



TOWN OF ELLINGTON

55 MAIN STREET – PO BOX 187
ELLINGTON, CONNECTICUT 06029-0187
www.ellington-ct.gov

Tel: 860-870-3120 Town Planner Fax: 860-870-3122

**CONSERVATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, JUNE 5, 2018, 7:00 PM
TOWN HALL ANNEX, 57 MAIN STREET, ELLINGTON, CT**

PRESENT: Chairman Rebecca Quarno, Regular Members James Gage, George Nickerson, and Robert Zielfelder.

ABSENT: Vice Chairman David Bidwell, Regular Members Chris Hattin and Sean Dwyer, and Alternate Ann Harford.

STAFF: Lisa Houlihan, Town Planner and Samantha Getchell, Recording Clerk.

I. CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Rebecca Quarno called the Conservation Commission meeting to order at 7:01PM, at the Ellington Town Hall Annex, 57 Main Street, Ellington CT.

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

III. ACTIVE BUSINESS:

1. Sustainable Ellington Initiative

a. Conservation Commission Master Action List (DRAFT)

Ms. Houlihan presented a draft Master Action sub list for review and revision. The Commission discussed the list. Ellington has 90 days from date of resolution to get a sustainability team together, a meeting is tentatively set for July 10, 2018. Ms. Houlihan anticipates that other departments and commissions will be assigned to the Sustainable Ellington team. She will report to the Commission actions taken by Sustainable Ellington.

Ms. Houlihan confirmed the Town adopted the C-PACE program, a program for energy efficiency for multi-family, commercial, and industrial properties. Chairman Quarno asked if there is any guidance for completing the actions on the sub list. Ms. Houlihan will see if assistance is available. The First Selectman's office is responsible for documenting actions completed by Ellington to Sustainable Connecticut.

The Commission reviewed actions already completed. Ms. Houlihan will work towards writing up actions completed by the Conservation Commission and report them to the First Selectman's office. The Commission asked that columns H and I be updated for the next meeting. Chairman Quarno suggested that next month they assign priority actions to work on. The Commission agreed to review and work on editing the draft sub list.

2. Update – Ellington Hockanum River Committee: Harford/Nickerson – Leads
Commissioner Nickerson reported the maintenance work on the trail behind the YMCA, explaining that volunteers are cleaning up Knotweed and vines. Commissioner Nickerson confirmed Commissioner Harford was at the Ribbon Cutting for the suspended bridge. Commissioner Nickerson will research his concerns regarding invasive species.

The Planning Department has been added to the distribution list for the town-wide Trail Committee's agendas and minutes and copies will be shared with the Commission on an ongoing basis.

3. Report - Working Farmland Preservation Program: Gage/Staff – Leads
Ms. Houlihan reported that Oakridge Dairy provided a quote for the letter being sent out to farmland owners explaining how participating in the farmland preservation program benefited their farming operations. She explained that the interaction with Oakridge led to a formal application for preservation of 468 acres of a group of parcels in Ellington. If the application receives all approvals, the Department of Agriculture anticipates that closings will occur in increments over a few years. The program will exceed existing balance of bond authorization.

Ms. Houlihan spoke with the Cost of Community Services Study's consultant, Stahl & Associates, regarding the public presentation portion of the Study. She suggested that the public presentation be postponed to just before town meeting seeking bond authorization for Oakridge Dairy's pending farmland preservation application. Ms. Stahl concurs and suggests it may be worthy to provide a case study comparing what it would cost in services if the land subject to farmland preservation application was developed versus what it will cost in increased taxes to support additional bond authorization. Ms. Houlihan reported Oakridge's interest in purchasing other farmland parcels in Town. The Commission agreed to send the interest letter out to top priority properties including Gardners Nurseries, Dzen, RHL, Ellington Farm, Adams, and the Cohens.

4. Report - Open Space Preservation Program: Gage – Lead
An infestation of disease was found on some of the trees on the Arens' property, a property of interest for open space purchase. Some trees need to be taken down. A Selective Timber Harvest Application has been submitted. The owner is still interested in preserving the land.

Commissioner Gage reported that the land trust was approached by a land owner in Ellington for a potential open space purchase. The land trust is in the process of considering the parcel.

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS:

1. FY17-18 Budget Expenditure Update
The Commission reviewed the May 31, 2018 budget report and noted that the fiscal year ends June 30th. The anticipated budget balance is \$600.

MOVED (NICKERSON) SECONDED (GAGE) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY (4 YES, 0 NAY, 0 ABSTENTIONS) TO APPROVE DONATION EQUAL TO HALF THE REMAINING BALANCE OF THE COMMISSIONS BUDGET AT THE END OF THE FISCAL YEAR 17/18 TO THE ELLINGTON HOCKANUM RIVER TRAIL COMMITTEE.

2. Approval of the May 1, 2018 regular meeting minutes
MOVED (ZIELFELDER) SECONDED (QUARNO) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY (4 YES, 0 NAY, 0 ABSTENTIONS) TO APPROVE THE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES AS WRITTEN.
3. Correspondence:
 - a. Reading of Witness Tree, an exploration where a century-old red oak tree shares the story of our changing climate; sponsored in part by MassConn, June 9, 2018, 11AM, Gilbertville, MA.
 - b. Oakridge Times - May 17, 2018

**V. ADJOURNMENT:
MOVED (ZIELFELDER) SECONDED (QUARNO) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO
ADJOURN THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEETING AT 8:03 PM.**

Respectfully submitted,

Samantha Getchell, Recording Clerk