



TOWN OF ELLINGTON

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**CONSERVATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 2018, 7:00 PM
TOWN HALL ANNEX, 57 MAIN STREET, ELLINGTON, CT**

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

ABSENT: Regular Member Chris Hattin, Alternate Laurie Burstein

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

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Rebecca Quarno called the Conservation Commission meeting to order at 7:02 PM at the Ellington Town Hall Annex, 57 Main Street, Ellington, CT.

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

II. ACTIVE BUSINESS:

1. Sustainable Ellington Initiative
 - a. 2.4 Develop an Open Space Plan

Lisa Houlihan, Town Planner, reported that the GIS consultant will add the Connecticut Water Co. parcels to mapping as part of the next routine updates scheduled for summer 2019. Adding the water company land to the Plan of Conservation (POC) should be eligible for credit through Sustainable Connecticut. The Commission came to a consensus to take the item off the agenda for further meetings since it has been completed.

BY CONSENSUS, REMOVE 2.4 DEVELOP AN OPEN SPACE PLAN FROM FUTURE AGENDAS FINDING WORK ASSOCIATED WITH UPDATING THE PLAN COMPLETE.

- b. 2.5 Create a Natural Resource and Wildlife Inventory

Ms. Houlihan thanked Commissioner Dwyer for the referral for Portland's Wildlife Study. Ms. Houlihan referred to her report from last month and stated she spoke with Chet Arnold, Director, Department of Extension, UConn Center for Land Use Education and Research. Director Arnold offered to provide a training session for the Commission to familiarize them with CT-ECO site. The site can be used to help create a natural resource and wildlife inventory. The Commission agreed to keep the action on the agenda until agreeing on whether to receive a hands-on training or a presentation. Ms. Houlihan will ask Director Arnold to save the Commission's meeting date for March.

BY CONSENSUS, SUPPORT TRAINING / PRESENTATION FOR CT-ECO AT THE FEBRUARY OR MARCH 2019 MEETING WITH UCONN - CENTER FOR LAND USE EDUCATION AND RESEARCH.

- c. 2.7 Provide Education on Water Conservation
Vice Chairman David Bidwell will reach out to Connecticut Water Company to see if they offer any water conservation programs and report at next month's meeting.

- d. 4.3 Develop Agricultural-Friendly Practices – Draft Right to Farm Ordinance and CGS19a-341 Agricultural or farming operation not deemed a nuisance and CGS 1-1(q) Word and Phrases

Ms. Houlihan reported that since last month she reviewed the draft Right to Farm Ordinance (RTF) drafted some years ago, Lebanon's RTF Ordinance, the enabling statutes, existing zoning regulations, and the format of existing Ellington ordinances. Ms. Houlihan presented a draft RTF Ordinance. The Commission will review it and discuss next month.

2. Update – Ellington Hockanum River Committee: Harford/Nickerson – Leads

Commissioner Harford reported there has been trees down along the river and cleanup is in progress. There are areas that the Committee plans on trying to open up in the future for better views of the marsh. Commissioner Harford reported there is a new bridge across the Hockanum from personal property near the Carlson's. Commissioner Harford stressed that someone canoeing the river would not be able to pass under the bridge. Ms. Houlihan reported that John Colonese, Zoning & Wetlands Officer, is looking into the issue.

- a. Ad Hoc Ellington Trails Committee – Monthly agenda/minutes, as available

Commissioner Zielfelder attended the Trail of Treats event recently held at Brookside Park by the Trails Committee. It was well organized and a lot of people in attended.

- b. Brookside Park Path 0.65 mile
- c. Save the date, November 24, 2018 – Ribbon cutting at Kimball Forest Trail
- d. Letter of Support – CT Recreational Trail Program Grant for South Windsor Crosstown Trails

Ms. Houlihan was contacted by representatives of the South Windsor Park and Recreation Department seeking a letter of support for grant funds to construct a multi-use trail. Ms. Houlihan shared the information with Rebecca Quarno and David Bidwell as Chairman and Vice Chair and with their support she sent a letter. The letter was provided to the Commission. Commissioner Gage reported that the Northern Connecticut Land Trust provided a letter too.

Ms. Houlihan suggested those attending the Kimball Forest Trail Ribbon Cutting carpool since there is limited parking.

3. Report - Working Farmland Preservation Program: Gage/Staff – Leads

Ms. Houlihan attended a meeting with Seth Bahler from Oakridge Dairy and the Connecticut Department of Agriculture (DOA) to go over draft configurations for 500 acres of land applied for farmland preservation. Ms. Houlihan reported in order for land to be part of the Farmland Preservation Program (FPP) it must have a minimum percentage of qualifying soils and a maximum percentage of impervious surface. Because of these standards the configuration of land is broken down into smaller groups. One of the draft configurations wouldn't allow for any changes to impervious surface and impede Oakridge's plans to place a methane digester on the land. Because of this, they removed some of the acreage from the FPP application and may defer it to a future application. The rest of the land is a little over 270 acres and is being split up into 3 farms. Oakridge Dairy has accepted the plan. The DOA will order appraisals and start the formal process.

This process will need Town Meeting approval. Ms. Houlihan anticipates the process to be lengthy.

4. Report - Open Space Preservation Program: Gage – Lead
 - a. Minutes, Special Town Meeting, October 15, 2018, Bellante open space, 37 acres rear of 14 Sandy Beach Road

Commissioner Gage thanked commissioners for support at the Town Meeting on October 15, 2018. Commissioner Gage confirmed the approval of \$30,000 towards the Bellante Property and the acceptance of DEEP money. Transfer of property will occur soon.

Commissioner Gage reported the Northern Connecticut Land Trust has started another project for property off Webster Road. Commissioner Gage reported they are interested in the property on the west side that abuts the State forest. The land is watershed for water supply. There will be two appraisals, and if the value of the land is too high they may back out.

III. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS:

1. FY18-19 Budget Expenditure Update
Nothing to report.
2. Approval of the October 2, 2018 regular meeting minutes

MOVED (GAGE) SECONDED (HARFORD) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE THE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF OCTOBER 2, 2018 AS WRITTEN.

3. Approval of the 2019 Meeting Schedule

MOVED (DWYER) SECONDED (ZIELFELDER) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE THE 2019 CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEETING SCHEDULE AS PRESENTED.

4. Correspondence:
 - a. Letter dated October 17, 2018, from FEMA in reference to Risk MAP Program
 - b. The Habitat – Fall 2018
 - c. Oakridge Times – October 15, 2018
 - d. Memo dated October 15, 2018 from First Selectman's Office in reference to FY2019-2020 Capital Improvements Budget Requests

IV. ADJOURNMENT:

MOVED (HARFORD) SECONDED (BIDWELL) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADJOURN THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEETING AT 7:56 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Samantha Getchell, Recording Clerk