

**CONSERVATION COMMISSION
TOLLAND, CONNECTICUT
MEETING MINUTES OF MARCH 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), Richard Symonds and Andrew Holl. Eugene Koss arrived at 7:25 p.m. Others present were: Ken Hankinson of the Tolland Conservation Corps as well as the Scoutmaster and a Scout from Troop 2 in Tolland.

Mr. Moreschi invited the addition of any agenda items and Mr. DiGenova stated he would like to add a section "D" under part 4, Old Business. The addition should be "D. ERT (Environmental Review Team)". This request was accepted and the line added to the agenda.

B. Public Comment. – The Scout from Troup 2 noted that he went with Mr. Hankinson and Mr. Hebner to check the multiflora rose that the Troop would be removing as part of its project. This project was discussed in the previous two Conservation Commission meetings. For the next meeting the Scout will provide a written summary of who will participate in the project and how the multiflora rose will be removed. The Troop is projecting the dates of April 13th (Easter Monday), April 25th and May 23rd since it needs to complete its conservation project prior to traveling to New Mexico for week-long Scout activities during summer 2009.

Mr. DiGenova asked how many of the Troop had gone to the location and for its overall thoughts. The Scout replied that 5 members visited the site and believed it was a do-able project. A smaller crew would work on April 13th for 7 hours and then for the May 23rd date a large group (36 participants which is 60% of the Troop) would continue the project. Ms. MacDonald inquired as what time the boys would work on the project and if pictures could be taken for before/after descriptions and information. The Scout replied the crew would be there for the full 7 hours and that photography would be welcome. Ms. Query asked what the plans were if it were to rain on the dates and the Troop stated the project would be performed on these specified dates regardless of the weather.

Mr. Hankinson commented that some areas would be more manageable than others and that the Scouts wouldn't be able to remove all of the multiflora rose but the project will be a good starting point in the invasive plant's removal. Further, it is still being discussed where the debris piles would be placed to be later burnt, conditions permitting. Further details will be provided at the next meeting.

2. New Business

- A. Update – Linda Farmer – Mr. Symonds stated he had notes from Ms. Farmer who would not be in attendance this evening. Ms. Farmer received the Scout's request to use the Schindler/Schmidt property and reiterated that Mr. John Littell, the fire chief, wishes to know when the Scouts will be on the property. Further, Ms. Murdock has the management plans with their status on her computer and will maintain the 4 plans that were approved. Mr. Symonds also distributed "The Habitat" Winter 2009, Volume 21, Number 1 for Ms. Farmer to all on the Commission.
- B. Discuss June workshop with Diane Ellis – (correct name to Donna Ellis) Ms. MacDonald stated there would be an announcement in the May Tolland Monthly advertising the June 13th seminar (9-11AM) on invasive species. The announcement was discussed in detail. Ms. MacDonald reminded the group that since it will be held at the Lodge there is a maximum of 100 participants. Ms. Query suggested that the announcement also be on the Conservation Commission website. Mr. Symonds indicated that if it was written up and sent to Kate Whittaker that she would put it on the site – the management plans, minutes and agendas are also there and a copy of the article could be posted as well if it was provided to her in electronic format. Mr. Moreschi suggested that people should call in to register for the seminar for the purpose of having sufficient refreshments and handouts available. Mr. Koss recommended that registrants leave their name and number as part of the reservation process.
- C. Conservation Commission website additions. – Discussion ensued as to whether Management Plans were posted to the website before or after Council approval. Mr. Koss believed it should be posted once approved while Mr. Symonds believed they should be posted prior to approval to garner public input. Mr. Koss felt there were opportunities for the public to weigh in prior to the time the plans would be posted to the website. Ms. MacDonald added that some of the properties may not yet be ready for public use and that in some instances the habitat was not yet known. Mr. Symonds commented that there should be an article describing what the management plans are, the process of approving the plans and a list of what properties are accessible to the public. The Commission then discussed the possibility of putting maps with trails higher up on the webpage for those properties open to the public and listing the other properties with their tentative opening dates. The posting of the upcoming Workshop was also discussed and Ms. MacDonald suggested it be listed first on the page.

3. Business Meeting

- A. Approve minutes of February 12, 2009 - Discussion: Section 1A should be indented to match up with the remainder of the minutes' format. Under 2B, in line 4 after "approved in Fall '08" the following should be added, "by the Tolland Conservation Commission". Also under 2B, in line 6 "a campfire" should be deleted and "use of property" inserted. Under 2D, paragraph 2, line 7 "suggested that water sampling be done" should be changed to "water sampling has been done". Under 2D, paragraph 2, line 11 should read, "...health of the river drainage area as well as to protect the physical and chemical characteristics of the Tankerhoosen River". Under 2D, paragraph 3, line 2 "conservation" should be capitalized and "by" should be "but" in line 6. In the same paragraph, beginning in line 7 the following should be deleted: "Ms. MacDonald asked if a cost could be put on this project and". Ms. Query added that the notes should be paginated.

Further, Mr. Symonds indicated that Jason Szemrelylo would like to be removed from the email distribution list and that Lisa Pascuzzi (lisap814@aol.com) should be added.

4. Old Business

- A. Tolland Conservation Corps – Mr. Hankinson summarized that the current focus is on Spring 2009 with 2 sessions to be performed at Schindler/Schmidt and 2 sessions at the King properties. Mr. Hankinson and a group from the AARP would be at the Shafran property on March 13th to assess and address tree limb damage from the most recent storm.

New stewards have been picked up including one for the Palmer property and the steward base is rather well covered however since people do come and go that this year a focus would be on having backups.

Mr. Hankinson attended the Town Council meeting and said the plans were unanimously approved with few questions. One question concerned if there was an appeal process if for some reason a request to use a property was denied. Mr. Koss added that the Council was confident that the Conservation Commission had a good handle on the management plans and agreed that an appeal process was needed. The Conservation Commission wants the public to use the property and if for some reason a request could not be approved that an alternate time or day could be provided in the event of 2 groups wishing to use the property at the same time.

Mr. Holl asked Mr. Hankinson if there was anything pressing that should be addressed including resources. Mr. Hankinson explained they still have some resources but by the end of Spring 2009 will probably be out of wood – they need to build map boxes and will need nail, paint, brushes etc. Mr. Moreschi asked if Mr. Hankinson could provide a budget of what was needed not only in the near future but in 2010. Mr. Hankinson will provide an inventory and a list of what will be needed to get other properties up to speed as well as an awareness of what would be needed in the future to maintain 500 acres. He will be able to project this for 2010 using information from 2008 once the Knofla and Parciak properties are board and will extrapolate however it is also based on the number of new properties to be brought on board in the future. Mr. Symonds stated that the lack of money in the budget was partially the Conservation Commission's fault – it had not spent enough in the past although Ms. Query added that the Commission did not have all of the properties at the time. Mr. Moreschi added that they had purchased a camera and a GPS unit but that the Commission didn't spend all of the money. Mr. Hankinson added that it would be most ideal to get a professional recommendation on forest management and the overall health of the properties in the future. Mr. Moreschi further added that the value of all donated materials should also be tallied along with a description of how they benefited the Town to increase public awareness. Mr. Koss added that when times are good, many donations are made and the town has done well but the Conservation Commission may need to ask for resources. Mr. Hankinson added that the assets are worth \$4.5M and that they needed to be maintained (albeit a small expense, an expense). Mr. DiGenova added that a dollar amount should be put on the donations.

- B. Boy Scout Project - discussed during Public Comment

- C. Management Plans - Mr. Hankinson stated that the following were work days (3/28, 4/11 and 4/25) and that Richard Audet, the current steward of the Campbell Property would become the steward of the Knofla property. It was also discussed that the Conservation Commission would walk the Knofla property on April 4th at 9:00 AM and that they would meet on Bakos Road. The Conservation Commission will walk the Auperin property on April 18th at 9:00AM and meet at the Weigold lot.

- D. ERT – Mr. DiGenova attended a meeting on March 11th and commented that there are plans for an environmental review team to look at Bolton Lakes during the day on either April 22nd or April 29th (tentative dates). This team of 10 people including scientists and local folks would do a drive around of the lakes to see the state of affairs and needs to know where the team can access the Lake from Tolland. (The team will not go into the water). It was determined that it could be accessed via Cedar Swamp Road. Mr. DiGenova added that a letter of permission would need to be completed prior to the ERT visit.

Lastly Mr. Koss added that at the Council Meeting it was requested that the Conservation Commission look at its charge – it is not necessary to do so immediately but it should be put on the list for review. No deadline was given.

5. Reports of Subcommittees

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

- E. Announcements - None

- F. Executive Session - None

- G. Adjournment - Symonds/MacDonald motioned to adjourn the meeting and pay the clerk at 9:15 p.m. Motion was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Pascuzzi
Clerk