

CONSERVATION COMMISSION
TOLLAND, CONNECTICUT
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF APRIL 14, 2011

MEMBERS PRESENT: Philip Moreschi, Chair
Lois B. C. Query, Vice Chair
Don DiGenova, Secretary
Cynthia MacDonald
Richard Symonds
Eugene Koss
Richard Merritt, Alternate

MEMBERS ABSENT: Dorothy Mickiewicz

OTHERS PRESENT: Ken Hankinson, Conservation Corps
Donald and Arthur Jacques, Venture Crew 422 and Troop 61

1. Call to Order: Philip Moreschi, Chair called the meeting to order at 7:15p.m. in Council Chambers. He seated Richard Merritt for Dorothy Mickiewicz.
2. Public Comments
 - a. Comments from public – none.
 - b. Boy Scouts – Venture Crew 422 of Mansfield and Troop 61 of Mansfield. Arthur Jacques and his father, Donald Jacques spoke on behalf of both groups. Arthur Jacques said Venture Crew member Paul could not be here this evening, but he is still interested in doing a project. Arthur said they do have a list of project provided to them earlier, but Paul would like to meet with Ken Hankinson to talk about a potential limited accessibility project.

Mr. DiGenova asked if the Venture Crew is based out of Tolland or Mansfield. Arthur Jacques said it is out of Mansfield, but has several Tolland members. Arthur Jacques added that Troop 61 has been working on the birdhouse project and there are now a total of 16 placed out on the Campbell property and 24 at the Sage Meadow property. He said they are also working on an e-recycling project to be held this Saturday using a Connecticut-approved e-recycler out of Massachusetts. People can drop off their e-waste at the high school between 9am and 12pm on Saturday, free of charge. Mr. Hankinson said a list of approved e-waste items can be accessed from the town website. Arthur Jacques said they have had e-blasts sent out and they've also distributed flyers around town.

Mr. Symonds warned that people should remove their ribbons from their fax machines they turn in as well as any sensitive material from their computers because there are scammers that obtain people's personal information from discarded e-waste.

Arthur Jacques said they also have some material that still needs to be chipped from the Weigold property and he has talked to Mr. Symonds about chipping it. They also could use a load of top soil there and if it can be dropped off at the property, the scouts will take care of spreading it and seeding it. Mr. Moreschi said he will ask the town about getting some hay to cover the grass seed when it is put down.

Arthur Jacques said they also need an open space map, and Ms. MacDonald suggested he check with Steve Lowrey in the Planning Office about getting one. However, Ms. Query had an additional map and provided one.

Donald Jaques said the removal of invasive plants on the Weigold property will be a combined Venture Crew 422 and Troop 61 effort.

3. Approval of Minutes – March 10, 2011. Ms. MacDonald noted that the minutes should reflect that the group met in Council Chambers for the March 10 meeting, and not Conference Room A. Lois Query/Richard Symonds motion to approve the March 10, 2011 minutes as amended. All members voted to approve the minutes, with the exception of Mr. DiGenova, who abstained. Motion passed.

4. Committee Reports

- a. Website (link on home page to Open Space Trails). Mr. Moreschi noted that this has been accomplished.
- b. Management Plans: Luce, Palmer and Auperin. Mr. Moreschi said the completion of this item is just a matter of getting trail maps for the properties. Mr. Symonds asked what transpired at the workshop on this. Mr. Moreschi said the Commission voted on phrases they wanted to use and that Dorothy Mickiewicz was going to take care of the editing. Mr. Symonds noted that all the plans have adoption dates and they would need to be revised to show the new wording. Ms. Query said they concluded that the changes were not sufficient to have to change the adoption date as they were minor semantic issues. Mr. Merritt concurred. Mr. Symonds said in this case they should list the plans stating the adoption dates and noting with revisions of a subsequent date, just for tracking purposes. He said he would email Ms. Mickiewicz to put that on the documents.

Mr. Hankins said there will not be a separate map for Auperin, but rather the map will be a combined Weigold/Auperin Conservation Area. He added that he has not proposed a trail for the Luce property yet. Mr. Hankinson said Steve Lowrey should have a map, but if he does not, Mr. Hankinson can draw another. He said to make it really accurate, he would like to GPS it. Mr. Symonds said he will be seeing Steve Lowrey and will give him the map from Mr. Hankinson.

Mr. Symonds noted that the Luce Plan cannot go before the Town Council until they own the property. Mr. Moreschi said the Palmer and Auperin plans should go to Town Council, and they can hold the Luce plan until the property is purchased. Mr. Hankinson said he will drop a trail map for Auperin to Steve Lowrey on Monday.

Mr. Merritt agreed to send an email to Ms. Mickiewicz and copy in all Conservation Commission members to find out the status of Auperin—if the wording has been finalized. He said she will likely make it consistent with Luce and Palmer.

Richard Symonds/Cynthia MacDonald motion to adopt the minor revisions to the three adopted plans (Luce, Palmer, and Auperin), as revised April 14, 2011. Motion was unanimously approved.

- c. Activity Reports – this bullet item was removed from the Agenda.
- d. Tolland Conservation Corps – Mr. Hankinson said they set up several work sessions in April and May. The April sessions were for the 9th and the 23rd, but because the 23rd falls on Easter weekend, it was changed to the 30th to ensure they will have more helpers. The May sessions will be on the 7th and 21st of May. The work sessions should all be at the Palmer property.

Mr. Hankinson provided a handout on a projected expense budget for the Spring session, which amounts to \$146.00. He said he submitted expenses of \$89.36 for the Fall. The Fall expenses were less than projected because the lumber and materials for trailhead signs and mapboards which were approved for that period were not completed. The \$133 in expenses for those items are being carried over and added to the Spring budget bringing the total to \$279.00. He said the fence and decals are up for the Palmer property, but he said they will not put up the map box until the maps are completed. He added that the Palmer Conservation Area sign has also been put up.

Mr. Symonds noted that they have some leftover wood, the same kind that was used for making the bluebird boxes. He asked Mr. Hankinson if he could use it. Mr. Hankinson said if it is available, he would take a look at it.

Mr. Hankinson said that at the Saturday session on April 9, they had 18 people including two new people. He said it was a productive session and the trail to the quarry is completed. He said the flagging has been left up and if the weather is good, they will plan to blaze the trail. He said the aim is to try to connect to the quarry trail to avoid the additional disturbance of building a second bridge over the stream. Mr. Hankinson said he hopes to have Palmer finished and blazed by the end of May, as it would be nice to hold a Grand Opening the last weekend in September.

Mr. Merritt asked about liability issues if a boy scout was working on a foundation and was injured. Mr. Hankinson said the projects always include adult supervision and that the scouts do have a limited insurance plan to cover them. The scouts are restricted from using power tools. He said he does not expect they would be doing a lot of rock removal, rather they would be clearing debris.

Mr. Hankinson brought up potential connectivity opportunities between properties that would likely require obtaining easements or Right of Ways. They would need a map of Sugar Hill and Bakos to determine the private properties these would involve. Ms. MacDonald suggested they hold a future workshop to look at and discuss possibilities. Mr. Hankinson said he would look at the map in the assessor's office and then look into getting a map made with topography information for the Commission's next workshop.

- e. Willimantic River Alliance update – Ms. MacDonald said the Annual Open House will be held on Wednesday, April 27, and the time has been changed to hold their business meeting from 5:30 to 6:00pm, followed by food and possibly a slide show at the Willington Pizza House. She said it will be open to the public.

She also said AMC will have a paddle event on April 30 and the Riverfest in Willimantic will be held May 21. Connecticut Walk Day will be on June 4 and this will include a paddle at 10:00am in Mansfield. There will also be a couple of Walktoberfest events on October 1st. All of this information can be found on the WillimanticRiver.org website.

- f. Education and Outreach Committee Report – Ms. MacDonald said Tolland Walk Day will be held on June 5. This will include an early-bird walk at 7:30am on the Weigold/Auperin loop and will be led by John Stake who will teach people how to identify bird calls. There will also be a family walk at 1:00pm on the same property, where they will introduce the various boy scout projects done there. In the advertising, they will be asking people to park on Summerwood. An e-blast will be done to help get the word out. Mr. Moreschi noted there is a section of trail in a hollow on the Stoppelworth property where there is a lot of bird activity worth checking out.

Ms. MacDonald said some residents have expressed disappointment that there hasn't been more guidance in identifying birds during some of the birding events, and so to address that,

they are hoping to hold a mini-seminar at the library on June 2. They are presently working on getting approval from the library. Ms. Query said they are trying to get Marsh Summers to lead the event at the library. She said he is good at identifying birds and mimicking their sounds, and so they are also hoping to get him for the 1:00pm walk on June 5.

Ms. Query added that the June 5 Tolland Walk Day will be done in conjunction with Conserving Tolland, and Roseann Gottier of Conserving Tolland has agreed to this. Ms. MacDonald said she would email Ms. Gottier with the times of the events. She added that they are also looking at the potential for a subsequent hike in July. Ms. Query said they would like to invite Phil Potts for a walk of the Campbell property in July—either on July 10 or 17. She said she has seen a past presentation by him and he gives an excellent talk.

Ms. MacDonald said the Walktoberfest application has been submitted and the date for this walk will be October 16, with a rain date of October 23. The time will be 1:00pm at the King property. Ms. Query said Charlie King will lead the walk on the entire property. Ms. MacDonald also noted that a tractorfest-type of event will be held at Sage Meadow in late October. Mr. Symonds said he believes Archie Tanner will be getting back to them with the date.

Mr. Merritt shared an article he saw in the Willington Guide that said their town's Conservation Commission offered a walk led by Barbara Austin, a local naturalist. She also gives a talk on edible plants. He provided a copy of the article to Ms. MacDonald in case there might be some interest.

5. Old Business – None.
6. New Business – The Tolland Walk Day and Walktoberfest were discussed earlier in the meeting.
7. Executive Session – no session will be held this evening.
8. Adjournment: Richard Symonds/Lois Query motion to adjourn the meeting and pay the clerk at 8:30pm. Motion was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Annie Gentile
Substitute Clerk