



STATE OF CONNECTICUT – COUNTY OF TOLLAND
INCORPORATED 1786

TOWN OF ELLINGTON

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**CONSERVATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, MAY 7, 2019, 7:00 PM
TOWN HALL ANNEX, 57 MAIN STREET, ELLINGTON, CT**

PRESENT: Chairman Rebecca Quarno, Regular Members Sean Dwyer, Robert Zielfelder and George Nickerson, and Alternate Ann Harford

ABSENT: Vice Chairman David Bidwell, Regular Member James Gage, and Alternate Laurie Burstein

STAFF: Lisa Houlihan, Town Planner and Samantha Getchell, Recording Clerk

I. CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Rebecca Quarno called the Conservation Commission meeting to order at 7:03 PM at the Ellington Town Hall Annex, 57 Main Street, Ellington, CT.

II. PUBLIC COMMENTS (On Non-Agenda Items): Tom Palshaw, 120 Pinney Street, was present to talk about the Hockanum River Committee. Mr. Palshaw reported that there are trees that have fallen across the Hockanum River that are now causing blockages. He is concerned about the portion of the river between Windermere and the suspension bridge. The Hockanum River Committee is interested in getting permission to clear the blockages from the river. They need permission from Ellington administration and property owners. The plan is to take a flat bottom skiff along the river and clear the obstructions. Mr. Palshaw would like to clear the waterways for kayakers like himself.

Mr. Palshaw is also concerned about the town's liability with volunteers working on private property. Ms. Houlihan reported the liability policy covers volunteers and the Hockanum trails. With regards to clearing the trees and seeking permission to use power equipment, Ms. Houlihan suggested the issue be brought to the First Selectman and Public Works Department. She suggested the committee provide details about the blockages and the plans to clear them.

III. ACTIVE BUSINESS:

1. Determination of open space for a 3.70 acre parcel for a two lot subdivision, 180 Mountain Street, APN 048-001-0001, Rural/Agricultural Residential (RAR) Zone, JSJ Properties, LLC, owner/applicant

Rachel Dearborn from Landmark Surveys, LLC was present to review an open space proposal for a parcel of land available for a 2 lot residential subdivision. Ms. Dearborn confirmed they are proposing a fee-in-lieu-of land set-aside. Ms. Dearborn confirmed the parcel is completely vacant at the moment.

MOVED (HARFORD) SECONDED (DWYER) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO RECOMMEND TO PLANNING AND ZONING A FEE-IN-LIEU-OF LAND SET-ASIDE TO MEET OPEN SPACE REQUIREMENTS ASSOCIATED WITH A 3.70 ACRE PARCEL

FOR A TWO LOT SUBDIVISION, 180 MOUNTAIN STREET, APN 048-001-0001, RURAL/AGRICULTURAL RESIDENTIAL (RAR) ZONE, JSJ PROPERTIES, LLC, OWNER/APPLICANT.

2. Sustainable Ellington Initiative

a. 2.5 Create a Natural Resource and Wildlife Inventory

- Building a Natural Resources Inventory (April 2, 2019) Power Point
- Natural Diversity Data Base Areas for Ellington, CT, December 2018

Ms. Houlihan presented a copy of the presentation conducted by UCONN last meeting and available for the commission in their agenda packet. The agenda packet also included a map of the natural diversity data base of Ellington, showing possible areas of endangered wildlife and vegetation.

Chairman Quarno reported the next step would be to establish an action plan to create a natural resource inventory. Ms. Houlihan reported she has seen examples of other town's wildlife inventories ranging from packets of 105 plus pages to basic informational packets. The more generalized ones break down areas and geology of the town. Ms. Houlihan recommended to the commission that they work on the project at upcoming meetings and she'll organize their work into a format presentable for Sustainable CT. The commission concluded to do a working session next meeting to start to identify key pieces and create an outline for creating an inventory.

b. 2.7 Provide Education on Water Conservation

- CT Water Company Letter dated March 27, 2019 and Inspection FAQ
- Connecticut Water - Clean Water and Your Health

Ms. Houlihan presented a letter from Connecticut Water Company sent to property owners who have watershed on their land notifying them that Connecticut Water will be inspecting their properties. Ms. Houlihan provided the commission with an informative packet from Connecticut Water used for educational purposes. Chairman Quarno suggested the commission have a booth at the next town Earth Day event to showcase initiatives like water conservation.

Ms. Houlihan reported there is a newsletter scheduled to go out in August that the commission can make the deadline for. Chairman Quarno confirmed that at the next meeting the commission can go over some things to add to the August town newsletter. Chairman Quarno confirmed part of the discussion could be to educate the town on alternatives to using less water in the dry months of summer. The commission confirmed the more information they have the better they can readily educate town residents. The commission will talk to Vice Chairman David Bidwell at the next meeting to come up with something for the August newsletter.

3. Update – Ellington Hockanum River Committee: Harford/Nickerson – Leads

a. Ad Hoc Ellington Trails Committee – Monthly agenda/minutes

Commissioner Harford reported two benches were put in behind the pond near the industrial park area of the trail. Knotweed is already being eradicated from the trails. Ms. Harford reported there are two properties that were under water from the river flooding for 2 weeks, and the river beyond Windermere has broken

through a walkway created by the committee. The committee is waiting for the river to slow down and lower from all the rain and flooding.

4. Report - Working Farmland Preservation Program: Gage/Staff – Leads

Nothing to report on this item.

5. Report - Open Space Preservation Program: Gage – Lead

Ms. Houlihan reported she met with Jim Gage, Conservation Commissioner and Pam Moriarty, Realtor, about the 57 acre parcel of land owned by Arens on Route 83. The parcel is surrounded by state forest. Mr. Arens is selling his land holdings and is interested in selling the property as town open space. The first two appraisals were well below Mr. Arens' asking price, but he is now willing to take the lower of the two appraised values. Ms. Houlihan confirmed that the proposal will be presented to the Board of Selectmen (BOS) on Monday, May 13, 2019, and encouraged commissioners to attend the meeting to show support. Ms. Houlihan will provide the commission with a BOS meeting agenda.

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS:

1. FY18-19 Budget Expenditure Update
Ms. Harford reported the Hockanum River Committee bought waders and submitted information to the Finance Department.
2. Approval of the March 5, 2019 and April 2, 2019 regular meeting minutes
MOVED (HARFORD) SECONDED (ZIELFELDER) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE THE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF MARCH 5, 2019 AND APRIL 2, 2019 AS WRITTEN.
3. Correspondence:
 - a. Landmark Newsletter of the Northern CT Land Trust – March 2019

V. ADJOURNMENT:

MOVED (HARFORD) SECONDED (DWYER) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADJOURN THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEETING AT (8:00) PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Samantha Getchell, Recording Clerk