



STATE OF CONNECTICUT – COUNTY OF TOLLAND
INCORPORATED 1786

TOWN OF ELLINGTON

55 MAIN STREET – PO BOX 187
ELLINGTON, CONNECTICUT 06029-0187
www.ellington-ct.gov

Tel. 860-870-3120 Town Planner's Office Fax. 860-870-3122

**CONSERVATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, JUNE 4, 2019, 7:00 PM
TOWN HALL ANNEX, 57 MAIN STREET, ELLINGTON, CT**

PRESENT: Chairman Rebecca Quarno, Regular Members James Gage, Sean Dwyer and George Nickerson

ABSENT: Vice Chairman David Bidwell, Regular Member Robert Zielfelder, and Alternates Ann Harford and 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 7:04PM at the Ellington Town Hall Annex, 57 Main Street, and 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 the blockages along the river in Ellington have cleared themselves, and volunteers repositioned a walkway and anchored it with steel supports. Commissioner Ann Harford called him to report seeing a beaver in the Hockanum River. Volunteers are actively mowing West Road trails and working to eradicate knotweed.

III. ACTIVE BUSINESS:

1. Sustainable Ellington Initiative
 - a. 2.5 Create a Natural Resource and Wildlife Inventory

Ms. Houlihan referred to last month's meeting and the informational packet previously provided for natural resource inventories. She suggested the commission draft an outline identifying key areas to be part of an inventory. She referred to the format of the Meriden Wildlife Inventory and confirmed that she'll email a copy of it to the commission. Commissioners agreed to hold a working session next month to start creating an outline. Chairman Quarno asked that a projector and computer be set-up for the next meeting.

NO MOTIONS OR DECISIONS

- b. 2.7 Provide Education on Water Conservation

No information has been received from Vice Chairman Bidwell. Chairman Quarno referred to last month's discussion about having a booth at Ellington's Earth Day or the Farmers' Market regarding water conservation techniques and awareness of other conservation initiatives. Chairman Quarno will reach out to Vice Chairman Bidwell to see if he has any information to share. Ms. Houlihan will ask the Connecticut Water

Company if they are interested in partnering with the commission to man an educational water conservation booth in the future.

NO MOTIONS OR DECISIONS

2. Update – Ellington Hockanum River Committee: Harford/Nickerson – Leads
 - a. Ad Hoc Ellington Trails Committee – Monthly agenda/minutes

Report was given under public comments. **NO MOTIONS OR DECISIONS**

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

Ms. Houlihan reported there is no update with the Oakridge Dairy farmland preservation application. She explained the status of the methane digester for Oakridge Dairy, and summarized the content of a meeting she attended with the First Selectman, Seth Bahler of Oakridge, Commissioners and staff from the Departments of Agriculture and Energy and Environmental Protection, representatives from the Public Utility Regulatory Authority, a representative from Eversource, Senator Anwar and his staff, and funding partners for clean energy projects for agriculture. It's possible that legislation may pass to allow methane digesters on farms that create animal waste on their property.

Ms. Houlihan reported the Right to Farm Ordinance was approved by the Ordinance Committee and will be bundled with other ordinances and set for vote at Town Meeting.

NO MOTIONS OR DECISIONS

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

Commissioner Gage reported on the Board of Selectmen meeting on May 13, 2019, for the review the Arens open space proposal. The Board tabled action and is expected to review it again at the next meeting on June 10, 2019. The Board expressed concern with gunfire from hunting on state land which surrounds the Arens property.

Since the meeting with the Board, the listing price has been reduced to \$269,900 and the reduced price shared with the First Selectman. The funds in the open space account can only be spent on open space preservation. Ms. Houlihan and Commissioner Gage felt the First Selectman supports the purchase of the property.

Chairman Quarno wondered if the commission should contact the Trails Committee to seek their support and attendance at the Board meeting. Ms. Houlihan reported the Board will likely discuss the Arens proposal under executive session.

Ms. Houlihan presented the information she provided to the Board in May. Ms. Houlihan confirmed that she will forward a copy of the Board's agenda when it's finalized.

NO MOTIONS OR DECISIONS

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS:

1. FY18-19 Budget Expenditure Update

Ms. Houlihan reported half of the commission's budget has been spent, and the new budget goes into place July 1, 2019. She reviewed past donation amounts and sources and reported there is \$1600 left to donate. Funds can be encumbered from the printing budget for the Farmers' Market event. The commission came to a consensus to encumber \$350 and donate the rest.

MOVED (DWYER) SECONDED (GAGE) AND PASSED (3 YES, 0 NAY, 1 ABSTENTION - NICKERSON) TO APPROVE DONATION OF \$430.00 TO THE ELLINGTON HOCKANUM RIVER TRAIL SUBCOMMITTEE.

MOVED (DWYER) SECONDED (NICKERSON) AND PASSED (3 YES, 0 NAY, 1 ABSTENTION - GAGE) TO APPROVE DONATION OF \$430.00 TO THE NORTHERN CONNECTICUT LAND TRUST.

MOVED (DWYER) SECONDED (GAGE) AND PASSED (UNANIMOUSLY) TO APPROVE DONATION OF \$430.00 TO THE AD HOC ELLINGTON TRAILS COMMITTEE.

2. Approval of the May 7, 2019 regular meeting minutes
MOVED (DWYER) SECONDED (NICKERSON) AND PASSED (3 YES, 0 NAY, 1 ABSTENTION - NICKERSON) TO APPROVE THE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF MAY 7, 2019, AS WRITTEN.
3. Correspondence:
 - a. Oakridge Times – May 20, 2019

V. ADJOURNMENT:

MOVED (GAGE) SECONDED (DWYER) AND PASSED (UNANIMOUSLY) TO ADJOURN THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEETING AT 8:34 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Samantha Getchell, Recording Clerk