

**CONSERVATION COMMISSION
TOLLAND, CONNECTICUT
MEETING MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 11, 2010**

- a. Call to Order – The meeting was called to order at 7:06 p.m. in the Council Chambers. Present were: Phil Moreschi (Chair), Lois Query (Vice-Chair), Don DiGenova, Cynthia MacDonald, Richard Symonds and Dorothy Mickiewicz. Eugene Koss arrived at 7:55 p.m. Others present: Eric Grulke, Boy Scout, troop 2. Not in attendance: Andrew Holl.

b. Additions to the Agenda

The following additions were made to the agenda:

4f. Sage Meadow Discussion

4g. Rating Forms

Executive Session

Mr. Symonds moved to seat Ms. Mickiewicz as a voting member and this was seconded by Ms. Query.

2. Public Comments

- a. Comments for the public – 2 minutes - None

b. Boy Scouts, invasive plants – 5 minutes

Eric Grulke from Troop 2 in Tolland attended the meeting and had questions for the Commission regarding Scout project options. These questions generally focused on the Auperin property and its location. He suggested breaking this into two projects: forest management (trail & viewing area) and water pollution control (bridge).

Ms. Query explained that the Commission had been discussing presenting an invasive species program to the school system and that the Scouts were identified as a potential resource to be a part of the event.

Lastly, Ms. MacDonald asked if the Hornaday had been awarded. Mr. Grulke explained that it is in the system and a step closer but would still take some time. The Commission congratulated Mr. Grulke and explained that it would like to provide an opportunity for the project to be presented along with its background once the Hornaday is awarded. Mr. Grulke will keep the Commission updated.

3. Approval of Minutes – January 14, 2010 – 5 Minutes

Mr. Symonds motioned to accept the minutes of the January 14, 2010 meeting and Ms. Query seconded the motion.

The following changes were noted: 1b, “Ms. Query moved to seat Ms. Mickiewicz and this was so moved by Mr. Symonds” should be changed to “Ms. Query requested to seat Ms. Mickiewicz and this was so moved by Mr. Symonds and seconded by Mr. DiGenova”; 2b, first paragraph “Clow Brook” should be “Clough Brook”; 2b, first paragraph “connect the Middle School to Crandall Park and” should be changed to “connect the Middle School to Crandall Park and the post office”; 4a, the third sentence should read “where the town receives 10% of the pre-development appraised value of the property and that there may also be easements on the wetlands”; 4c, first paragraph “Ms. Symonds” should be “Mr. Symonds”; last sentence should be edited to include

“to attend CT state continuing education programs”; 4d, the first sentence should be edited to “regarding what will be needed to accomplish the application” and “part of the process will be to notify the landowners and towns with access. The towns will receive a letter asking for support.”; 4e, “separate map indicated” should be “separate map indicating”; 4e, “plan is to work two weekdays” should be “plan is to work two weekends”; 4g, Dean should be corrected to Deen O’Connell and Donna to Donna Ellis; 5, John should be corrected to John Pagini.

All were in favor of the changes.

4. Committee Reports

a. Knofla Plan – discuss and approve plan.

Mr. Symonds distributed the Knofla Conservation Area Management Plan and noted that the photograph on the cover needs to be replaced and the location maps need to be completed. He believes it is ready but needs to be edited. The edits were discussed and Mr. Symonds motioned to approve the Plan with the changes and final edit. Mr. Koss seconded the motion. All were in favor.

b. Invasive Species Committee Report

Ms. Query explained that she and Ms. MacDonald met with Donna Ellis, invasive species expert from the University of CT and Deen O’Connell, a member of the Tolland Garden Club to discuss how to make the town and homeowners aware of the problem of invasive species and decided it would be best to reach people through the Middle School children. This would involve a program of identifying and eradicating invasive species at the Middle School and a letter would be sent to the parents via the children about the event to be held on May 16, 2010 (rain date May 23, 2010). While the event would take place at the Middle School, information regarding the program would be sent to all schools. Discussions included options such as dividing groups into teams which would identify, remove and gather piles of such plants to compete for prizes. Additionally the committee would like to send out a pamphlet to homeowners in town which would describe invasive species in greater detail. This cost would be \$300 (400 pieces at .75 ea).

Ms. Mickiewicz suggested that a responsible person be present as well to ensure students were not removing non-invasive plants and Mr. Grulke inquired as to what kind of protective equipment would be provided to the participants such as gloves. Mr. Symonds suggested that perhaps the students should only perform the identification activity rather than removal and Mr. Moreschi recommended that the students could do this by attaching tie flags to the appropriate plants. Further discussion took place including some concern regarding working with this age group of students and the use of various tools and it was also discussed that this is intended to be a parent-child event. Mr. Moreschi commented that the goal is to educate the students so that they would be able to identify these plants at home. He further suggested that an adult at the event could do a demonstration of how to safely remove the invasive species.

Mr. Symonds inquired about historical turnout at other parent-child events and suggested that the Commission consider combining this program with another local event such as Children’s Day to enhance participation. Mr. Moreschi also suggested providing a plant for the students so that they would be encouraged to remove the invasive specie and substitute it with the provided plant. The Commission will start by

contacting the Middle School and thanked Mr. Grulke for providing input.

c. Willimantic River Alliance - update

Ms. MacDonald explained the current goal is to get a site analysis and management report for all access sites. Someone is framing letters that will be distributed to towns and property owners where there is access. Overall, the process is moving forward.

d. Tolland Conservation Corps

Mr. Symonds had spoken with Mr. Hankinson and provided the following information. Mr. Hankinson took care of some blow-downs that occurred at the Schindler/Schmidt property but expressed some concerns regarding Tolland and Vernon scouts camping at the Schindler/Schmidt property on the same day. (The Commission received a request from the Vernon Scouts for group use of the Schindler/Schmidt property for an overnight camp on March 13th & 14th.) It was clarified that Tolland Troop 2 would be using the Campbell property, not Schindler/Schmidt. Mr. Koss motioned that given the aid provided to the Commission and Town that Troop 2 should be allowed to use the Campbell property. Mr. Moreschi stated that no campfires would be allowed and Ms. Query added that cooking would be limited to camp stoves. Mr. DiGenova seconded the motion subject to the conditions noted. All were in favor. Ms. MacDonald added that a copy of the request be sent to the property steward to alert him/her of the planned activity.

e. Website Additions and Update

Mr. Symonds requested an update report on the status of the website. Mr. Moreschi will e-mail Mr. Holl requesting this information.

f. Sage Meadow Discussion

Mr. Symonds explained the reason for the walk was to generate dialogue between the Commission and Joshua's Trust. Issues discussed included keeping the grass down while not being allowed to hay, addressing the brush above the pond and that wildlife should be a major consideration. Joshua's Trust is willing to do a joint management plan and will add resource documentation. Further, access points between the two lots were discussed including whether the right of way should be relocated. A general discussion of moving the easement/access location took place.

Ms. MacDonald, Ms. Query, Mr. Symonds and Mr. Koss volunteered to work as a group to move this project forward.

g. Rating Forms

Mr. Moreschi explained that there are some new rating forms available that could be used by the Commission. Ms. Query suggested that when the management plans are done that the ratings could be re-worked.

5. Old Business - None

6. New Business

Ms. MacDonald received an e-mail from Conserving Tolland regarding two events: Wildlife Enhancement and Winnie the Screech Owl; these events will be held on February 22nd and March 24th at the Lodge.

7. Adjournment

Mr. Symonds motioned that the meeting be adjourned at 9:14 p.m. and that the clerk be paid.

Ms. MacDonald seconded the motion. All were in favor.

The commission went into Executive Session.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Pascuzzi

Clerk