



# TOWN OF ELLINGTON

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**CONSERVATION COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
TUESDAY, MAY 5, 2020, 7:00 PM  
ZOOM MEETING  
(IN-PERSON ATTENDANCE NOT PERMITTED DUE TO COVID19)  
(PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROVIDED VIA ZOOM)**

**PRESENT:** Chairman Rebecca Quarno, Vice Chairman David Bidwell, Regular Members Sean Dwyer, Robert Zielfelder, James Gage and George Nickerson

**ABSENT:** Regular Member Laurie Burstein and Alternate Ann Harford

**STAFF:** Lisa Houlihan, Town Planner and Christine Post, Recording Clerk

**I. CALL TO ORDER:** Chairman Rebecca Quarno called the meeting to order at 7:23 PM

**I. PUBLIC COMMENTS** (On Non-Agenda Items): **None**

**II. ACTIVE BUSINESS:**

1. Sustainable Ellington Initiative
  - a. 2.5 Create a Natural Resource and Wildlife Inventory - Draft 4-29-20

Ms. Houlihan gave a brief overview listing the new sections added to the Inventory in the April 29, 2020 draft. She and John Colonese, Assistant Planner Wetland Zoning Official, are keeping a list of references which will be added to the end of the Inventory. Ms. Houlihan indicated that they are close to completing the Inventory and should have more details for next month's meeting. The Commission will review the newest draft as homework and may send Ms. Houlihan their comments via email and discussion will continue at next month's meeting.

- b. 2.7 Provide Education on Water Conservation

The Earth Day event was cancelled. The Commission agreed that any type of public education will be tabled. Vice Chairman Bidwell suggested that if the lack of face to face interactions continue that there are online education platforms that can be explored.

2. Update – Ellington Hockanum River Committee: Harford/Nickerson – Leads
  - a. Ad Hoc Ellington Trails Committee – Monthly agenda/minutes

Commissioner Nickerson reported that Commissioner Harford, Tom Palshaw, 120 Pinney Street, and he removed 2 trees that were blocking Windermere Trail and one on the West Road Trail as well as some other trail maintenance. Vice Chairman Bidwell indicated they will be building bridges on the Highland Trails to officially open them in the next month or two. Ms. Houlihan added that the Town is looking into adding a formal parking lot off of Stein Road.

3. Report - Working Farmland Preservation Program: Gage/Staff – Leads
  - a. Status - Oakridge Dairy Application, Jobs Hill and Meadow Brook Roads.

Ms. Houlihan reviewed her memo dated April 29, 2020 regarding the Oakridge Dairy signed agreements for Farmland Preservation for Farm 1 and Farm 3, which would require a total local contribution of \$126,500.00 for 165+ acres, which is only a 10% cost-share for the town as opposed to past cost-share of 25%.

Ms. Houlihan has been working with the Financing Department on obtaining another funding mechanism. The Finance Department has had some personnel changes over the past couple years and this budget season has been affected by COVID-19. In agreement with recommendations from the Finance Department, Ms. Houlihan suggested waiting until next month to present to the Board of Selectmen (BOS) to allow the Board of Finance to finalize the budget process. The Commissioners agreed while stressing this is a wonderful opportunity for the town and that farmland preservation saves the town money. Ms. Houlihan explained that financing for farmland preservation is a request for special appropriation and separate from the budget process.

4. Report - Open Space Preservation Program: Gage – Lead

Commissioner Gage announced that \$90,000.00 was approved by the BOS for the Wraight open space property. Ms. Houlihan answered Commissioner Gage's question that the Planning and Zoning Commission does not need to sign off on the purchase of the Wraight property. Commissioner Gage stated that the Land Trust is sending a survey to the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) for their review and once money is released from the town and the DEEP, the Land Trust will close on the property. Vice Chairman Bidwell congratulated Ms. Houlihan and Commissioner Gage on their hard work.

Commissioner Dwyer stated the BOS seemed interested in the Brady property off of Kibbe Road.

**III. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS:**

1. FY 19-20 Budget Expenditure Update - **NO MOTIONS OR DECISIONS**

There were no expenses during April to report. Chairman Quarno suggested the commissioners think about how best to allocate the remaining budget.

2. Approval of the March 3, 2020 regular meeting minutes

**MOVED (BIDWELL) SECONDED (GAGE) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE THE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF MARCH 3, 2020 AS WRITTEN.**

3. Correspondence:

- a. Landmark – Newsletter of the Northern CT Land Trust March 2020

**IV. ADJOURNMENT:**

**MOVED (DWYER) SECONDED (ZIELFELDER) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADJOURN THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEETING AT 7:58 PM.**

Respectfully submitted,

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Christine Post, Recording Clerk