

**CONSERVATION COMMISSION
TOLLAND, CONNECTICUT
MEETING MINUTES OF JULY 14, 2011**

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:11 p.m. in the Council Chambers.

Present were: Lois Query (Vice-Chair), Cynthia MacDonald, Richard Symonds, Rich Merritt, and Don DiGenova (Secretary). Not in attendance: Phil Moreschi (Chair), Dorothy Mickiewicz, Eugene Koss.

Also present: Ken Hankinson (Tolland Conservation Corps), Linda Farmer (Director, Planning & Community Development).

Ms. MacDonald moved to seat Mr. Merritt as a voting member. Mr. DiGenova seconded this motion. All were in favor.

b. Addition to the Agenda

The following additions were made to the agenda:

*Discussion regarding Joshua's Trust

Mr. DiGenova motioned to add this to the agenda. Ms. MacDonald seconded the motion. All were in favor.

2. Public Comments

a. Comments from the public – 2 minutes -None

3. Mowing Schedule - Sage Meadow

Archie Tanner met with his group and would like to set the date of September 24, 2011 to do the mowing at Sage Meadow. He requested that someone show him around the property to identify property lines, access and other features. Mr. Hankinson offered to meet with Mr. Tanner closer to the proposed date to show the property, potentially at some time between September 12th and 14th. Mr. Merritt and Mr. Steve Williams will be in attendance as well.

4. Site Analysis Plan - Wanat Property, Kozely Road

Jay Ussery from J.R. Russo & Associates, a civil survey firm with offices located in East Windsor, CT was present to present a site analysis for the Wanat Property on Kozely Road in Tolland. Mr. Tony Randazzo, representing Helen Wanat's nephew, was also present. Mr. Ussery presented and described a site plan for the property. A copy of this plan was also provided to the Commission. The plan provided information on existing vegetative cover types, the contours and the slopes in excess of 20% which are called out in the zoning regulations.

A scenario for how the property could be subdivided was presented on a concept plan. These would be full sized lots with 200' of frontage except for the main house which would be classified as a rear lot with smaller frontage. This would provide for 4 new lots plus the existing house/rear lot/5th lot. This uses the existing regulations for a full size subdivision with lot areas of 2 acres and 5 acres for the rear lot with 35' of frontage. (A correction was made on the plans that the lot listed as #6 should be lot #5; there is no sixth lot).

Another option would be if it was subdivided with the FRD (flexible residential development) regulation and used a larger open space conveyance. There also exists the possibility of taking some of the earlier conveyance to the Town as the open space dedication which could allow for an additional lot. This brought the discussion back to the question of whether it would be possible to take some or all of the 13.4 acres previously gifted and allow it to be dedicated as the open space. Other options include the possibility of placing a conservation easement around the

pond behind the existing house or the possibility of a private conservation easement. Mr. Symonds noted that the water supply for the existing house comes from the spring (Spring House) adjacent to the pond area and thus could not be included in the open space parcel.

Ms. Query reviewed Ms. Mickiewicz's e-mail dated 6.30.11 which states that she believes the best method of preservation of the parcel is through a conservation easement rather than town open space ownership. A variety of open space options were discussed.

Mr. Symonds explained that he understood the role of the Commission to be to look at the value of property for open space purposes. Ms. Farmer explained this to be identifying land that is in accordance with the open space conservation plan and its principles as well as noting what might be unique about that land to define how it might be preserved. Beyond that the Planning and Zoning Commission will review the Conservation Commission comments. It is then a policy decision on the part of the P&Z commission. Ms. Farmer noted that this is on the Planning and Zoning agenda for the July 25th meeting.

Mr. Symonds added that after walking the property that he did not feel there were any other areas of unique features in terms of open space purposes. Ms. MacDonald noted that her opinion and recommendation is to consider a "fee in lieu of" and go with the four lots plus the existing one and allow the Wanat piece to remain as is - it was already gifted to the town. Ms. Query agreed noting that land gifted to Tolland was a gift and should not be considered in the application. She added that a conservation easement around the pond would be realistic due to the sensitivity of the area and that to satisfy the spirit of development "fee in lieu of" should be considered. Ms. Farmer commented that it would have to be reviewed and that "fee in lieu of" may not work in this instance given that the discussion is about Open Space.

Mr. Symonds motioned to make an advisory recommendation to the Planning and Zoning Commission. Mr. DiGenova seconded the motion. The motion: The land at the rear of the 13.96 acre Wanat property on Kozley Road is an area consisting of a pond, a spring, and a stream running easterly with steep berms. The Conservation Commission deems this to be a valuable natural resource that should be considered for long term preservation. The Conservation Commission believes that the best method of preservation is through a conservation easement rather than Town Open Space ownership as it is not appropriate for public access. All were in favor.

5. Boy Scouts

- Venture Crew 422, Mansfield - 5 minutes - None
- Troop 61, Mansfield - 5 minutes - None

6. Approval of Minutes – June 9, 2011 – 2 minutes

Mr. Symonds moved to approved the minutes of the June 9, 2011 meeting. Ms. MacDonald seconded the motion. Discussion took place and the following changes were made: the format of the minutes needs correction to read "CONSERVATION COMMISSION TOLLAND, CONNECTICUT MEETING MINUTES OF JUNE 9, 2011", item 1b should read "Addition to the Agenda", under 1b "items" should read "item". All were in favor.

7. Committee Reports

- a. Website - None
- b. Tolland Conservation Corps - 15 minutes

Mr. Hankinson met with Paul regarding where the new signs would be installed on the Schindler/Schmidt and Knofla properties. Paul will also help at the Palmer property with the rock removal and grading. Mr. Hankinson confirmed the date of the Palmer opening to be September 25th at 1p.m. rain

or shine. He has made a couple of calls to Darrin Melendy regarding Stopplesworth and is waiting to hear back. Mr. Melendy did a great job on the restoration/renovation of the foundation. All that is needed is a small bench and a historic plaque to complete the project. Mr. Hankinson distributed a document written by Mr. Bill McDermott which covers the history of Stopplesworth and ideally this information could be on the plaque in a bolder font on a cedar board, possibly laminated and measuring 11"x14". Mr. Hankinson has signs for Palmer and all three trails will be blazed by the end of August, well in advance of the September 25th opening. In terms of promoting the event, Mr. Symonds noted that Tolland Monthly deadline is August 10th to make the September publication. Mr. Hankinson will meet with Peter Marteka from the Hartford Courant the weekend after labor day to walk the Palmer property and write an article two weeks prior to the opening. Ms. MacDonald will get out an e-blast and send the information to Tom Ainsworth for the newsletter. Ms. Farmer will ask Cindy to put a link on the Tolland website as well. Mr. Symonds added that information such as that on the document about the history of Stopplesworth is perfect and ideally should be available for each of the properties. Mr. Symonds thanked Mr. Hankinson for a great day at the picnic and noted that the walk at Campbell was very successful. Ms. MacDonald did a wonderful job coordinating the walk and the presentation was outstanding. Thirty four people attended, about half of whom were from Tolland. Mr. Symonds suggested having participants sign a guest book to learn where people are from and having maps available which note "You are here" with labels of the surrounding area. Ms. MacDonald will look into having the handout distributed at Campbell uploaded to the Tolland website.

c. Willimantic River Alliance - update - 2 minutes

The WRA has adjourned for the summer.

d. Education & Outreach Committee Report – 2 minutes

Ms. Query noted that Sunday's walk was very successful and she will invite Dr. Philpotts to the Palmer opening. Ms. MacDonald added that Mr. Stake would be interested in doing another bird walk next year but would like to do it a bit earlier.

8. Old Business - None

9. New Business

• Discuss Open Space Conservation Easement on Crystal Peat & Humus-Cook Road

Ms. Farmer distributed the Carriage Crossing (45 lot subdivision) Open Space Layout. The Roncari family is interested in donating land which is currently open space in the Carriage Crossing subdivision. Currently there is only an easement on the property. It has a cranberry bog, a peat bog and some other features. Ms. Farmer will bring the information to Planning and Zoning on July 25th and will request that the Conservation Commission and others have a chance to visit the property.

• Discuss letter from Joshua's Trust

A letter was sent to the Town Manager by Joshua's Trust regarding the Lemek Open Space that Joshua's Trust took possession of. Ms. Farmer provided information about the correspondence received which was a request for a donation relative to Joshua's Trust accepting the property. Ms. MacDonald motioned that Mr. DiGenova, the Conservation Commission Secretary write a letter to the Town Council noting that the Conservation Commission does not recommend contributing \$4448 toward the Lemek Subdivision Open Space. Mr. Symonds seconded the motion.

All were in favor. Mr. DiGenova will get the letter to Ms. Farmer by July 20th.

10. Announcements

- October 16th – Last Green Valley’s Walktober Event at 1:00 p.m., Mr. Charlie King will guide you through the beautiful King Riverside Conservation area on Dimmock Road. Rain date is October 23rd.

11. Adjournment

Mr. Symonds motioned to adjourn the meeting at 9:20 p.m. and to pay the clerk. Ms. MacDonald seconded the motion. All were in favor.