

**CONSERVATION COMMISSION
TOLLAND, CONNECTICUT
MEETING MINUTES OF JANUARY 14, 2010**

- a. Call to Order – The meeting was called to order at 7:12 p.m. in the Conference Room C. Present were: Lois Query (Vice-Chair), Cynthia MacDonald, Don DiGenova, Richard Symonds and Dorothy Mickiewicz. Eugene Koss arrived at 7:30 p.m. Others present: Ken Hankinson, Tolland Conservation Corps, Eric Grulke, Boy Scout, troop 2, Linda Farmer, Director of Planning and Community Development, Mark Peterson of Gardner & Peterson Associates LLC. Not in attendance: Phil Moreschi (Chair) and Andrew Holl.
 - b. Additions to the Agenda
 - Ms. Query moved to seat Ms. Mickiewicz and this was so moved by Mr. Symonds.
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 reviewed the list the Commission emailed him regarding project options. He had the following questions: regarding the bridge over Clow Brook at Sage Meadow, what is the project? The Commission explained that it would be an entry option to the property but given the property’s layout it is not a high priority. Another question was regarding #20: Mr. Hankinson explained that they had cleared the bush and a lot of the invasive plants but that to access the property a 12-16’ bridge would need to be built. A question regarding #23, Ms. Farmer explained that the goal was to connect the Middle School to Crandall Park and that it would involve adhering to ADA requirements. The next question was regarding #22: Ms. Query explained this would be a good project for someone in the Troop who was interested in something other than building or a hands-on activity. Ms. MacDonald explained it as a photographic summary rather than a video. Mr. Grulke asked about the timeframe for this project and Ms. Query explained that that had not yet been discussed but that he would work with Commission member Andrew Holl who would be the liaison for the project. Mr. DiGenova added that if this was to be a four-season project that ideally now would be a good time to get winter (snow) photos. Ms. MacDonald added that there were some other photos that would also be available for use and that this would be a great project that could be brought to the local schools and used for education. Mr. DiGenova added this would also provide a wonderful database for documentation as needed in the future. Mr. Grulke also asked for an explanation of #13. The Commission explained this was a trail system that would involve connecting the north side of Buff Cap; it has wetlands, invasive species and would be ideal for doing a wildlife inventory.

Mr. Symonds asked Mr. Grulke what project most intrigued him. Mr. Grulke explained an interest in a video/media project involving invasive species. He suggested taking an invasive plant inventory by sending a survey to the residents asking them to identify plants that were on their respective properties.

3. Approval of Minutes – December 10, 2009 – 5 Minutes

Ms. MacDonald motioned to accept the minutes of the December 10, 2009 meeting and Ms. Mickiewicz seconded the motion. It was noted that the date needed to be corrected to read “December 10, 2009. Further, Ms. MacDonald noted in 2b. that Mr. Darren Melendy was awaiting approval, not Mr. Grulke. All were in favor of the changes; Mr. Symonds abstained.

4. Committee Reports

a. Proposed subdivision – Welz property on Hunter/Bakos Roads. Review property and request to consider fee-in-lieu of “Open Space”.

Mr. Peterson distributed a copy of the map for the Welz Property on Hunter & Bakos road to all members. He explained that the project involved 16 acres and reviewed the map with the Commission. Ms. Query explained “fee in lieu of open-space” is a pre-subdivision approval of a property where the town receives 10% and that there may also be easements on the wetlands. Ms. Farmer explained that this does not need site analysis since the density is 4 lots (3.2 acres open space or 20% of the 16 acres) and that this was to seek input and recommendations from the Commission. Mr. DiGenova clarified that if the open space was given to the Town that it would be about the same amount of space as the wetland space. Mr. Koss questioned that if the Town holds the wetlands, how would this enhance the appearance of the property. If left alone, the inland wetlands will be tied to the house lots in turn limiting the property owners’ options hence the money should be spent on another project. Ms. Farmer asked Mr. Stevenson if he would go before Planning and Zoning in February and he stated that he would not. Ms. Query commented that with all the open space the Commission has that there is not an advantage to setting aside this piece. Mr. DiGenova moved to recommend a fee in lieu of open space. Mr. Koss seconded this motion. All were in favor.

b. Request for Boy Scout campout at Schindler/Schmidt Conservation Area on March 13 & 14, 2010.

Ms. Farmer received a request from John Zimmer representing Boy Scout Troop 2020 in Rockville to allow five adults and ten children to camp on the property on March 13 & 14, 2010. Mr. Symonds explained that they had followed procedure and Linda’s office should sign the approval. Mr. Hankinson requested that the Scouts be instructed not to gather more firewood than was needed and any extra should be dispersed. The stones are in a cairn and should be returned the way they were found when the event was completed. Ms. Mickiewicz made the motion to vote on granting the request which would allow the Troop to camp on the Schindler/Schmidt Conservation property with the provisos discussed. Mr. Koss seconded the motion and all were in favor. Ms. MacDonald requested that a copy also be sent to the property steward.

c. Budget – Statistical pages

Ms. Farmer distributed the Budgeted Statistical Page to all which covers July 2009 through July 2010. Ms. MacDonald noted that it should be confirmed that Ms. Donna Ellis is a Professor and Ms. Farmer stated that she would indeed fact-check the information and correct if needed. Ms. Symonds recommended checking with Cindy Murdock regarding which plans had been adopted to reflect a level of activity. Regarding an invasive plant education program, Ms. MacDonald explained that the Commission plans on working with Donna Ellis so that it is an objective - a proactive, educational and community outreach program involving invasive plants. Further, it should be added to the objective that the Commission will work with the River Alliance and connect the King property to the green ways. Ms. Query would like to see fees for members of the Commission to attend continuing education programs added. Mr. DiGenova suggested adding “ongoing” to each of the bullets.

Ms. Farmer has submitted the budget proposed by the Commission and requested that Mr. Hankinson send her the number of hours volunteered so she could add it to the document.

d. Willimantic River Alliance Update

Ms. MacDonald explained the River Alliance met with John Monroe from National Park Services and that the V.P. put out a bulleted announcement following this meeting regarding what will need to be accomplished. Mr. Symonds asked if the Commission needs to provide input and support. Ms. MacDonald explained that yes, part of the process will be to notify the landowners of the access so that towns will receive a letter asking for support. Further, at the meeting they discussed signage on the water courses and on roadways as well as coordination with other groups. Ms. MacDonald showed the Commission the map which indicated towns, open space and major waterways in the Thames Watershed Basin.

e. Tolland Conservation Corps

Mr. Hankinson explained he visited Schindler/Schmidt twice. It is not marked for winter so cross country skiers would need to stay on the logging roads but wouldn't have any total loops to travel. When complete, the Corp will make a separate map indicated cross country ski trails. The Corp is working on the Knofla property signs that advise users when they are “leaving” town property and that a sign is needed at Knofla and Campbell to direct people to the scenic overview. Mr. Hankinson noted that people from the Tolland/Ellington border have been at Parciak with dirt bikes and that he will put up a sign in the Spring noting that this activity is not allowed. The Corp's plan is to work two weekdays in April and another two in May. He will provide a recap of 2009 program summary to the Commission at the next meeting.

f. Website Additions and Update - None

g. Invasive Species Report

Ms. MacDonald explained that there is a flyer which has methods for mechanical, biological and chemical control of invasive species which would allow the Commission to put together a calendar at the workshop. Ms. Query agreed that along with Dean and Donna that the Commission should come up with an action plan and/or calendar. Mr. DiGenova suggested holding a presentation at the Arts Center so the Boy

Scouts could present their project to the Town and tell the story behind it. Mr. Hankinson added the Town could present a Certificate of Appreciation as well and present it at the event.

h. Any other reports

Ms. MacDonald reminded the Commission that she has pictures available on CD and if anyone would like a copy she would be happy to provide one.

Mr. Symonds added four items. First, Mr. Symonds wrote to Peter Marteka. Mr. Marteka has very good articles and Mr. Symonds suggested that he publish a summary/book of the area. Second, Mr. Symonds was impressed with Beatrice Campbell's book and believes it would be great for the stewards to have similar information about properties (prior ownership, why a particular pond was built etc.) and that the book should be used as a sample. Third, the Freedom of Information Act meeting was also going on concurrent with the Conservation Commission's meeting. Mr. Symonds suggested that it would be a good event for members to consider attending in the future. Fourth, Mr. Symonds presented an information piece regarding the invitations that were sent so the Town departments and chairs regarding a fire department line of duty death memorial that would take place on Monday, January 18 at 2pm. The town is invited and it will be held at the Training Center. Reverend Miller will be in attendance and refreshments will be served. Mr. Symonds received a few invitations back via the postal service indicating that they were not delivered so he wanted to ensure that the information was available.

5. Old Business

Mr. Symonds is still waiting to get together with John regarding Sage Meadow and will review the Knofla plan. Ms. Query will get in contact with Ms. MacDonald to discuss putting something together regarding the invasive species.

6. New Business - None

7. Agreed/Adjournment

Ms. MacDonald motioned that the meeting be adjourned at 9:00 p.m. and that the clerk be paid. Mr. Koss seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Pascuzzi
Clerk