

CONSERVATION COMMISSION
TOLLAND, CONNECTICUT
MEETING MINUTES OF JANUARY 8, 2009

1. Call to Order.

- A. Lois Query called the meeting to order at 7:06p.m. in Council Chambers. Present were: Lois Query (Vice Chair), Cynthia MacDonald, Don DiGenova, and Eugene Koss. Richard Symonds arrived at 7:23p.m. and new member, Andrew Holl arrived at 8:35p.m. Absent: Phil Moreschi, Chair. Others present: Stephen Lowrey, Zoning Enforcement Officer and Wetlands Agent; and Ken Hankinson of the Conservation Corps, and members of Boy Scout Troop 2 of Tolland.
- B. Public Comment: None.

2. New Business

- A. Update – Stephen Lowrey. No update.
- B. Discussion with Boy Scouts on future projects. Scoutmaster David Grulke of Troop 2 in Tolland, along with Mark Schenher and Eric Grulke said the Troop is looking for a suitable project or group of projects that will help the troop and individual scouts in the troop to have the opportunity to receive the multi-faceted William T. Hornaday Award. This is a unit award, a badge, and silver and bronze medals that are awarded for a troop's significant contribution to conservation. He explained that the project or projects must encourage learning and increase awareness of conservation, and qualifying projects can fall into any one of eight conservation areas. They are asking the Commission to help them come up with a project idea of significant size, similar in size to an Eagle Scout project of at least 100 to 200 combined hours. Mr. Grulke said one of the Commission members would need to serve as an Advisor and the Troop will provide a youth leader and the resources to complete the project. The boy leader would receive the Hornaday badge and if the unit has at least 60 percent of their membership involved, they would qualify for the Hornaday Award. He said the Troop currently has about 58 boys from ages 11 to 18, so this would mean they would need about 35 participating to earn that award. Mr. Grulke reviewed the guidelines of the award, saying it has to serve a school, community, region, or church and the focus must be on improving the habitat or environment.

Mr. DiGenova asked how much work they were looking for. Mr. Grulke said if they have about 35 boys working on a project in about the 100 to 200 hour range, then it might mean around three hours each. However, it could be more, and even if they did not get a full 60 percent participation, they would ensure the work would get done. It would just mean those participating would put more hours into the job. Ms. Query said they may have seen the Commission's recent article in Tolland Monthly. There are three serious invasive species they are dealing with in Tolland—Japanese barberry, bittersweet, and Japanese knotweed. She said a project to try to annihilate them in some of their conservation areas would be worthwhile. She described the three species. The Japanese knotweed can grow 8' tall and they spread either underground or through the millions of tiny seeds on their branches which fall into nearby streams or get eaten and spread by

animals. She said Crandall Park is getting inundated with knotweed. She added they also have problems with multiflora rose. Ken Hankinson said they have a problem with this species especially on the Campbell property. Mr. DiGenova said it might be wise to approach Donna Ellis, a Tolland resident and UConn expert on invasive species to help them with this. He also said there might be a preferred time of year when it is best to try to eliminate these types of species and asked Mr. Grulke if he is looking at a particular time frame for a project.

Mr. Grulke said they would ideally wish to do something in the spring. However, if they need to wait until the fall, that would be acceptable. If they do need to wait until late next year, they would be interested in perhaps a second project in another of the eight categories that could be done in the spring. Ms. MacDonald asked if doing habitat inventories would meet their requirements, and Mr. Grulke said it would. He said they could even do projects for the Commission on a semi-annual basis, as it would be ideal if they could establish a working relationship with the Commission where they could serve as a resource for projects. The Troop would like to be able to offer the Hornaday badge to as many boys as possible, and as there are always new boys coming to the troop and others leaving as they get older, even if a similar project has been done before, it is often going to be new for some of the boys. The Troop, he said, is always looking for service hours. Mr. Koss said they might like to look at a particular property of theirs to see if they could find multiple categories of projects such as one inventory project, another eradication project, and still another wildlife management project. The Commission agreed to put together a list at their next workshop of potential projects and appoint an advisor at that time to the Troop. David Grulke agreed to be the contact for the Troop.

- C. Finalize permit process and article. Mr. Symonds said the permit process went to the Town for format changes. He said Cindy Murdock would like to have an adder on the permit if the event has been advertised. Ms. MacDonald said Mr. Moreschi added some comments to the article she put together for Tolland Monthly and she will submit this to Linda Farmer.
- D. Management Plans to go to Town Council. Mr. Lowrey provided handouts of maps. He noted that Andrew Holl was appointed as a new member to the Commission. Mr. Lowrey said the Parsiac property trail layout should be part of the Management Plan. He said as they acquire more properties, they will get more linkages, so that by the time they get to the Knofla property, they can do a separate map showing all the linkages there. Mr. Symonds suggested they have footers with revision dates put on the drawings. Mr. Lowrey said it will take some time to get a Management Plan together for the Schindler-Schmidt property. He said besides trails and places of interest, they also need to consider the use of the property by Boy Scout troops.

Mr. Symonds said the Campbell, Stoppelworth, and King properties' management plans have all been approved by the Town Council. He said Shaffron, Weigold and Parsiac all are due for movement to the Council. They did not go forward earlier because they were awaiting maps. Ms. MacDonald noted that Parsiac was adopted on October 9, 2008; Shaffron was adopted on October 23, 2008; and Weigold was adopted on November 13, 2008.

Mr. Symonds said on the last three or four plans they added another section to the boiler plate. They added a request for group use. It fell under Use Restrictions and the Commission is to be notified of proposed organized group functions.

On the November 17 dated Schindler-Schmidt plan, Ms. MacDonald recommended adding under potential uses, another bullet stating “Other uses require special permission of the Tolland Conservation Commission.” There was some discussion about grandfathering some uses. Ms. MacDonald said she would rather not grandfather any uses now that the Town is the new property owner. Mr. DiGenova agreed saying that this new bullet will allow the Commission some discretion whether to allow a particular use when it is requested.

Ms. MacDonald said the working draft for the Schindler-Schmidt plan has some typographical errors. She also would like to change the photograph on the plan to one that does not include a vehicle. She would like to add a “Leave No Trace” bullet to this plan. Additionally, in the Management Objectives, the “field area” should be changed to “stone circular area.” Ms. MacDonald said she also added the bullets: habitat inventory, request to use form, and adjacent open space location map. Under Management Objectives, she recommends changing the wording to “pursues” education documentation. Mr. Symonds suggested Ms. MacDonald give the corrected draft to Mr. Lowrey and then Mr. Symonds will later check back on it. Ms. Query said she prefers to see the town signs on the front of the plans but noted that they don’t have all of them yet to use. Mr. Symonds said he has talked to Clem (from Public Works) and signage is in the works. The placards are on order. Mr. Hankinson said his group can hang them when the signs come in.

Mr. Lowrey asked if anyone has the word version of the Management Plan on the Campbell property. He said Cindy Murdock only has the .pdf version. Mr. Symonds said he may have this and will check and get it to her if he does.

Mr. Symonds said there is not much review done yet on the Palmer plan. They have only done the first cut working off the template. He said they need to flesh out both the Palmer and Auperin properties. Ms. MacDonald said they need to put together some kind of proposed trail and rework some of the verbiage. Mr. Hankinson said he has walked the Palmer property five times and that Jackie Ricci has agreed to serve as a steward of the property. He said it is a tough piece of property with one logging road. He said with Schindler-Schmidt and Parsiac coming on board, he recommends that they not entertain a trail system on Palmer at this time, but rather leave it as open space or a wildlife preserve. He said it would take a tremendous amount of work to make it accessible, while they could do the Parsiac and Schindler-Schmidt properties through spring and fall this year. Mr. Symonds said it would behoove them to put together a plan, but they can always delay in implementing the plan right away. Ms. Query said the property was logged years ago and so it is a disturbed site.

Ms. Query discussed the Sage Meadow property and its potential for a handicap accessible area with a picnic site. Mr. Symonds also noted the Palmer property has a cellar hole which has generated some interest due to an historical article put together by Barbara Palmer.

New member Andrew Holl arrived at the meeting and introductions were made. Ms. Query brought him up to speed on the discussions so far this evening. Mr. Holl provided his email to the Commission: aholl@travelers.com

Further discussion on management plans was suggested to be tabled until their next workshop. Ms. Query suggested they could track some changes via email between them, then discuss these changes at the workshop. Those changes will be sent to Mr. Symonds. Symonds/Koss motion to table further discussion until the workshop. Motion was unanimously approved. Symonds/Koss motion to amend the motion to also look at the Schindler-Schmidt plan once more at that time after the changes have been made. Amended motion was unanimously approved.

3. Business Meeting.

A. Approve minutes of December 11, 2008 meeting. Symonds/MacDonald motion to accept the meeting minutes. Discussion: Ms. MacDonald said on Page 2, the Scouts camping discussion should also note that the Scouts have alternatives at June Norcross Camp in Ashford. She said there is a typographical error on Page 3 in Item C, 4th paragraph—there is an extra word “had” that needs to be removed. Also, on Page 4 in Item B, the Knofla property was not discussed as a priority and should be removed. On Page 5, Item 6 in the discussion on the Willimantic River Alliance, where it was written the oil spill in the area of Ruby Lake could become a problem, it should be expanded to say: “That could become a problem for the aquifer area and should be monitored.” The last sentence in this paragraph can be removed. Lastly in Item 8, Adjournment, the motion cannot be seconded by the Chair. The second on this motion was changed to Ms. MacDonald. Symonds/MacDonald motion to approve the minutes as amended. Motion was unanimously approved.

4. Old Business

A. Tolland Conservation Corps. Ken Hankinson said they held a walk on December 13, and despite the cold, 22 people attended. Since then they have been back to doing some additional flagging and cleaning. He said the Corps is expecting 35 to 50 people for a full moon hike on Saturday, February 9 at 8:00pm at the Campbell area parking lot. This did not make it into the Tolland Monthly magazine. Ms. MacDonald said she thought his email said people were to meet at the Stoppelworth parking lot. Mr. Hankinson said he will recheck his email and if he put Stoppelworth, then they will meet there. He said presently they are working on putting together a summary of what was accomplished last year and will be meeting with stewards shortly to make plans for work in the spring.

5. Reports of Subcommittees

A. Land Rating: None.

B. Land Management. None.

C. Education and Outreach. The Commission discussed that the Boy Scout projects will be a good education and outreach opportunity. They discussed other potential properties for boy scout projects including open space off Goose Lane and Buff Cap Road and that they should put them on the list put together at the next work shop. They reiterated that they will try to get input from Donna Ellis. Mr. Hankinson said he will plan to attend this meeting and in the meantime touch base with the property stewards to see if they can put forward any ideas that would fall in one of the eight categories of the Hornaday Award.

6. Adjournment. Symonds/Koss motion to adjourn the meeting and pay the clerk at 9:18p.m. Motion was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Annie Gentile
Clerk (substitute)