

**CONSERVATION COMMISSION
TOLLAND, CONNECTICUT
MEETING MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 10, 2009**

1. Call to Order

A. Attendance - Seat alternate member, if necessary. The meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m. in the Council Chambers. Present were: Phil Moreschi (Chair), Lois Query (Vice-Chair), Richard Symonds, Andrew Holl and Cynthia MacDonald. Eugene Koss arrived at 7:27 p.m. Mr. Moreschi left at 8:00 p.m. Others present were: Linda Farmer, Director of Planning and Community Development and Ken Hankinson, Tolland Conservation Corps. Not in attendance was Don DiGenova.

B. Public Comment.

Dean O'Connell of Rhodes Road in Tolland was present. The Tolland Garden Club donated \$1,000 to the Tolland Conservation Commission and would like to be involved with the Commission. Most importantly it would like to see the issue of invasive plants addressed. Ms. Query requested to add this as an agenda item. Mr. Moreschi motioned to add this after item #2, Boy Scout Project and Ms. MacDonald seconded the motion; all were in favor.

2. Boy Scout Project – Invasive Plants

A scout from the Boy Scout's Troop 2 was present and spoke to the Troop's plan and success of the elimination of the barberry, multiflora rose and autumn olive and provided panoramic photos. The troop leader added that the multiflora rose and barberry were removed including their roots. He suggested cutting down any remaining stumps before the end of the year and pile them in the swampy area where they would rot and disappear. Mr. Hankinson and the troop leader will coordinate a time to cut the stumps and paint what is left behind with Round-Up when the cuts are fresh.

Ms. MacDonald inquired what, if anything, the Commission should do to facilitate the Troop's project and receipt of the badge (William Hornaday Award). The troop leader will drop off the documents to be completed at the Conservation Commission's September workshop and would like to pick up them up at the Conservation Commission's October meeting. Further he would like the Commission to start thinking about other projects. He explained that while the Troop could continue to work on invasive plants that they would also like to do something in another category (such as energy conservation, fish & wildlife, forestry management, air and water control, habitat inventory etc.). In order for the Scouts to advance to the next badge level they will need to do something in another category. Ms. Query commented on what a wonderful association the Commission could have with the Troop while the scouts work through the badges. Ms. MacDonald motioned to add 2 items to the workshop agenda: address the Troop's forms for award and discuss ideas in other categories and create a project list. Mr. Moreschi seconded the motion. Mr. Symonds motioned that Mr. Moreschi has the authority to sign the Scout's forms as well. Ms. Query seconded the motion; all were in favor.

3. Invasive Plants

Mr. Moreschi commented that indeed there is a need to inventory the invasive plants on the Conservation Commission's properties and noted the magnitude of the problem. Ms. MacDonald suggested that they start small with this project going yard by yard and starting with the schools and then expand to other neighborhoods. She agrees it is a big problem and that it needs to be addressed. Ms Query added that she too sees it everywhere and knotweed is spreading as well. She suggested getting together with other entities to form a plan to educate the Town to be on the look out for invasive plants and be proactive in their removal. Ms. Query commented that Tom Ainsworth has been involved in initially looking at this problem and that Donna Ellis is willing to spearhead and lead this project. Ms. Farmer added that the recreation department and public works should be involved in this project as well. Dean O'Connell stated that the Garden Club would like to establish a Tolland Invasive Patrol (T.I.P.) and sees the purpose of the group to act as a resource to recruit citizens to join the team.

Mr. Symonds commented that Conservation Commission has two roles: acting as an advisory board of open space issues and managing properties and if there is a problem such as invasive plants that the Commission address it and suggested creating a subcommittee. Mr. Koss continued the discussion saying that a short run objective should be to enlist the town's public works departments and have them take care of what is on their properties. Mr. Moreschi inquired as to who would be interested in being on the subcommittee and Ms. Query, Ms. MacDonald and Mr. Holl expressed interest. Mr. Holl motioned to form a subcommittee of three people to address this problem and Mr. Symonds seconded the motion. Mr. Moreschi noted that the subcommittee would need to select a chair and Mr. Koss commented that the committee needs to evaluate the threat and begin formulating a strategy. Mr. Koss is willing to work with the group on an ad hoc basis and assist with writing needs.

Ms. Farmer offered up her office for posters and other support. Mr. Symonds suggested adding a two or three minute video on invasive plants to the Tolland website and believes it will be more effective than simple photos. Ms. Farmer will check with IT on the video. Mr. Symonds motioned to vote on the formation of a subcommittee of three to address examining the issue of invasive plants, caring for the Commission's properties and evaluating issues on invasive species. All were in favor.

4. New Business

A. Update from Linda Farmer – A while back it was reported that erosion controls at the Village at Crystal Springs were not in place and silt was accumulating at the Campbell property; specifically that sediment is entering the pond and that the dam in place is not functioning. Mr. Smith will repair the problem and install a valve. Ms. Farmer will keep the Commission updated on this project's progress. Further, Ms. Farmer is waiting to hear back regarding who will be at the Commission's workshop representing Joshua's Trust. Lastly, the Town Council approved the acquisition of the Becker and Luce properties. Signage was also discussed and Ms. Farmer stated that it would not be in place for the Schindler/Schmitt opening.

B. Meeting Procedures – Mr. Symonds suggested setting time limits on items as well as asking the Commission to review the previous meeting’s minutes in advance. Further he recommends that reports to the Commission from committees be kept to five minutes each and that the agenda should then reflect new business and include setting the agenda for the upcoming Commission workshop and meeting. Discussion ensued including Mr. Holl suggesting that as an agenda item they should set the next meeting’s agenda. The Commission agreed and acknowledged that although it would be an early creation of the agenda, items could always be added and the agenda updated at the workshop. Mr. Symonds commented that the agenda does not need to be overly formulized but should provide structure and management plans should specify the property up for discussion.

C. Discussion on Agenda’s format – See 4B.

D. Schindler/Schmitt Open House – Ms. Farmer requested the final version of the flyer advertising the open house and volunteered to have it posted and get the word out about the event. Mr. Koss explained that the long version will be in the Tolland Monthly and should be included in the Journal Inquirer as well. Refreshments were briefly discussed and it was agreed that cider, cookies and brownies tend to work out well and that the Commission and Conservation Corp members historically provided the refreshments and would continue to do so.

5. Business Meeting

A. Approve minutes of August 13, 2009 – Mr. Symonds motioned to approve the minutes and Mr. Koss seconded the motion. Discussion took place that on page 2, end of the first paragraph everything after “under” be changed to state, “the Tolland Water Company is a previous name and it should be referred to as the Tolland Water Commission or descriptively the Tolland H2O system”. Further on page 1, in the second paragraph under New Business in the sixth line that “train” be corrected to “trail”. On page 4, under Management Plans that Mr. Symonds motioned to approve the Auperin plan, not Mr. Moreschi. Lastly it was clarified that the Clerk would send out the minutes to the members of the Commission. All were in favor of the motion. Ms MacDonald abstained due to her absence at the meeting.

6. Old Business

A. Tolland Conservation Corps – Mr. Hankinson stated that he will be meeting with reporter, Peter Marteka. Mr. Hankinson also wrote an article for the Tolland Monthly, October edition entitled, “Take a Hike” and distributed a copy of the article to the Commission members. He is projecting the following Fall work dates: October 10th and 24th at the Knofla property and November 7th and 21st at the Parciak property. He visited 4 properties on September 10th and did not find any problems although he would like to discourage people from leaving garbage bags on the fence for debris collection so as to encourage the public “to take out what they take in”. Mr. Hankinson also distributed a document entitled, “Tolland Conservation Corps Purchasing and Reimbursement” to the members of the Commission as well as the “Tolland Conservation Corps Expense Projections for September 2009” document. He added that he will also need an additional \$40. to cover the two gallons of Round-Up to be used to paint the stumps discussed under the Boy Scout Project – Invasive Plants and will send a recap of expenses at the end of the

month. Mr. Symonds motioned to approve the \$167 (\$147 on the “Tolland Conservation Corps Expense Projections for September 2009” document and the \$40. Round-Up purchase) requested by the Corps. Ms. MacDonald seconded the motion and all were in favor.

B. Conservation Commission website additions – Mr. Holl explained Cindy Murdock had posted the information on the Schindler/Schmitt walk and the W.R.A. (Willimantic River Alliance). Ms. Query requested a link to the Joshua’s Trust site be added and Mr. Holl responded that he will do so. Ms. MacDonald also inquired regarding having photographs on the site and will send them to Cindy Murdock in a PowerPoint presentation format. Lastly it was discussed that a link to Donna Ellis’ page be posted on the site, a page linking to invasive plants that would contain Ms. MacDonald’s articles the topic be posted and that the link for the public to provide feedback was in place.

C. Management Plans – Mr. Holl inquired as to the status of the plans and Mr. Symonds explained that Auperin is done, Sage Meadow is on hold and Knofla would be next.

7. Reports of Subcommittees

- A. Land Rating – none
- B. Land Management – none
- C. Education and Outreach – none

8. Announcements – none

9. Executive Session – none

10. Adjournment – Mr. Symonds motioned that the meeting be adjourned at 9:20 P.M and that the clerk be paid. Ms. Query seconded the motion.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Pascuzzi
Clerk