

**CONSERVATION COMMISSION
TOLLAND, CONNECTICUT
MEETING MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 12, 2009**

1. Call to Order

A. Attendance - Seat alternate member, if necessary. The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m. in the Council Chambers. Present were: Phil Moreschi (Chair) Lois Query, (Vice-Chair), Cynthia MacDonald, Don DiGenova, (Secretary) and Richard Symonds. Andrew Holl arrived at 7:11 p.m. and Eugene Koss arrived at 7:55 p.m. Others present were: Ken Hankinson of the Tolland Conservation Corps, Linda Farmer, Director of Planning & Community Development, and Scoutmaster of Troop 2 in Tolland.

B. Public Comment. – Scoutmaster from Troup 2 briefly reviewed the previous meeting's discussion regarding the Troop's wishes to establish an ongoing relationship with the Tolland Conservation Commission to assist with species management, erosion prevention and water quality control. The Commission returned 5 possible projects to the Troop. The discussion of the removal of the multiflora rose and the Japanese barberry from Crandall Park and the Campbell property ensued. The scoutmaster believed it would not be difficult to identify these species although their removal could prove difficult due to the thorns on the plants although properly outfitted the Scouts would be able to do so. Further, the parcel that would be done isn't along the road and overall it is a doable project. In total, there are 58 boy scouts, 50 of which are active and 60% participation would be required to qualify for the troop award. The troop master will work closely with the scout in planning and execution and this project would need to begin in the Spring and it will definitely be completed. Ideally the Scouts would return at some later point to do a similar nature project.

Ms. Query expressed some concern regarding the Scouts' needs for the appropriate clothing and equipment. Further she would not want to see the young men begin the project and become discouraged due to the difficult nature of removing the plants. Ms. Farmer had some questions as to how the Scouts would rid the area of the plants. The Japanese barberry would be able to be pulled out however the multiflora would require significantly more effort. Ms Query offered that this would be done with the use of rakes to lift the plant and then root could be removed. A weed root wrench may also be used – the wrench wraps around the collar of the root system to ease the root ball out. Mr. Hankinson offered that once the area could be treated with an herbicide once the plants were removed and that eventually without sun the plants would eventually die and not return. The older Scouts would be able to cut down the larger plants while the younger ones could drag the material away. Mr. Moreschi questioned if a chainsaw would need to be used and if the brush would then be burned. Mr. Hankinson said that only hand saws would be used, the brush would be allowed to dry out over the summer and then burned in the Fall. Mr. Moreschi also inquired if the area would then need to have the plants replaced however Mr. Hankinson stated the natural vegetation would return to which Mr. Moreschi commented that this would be a several year project. Mr. DiGenova suggested that before and after pictures suitable for the Tolland Monthly be taken showing the piles of weeds and the Troop should wait until the ground thaws in April. The Scoutmaster stated he will work with Mr. Hankinson as well as the other leaders and the boys to survey the site, determine an appropriate strategy and will return

with a plan in March 2009. Ms. Query added that gloves for the Scouts could be purchased inexpensively at the Christmas Tree Shoppe in the Spring. Mr. Symonds agreed that the project should move forward and the Scoutmaster will return in March 2009. Ms. Query will find out more about the weed wrench.

2. New Business

A. Update – Linda Farmer – Welcome newest member Andrew Holl.

B. Management Plans to go to Town Council. – Ms. Farmer says that management plans are all “almost” there and directed all to see their packets. Three have been approved, 3 adopted and ready to go to Town Council. The Shafran, Weigold, and Parciak were approved in Fall '08 and the Schindler/Schmidt property granted permission to the boy scouts to camp on the site. Whether the Conservation Commission has the authority to allow the scouts to have a campfire will be brought to the Council on February 24th. Currently this is a vague area.

Regarding the Schindler/Schmidt Conservation Area, the owner's names have been corrected and the pictures were deleted so a new picture can be used on the cover. Mr. Symonds added that Ms. Murdock has agreed to maintain and keep the files on her computer (network) so as changes are made they can be given to her and the files updated. Further, once adopted the plans should go on the website so anyone can view them. Mr. DiGenova questioned if there are back-up copies available and/or how often the network was backed-up. This concern was addressed by Ms. Farmer who said that back-ups did occur regularly.

Further discussion of the Schindler/Schmidt Conservation Area management plan took place. Ms. Farmer did not believe the 12 page Conservation Easement is needed to be attached to the plan. Mr. Moreschi stated that it is given a volume and a page and Mr. Symonds added that when approved it would be referenced. Ms. Query asked if there was a reason for no page numbers on the plans and Ms. Farmer noted that they could be added. Mr. Symonds also noted that if the space needs forest management practices then that should be something to cover that. Ms. MacDonald responded that that is why the Best Management Practices were in place, these practices may vary by property. Other items to note, on the last page of the Area's report the “Conservation easement” should be deleted and on page 2 add “conservation easement is on file in the land management office”, a “p” should be added to the last bullet point's “location ma”, the TCCRTU form #1 should remove the form number, and on page 2 the caption under the second picture should read “Rock Ledge Area”. Listed under attachments, to the right of the second bullet “Proposed trail map” the following should be added in parenthesis “(existing trails to be prioritized, map under development)”. Lastly it was discussed that maps should be dated and include the name and north arrow.

Mr. Symonds motioned to approve the four plans (Schindler/Schmidt, Parciak, Shafran, Weigold) with pagination and references. This was seconded by Mr. DiGenova. Ms. Query noted that the Parciak Conservation Area plan has different verbiage and Ms. Farmer stated this would be changed and the correct form required will be added.

Ms. Farmer noted that this will go to Council on February 24, 2009 and the agenda will be sent to the Conservation Commission and further asked who would be there. Mr. Symonds responded that he would be present.

- C. Finalize permit process and article. - Completed
- D. Conservation Commission website additions. – Ms. Farmer informed the group that there is now an area on the website for the Conservation Commission. The agenda and minutes will appear here as well as anything else the Commission would like to add such as brochures etc. Ms. MacDonald suggested that the Request for Use form be added to the site and Ms. Farmer agreed. Mr. Holl also requested that his name be added to the site in place of the “vacant” information currently listed on the site.

The Watershed Management Plan for the Tankerhoosen River was then discussed. Mr. Moreschi requested that someone attend the meeting on February 26th and Ms. Farmer stated that she did attend an earlier meeting to discuss Tolland’s Low Impact Development Regulations and planned to attend this meeting. Mr. Moreschi then gave her a copy of the announcements and Ms Farmer agreed to put it on the Planning & Zoning Commission agenda to get the letter of endorsement. Mr. Moreschi further suggested that water sampling be done since the watershed is very high on the priority list to maintain a healthy brook trout population. Ms. Query added that catch-and-release should be maintained as well. Ms. Farmer said notices would be provided to the Wetlands and Planning/Zoning commissions. Mr. Holl questioned what the objective was of this and Mr. Moreschi replied it was to identify the health of the area as well as to protect its physical and chemical characteristics.

Mr. Moreschi went on to express concern regarding the fiscal Impact analysis Booklet from the Plan of conservation and Development update that states open space has a negative impact on the tax base and its reliance on taxpayers’ dollars. Ms. Farmer explained it needs to be looked at differently since it’s not developed and is a parcel of open space yet still requires roads etc. Mr. Moreschi commented that indeed services need to be provided by at a lower level and that there should be some way to distinguish between active and passive open spaces’ costs. Ms. MacDonald asked if a cost could be put on this project and Ms. Farmer replied that on March 4th the phone survey results would be available. Mr. Moreschi added that on page 3 the total revenue etc is available and he will email it to Heidi. Ms. Query felt it was misleading without all of the information and Ms. Farmer agreed. Mr. Symonds added that some of the information was not received by Cindy Murdock and recommended that everyone check their email lists to ensure she is included (cmurdock@tolland.org). Ms. Farmer added if you email Steve or Cindy, please cc her as well. Ms. Farmer left the meeting at 8:41P.M.

3. Business Meeting

- A. Approve minutes of January 8, 2009 - Symonds/DiGenova motion to accept the meeting minutes. Discussion: Mr. Symonds noted that Parciak had been misspelled as Parciac in the notes, in 2C, line 2 Cindy Murdock should be Cindy MacDonald and proposed removing the last 2 sentences of 2D. Ms. Farmer added that in the second paragraph of 2D, last sentence should read “...Parsiak was adopted by the commission on October 9, 2008;” Further, Ms Farmer added in the 7th paragraph of 2D that it should read “proposed trail map” and that in the last line of the same paragraph the “property” should specifically state, “Auperin property”.

4. Old Business

- A. Tolland Conservation Corps – Mr. Hankinson spoke of a successful Moonlight Hike with 19 people in attendance including the Willington and Bolton Conservation Corps. Mr. Holl was interested in what the other Corps was doing and Mr. Symonds asked for their reaction to the Moonlight Hike. Mr. Hankinson said they were very impressed, particularly that Tolland received the grants and in how the task was accomplished. He put forth the tentative Spring dates of: 3/31, 4/11, 4/25, 5/9 & 5/23. All dates are on Saturdays and although 5/23 is on a holiday weekend it is a possible backup date if inclement weather prohibits a previous event from taking place.
- B. Management Plans - Mr. Hankinson said the current emphasis is on the Schindler/Schmidt Conservation Area and that its completion would take 3 sessions. During the 3 sessions, two bridges would be completed and proposed a June 2009 opening could occur. The other properties being considered for the final 2 sessions are: the John & Mary Parciak Conservation Area and the King Riverside Conservation Area. The options are to complete Schindler/Schmidt Conservation area in 3 sessions and the John & Mary Parciak Conservation Area in 2 sessions and possibly complete the project or to use the 2 sessions to complete the King Riverside Conservation Area in full and leave the John & Mary Parciak Conservation Area for Fall 2009. Mr. Moreschi stated that he would prefer to see the King Riverside Area completed before the Parciak Area. Ms. Query added that King would indeed be beautiful for Spring walks.

Mr. Symonds inquired if there had been recent ATV use on the property. Ms. MacDonald answered that indeed there had been activity as recently as Fall 2008 and that snowmobile treads were visible this winter. Additionally, there have been single tracks as though a trail or motor bike had used the site as well. Mr. Holl inquired about signage on the property prohibiting this type of use and Mr. Hankinson replied that there was “the” blue sign as well as a sign on the fence stating “no motorized vehicles”. Mr. Holl proposed that additional signage may be helpful and Mr. Hankinson agreed.

Mr. Hankinson made the announcement that the Joshua Trust is interested in having someone from Tolland to be a trustee (4 year term).

5. Reports of Subcommittees

- A. Land Rating - None
B. Land Management - None
C. Education and Outreach - None

6. Announcements - Mr. Moreschi congratulated Ms. MacDonald on a well-done, attention-getting Tolland Monthly Article.

7. Executive Session - None

8. Adjournment - Symonds/Query motion to adjourn the meeting and pay the clerk at 9:28 p.m. Motion was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Pascuzzi
Clerk