

**CONSERVATION COMMISSION
TOLLAND, CONNECTICUT
MEETING MINUTES OF MAY 13, 2010**

- a. Call to Order – The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. in the Council Chambers. Present were: Lois Query (Vice-Chair), Don DiGenova, Cynthia MacDonald, and Richard Symonds. Eugene Koss arrived at 7:08 p.m., Phil Moreschi (Chair) arrived at 7:16 p.m., and Dorothy Mickiewicz arrived at 7:20 p.m. Others present: Arthur Jacques, Troop 61 Mansfield; Linda Farmer; Ken Hankinson. Not in attendance: Andrew Holl.
- b. Additions/Changes to the Agenda
The following changes were made to the agenda:
Mr. Symonds moved to move item 4f to the head of the agenda after Public Comments and this was seconded by Ms. Query. All were in favor.

2. Public Comments

- a. Comments for the public – 2 minutes - None
- b. Boy Scouts
 - Troop 2, Tolland – invasive plants – 5 minutes - None
 - Troop 61, Mansfield – bluebird project – 5 minutes

Mr. Jacques has constructed and installed five birdhouses at the Campbell property and has been observing them for the past two weeks. One house is currently occupied however it is doubtful that it is inhabited by a bluebird. Another scout in the Troop will start to do observations with Mr. Jacques and then take over the project once Mr. Jacques has completed his work on the project (at least 2 years away). Additionally, an adult leader will be out to help map the location of the boxes. Mr. Jacques will make five additional boxes next year, install them at a different location, and continue to observe. Further, he will attend some of the Conservation Commission meetings to provide updates including a photographic journal.

Mr. DiGenova suggested in order to bring in revenue for the additional birdhouses Mr. Jacques may want to consider building a couple of extra birdhouses and selling them at the Farmer’s Market in Town. Ms. Farmer explained that Mr. Jacques would need to apply to set up at the Farmer’s Market through the Town Manager’s Office. Mr. Koss invited Mr. Jacques to keep the Commission informed so that it may assist him in getting the word out if the birdhouses are available at the Market

3. Approval of Minutes – April 8, 2010 – 2 minutes

Ms. Symonds motioned to accept the minutes of the April 8, 2010 meeting. Ms. MacDonald seconded the motion. The opportunity for discussion was presented and the following changes were made: on page 1, 2b, first paragraph, fifth sentence, “Mr. Query” should read “Ms. Query”; on page 3, 4c, first paragraph, 4th sentence, “she” should read “Ms. MacDonald”. All were in favor.

4. Committee Reports

a. Website additions and update – 2 minutes

Ms. Farmer believes that Ms. Murdock had put some items on the website and would know if additional tabs could be added. Further, Ms. Farmer confirmed that the Luce Grant, due May 3, 2010, was handed in on that date.

b. Updated Rating Sheets – 20 minutes

Ms. Farmer distributed Ratings Sheets to the members of the Commission. Extensive discussion regarding these sheets took place. Mr. Moreschi noted that the role of the Conservation Commission was to act in an advisory capacity and Ms. Farmer commented that this piece is a guide, one evaluation tool to be used when reviewing a property. Mr. DiGenova believed it should be considered an enhanced checklist to use when evaluating a property rather than a “rating” piece. Additionally, an “Other” category should be added after Town Plan where additional comments could be noted.

Specifically, the following items were discussed: Mr. DiGenova would like “protects dams” to be added in the first category and end the Town Planning category with two bullets: “consistent with open space plan” and “consistent with the plan of Conservation and Development”. Ms. MacDonald would like to see another category which would address the proximity of the property under review to neighboring towns’ open space. Mr. Symonds noted that these sheets are designed to evaluate a property based on its parts and Mr. Moreschi agreed that the items on these sheets were very specific. It was also noted that the property under review needs to be consistent with the Open Space Plan as well as the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD).

Ms. Query noted that the Commission needed to determine if it was going to use a scale or a yes/no format when completing the rating sheets. Additionally, if something was a negative, how this information should it be noted. Mr. Symonds explained that a value needs to be established and an evaluation performed based on the impact on open space criteria. Mr. Koss added that implementation becomes part of it as well and Ms. Mickiewicz noted that it is an inventory of the property.

In order to calibrate the rating sheets, it was determined that a single property be selected and that all members of the Commission would perform the review individually. The selected property was Shafran and within the next two weeks the Members will use the ratings sheets distributed by Ms. Farmer to review the Shafran property. Discussion on the outcome of these reviews will take place at the Commission’s next workshop.

c. Invasive Species Committee Report – 2 minutes

• Children’s Day Event

Ms. Query commended Ms. MacDonald on her commitment to the project and noted that it was an excellent event.

The invasive species were placed on a table with pictures and descriptions while another table was used to promote the raffle prizes and items available for sale. Boy Scout Troop 2, Tolland was in attendance as well and Ms. Query dressed as the “Invasive Raider”. Children, and in turn their parents, were encouraged to visit the display where they received a booklet and survey. The survey encouraged the families to note what invasive species lived in their

neighborhoods and return it completed to the Town. Ms. MacDonald added that the Girl Scouts may also be interested in learning more about the Invasive Species and tying it into a badge. Mr. Moreschi congratulated the Invasive Species Committee, Ms. Donna Ellis and the Garden Club on a fantastic event.

d. Unfinished Management Plans – 15 minutes

• Discuss Sage Meadow Plan

Mr. Symonds reviewed the draft of the Sage Meadow plan. He liked how the management areas were separated out with distinct approaches but believed an implementation schedule should be added or included as an attachment. This plan will provide an expanded template for the Commission to use in the future. Discussion took place regarding signage and its placement on the site as well as options for parking (on-street and off-street). Mr. Moreschi believed parking should be on-street and there should not be parking, a kiosk or a gate on Old Stafford Road. Mr. Symonds would like to see a simplification of the wording regarding “kiosk” to “information stand”. Mr. Symonds will telephone Joshua’s Trust to discuss the revisions and update Mr. Moreschi on its status.

e. Willimantic River Alliance – update – 2 minutes

Ms. MacDonald explained that the WRA will have a meeting on May 20, 2010 to review management plans for access to Herring Cove and will document existing public access.

f. Tolland Conservation Corps

Mr. Hankinson explained that due to the inclement weather that the previously scheduled work session was cancelled and that he plans to work at Campbell on May 22nd. Additionally, the Parciak property’s map boxes are being made and next weekend both trails (Campbell and Parciak) will be blazed. He visited the Auperin property to cap the well but this is something that may need to be revisited to ensure it is acceptable. The corrections to the Schindler/Schmidt map have been made and they will be forwarded to Ms. Murdock. By the end of June, the Parciak property should also have a map and at that time all properties will be complete. The Schindler/Schmidt and Knofla properties have dried out but both lots need gravel. Mr. Hankinson spoke to another Scout who may be interested in cleaning the brush, working on a trail/path and gathering and displaying historical information at the Stoppeworth property. The Scout is seeking approval for his project from the Boy Scouts and Mr. Hankinson will contact him to explain how to present the plan to the Conservation Commission for its approval as well.

Mr. Hankinson presented a prototype of a trail head to the Commission. It is a wood board used for display with a slanted roof and will hold a laminated map. These would be stapled to trees at each open parcel and ideally be up by the first of July. Mr. DiGenova recommended using brass screws to affix the framing around the map to the board to make future map replacement easier. Mr. Hankinson will make a prototype for the Commission’s approval

5. Old Business

Mr. Symonds commented regarding the previous Conservation Commission's discussion on cleaning the debris at the Weigold property. He spoke with Steve Lowrey and Mr. Lowrey said that it was fine to proceed.

6. New Business

- Nye-Holman State Forest Management Plan -10 minutes

Mr. Moreschi deferred this to a later time.

- Bolton Lakes ERT meeting

Mr. DiGenova and Mr. Koss explained that there was no new information at this time.

7. Adjournment

Mr. Symonds motioned that the meeting be adjourned at 9:46 p.m. and that the clerk be paid. Ms. MacDonald seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Pascuzzi
Clerk