



Town of Woodbury Conservation Commission

281 Main Street South
Woodbury, CT 06798
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WOODBURY CONSERVATION COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, October 3, 2023

7:00 p.m., – Shove Building, 281 Main Street South

MEMBERS PRESENT:

D. Taylor, Chairman
L. Peters
J. Sherman
T. Clark
B. Hickey

MEMBERS ABSENT:

D. West
C. Aberg

1. DETERMINATION OF QUORUM

Chairman Taylor began the meeting at 7:00 p.m. A quorum was established.

2. APPROVAL OF SEPTMEBER MEETING MINUTES

Chairman Taylor presented the minutes of the September 5, 2023, Conservation Commission meeting for consideration. He called for discussion. There was none.

MOTION:

To approve the minutes of the September 5, 2023, Conservation Commission meeting as presented.

Made by L. Peters, Seconded by J. Sherman

Vote: 5-0-0 – Approved – Motion Passed

Ayes: Taylor, Peters, Sherman, Clark, Hickey

Nays: None

Abstain: None

3. CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence to consider at this time.

4. CURRENT BUSINESS

a) **Discussion of Trash Reduction Pilot Program**

Christine O'Neill and Tom Doherty of NVCOG introduced themselves to the commission. Ms. O'Neill spoke to the Commission about the important role they play as an advisory group within the town. NVCOG is seeking input, advice, and support from the Commission regarding how to proceed to make the Trash Reduction Pilot Program a permanent program. Ms. O'Neill began her presentation by reviewing the pilot program with a slide show. The two objectives of the program are 1) to limit household trash and 2) to turn the food garbage into energy.

The main reason for this program is because New England is running out of room for trash and the costs for dealing with trash could double in the next four years. The easiest answer is to make less trash. Food garbage in landfills releases a lot of methane. Under the program, the food garbage goes to an anaerobic digester at Quantum Biopower in Southington; methane is captured and produces compost quickly.

Many communities have adopted a "pay as you throw" program which is you pay for what garbage you produce since trash is paid for by tonnage, rather than building it into the taxes. This is recognized as the #1 way to reduce trash since people see the impact immediately. There is a per bag charge and your waste management is not included in your property taxes. The average person generates 740 pounds of waste a year. When the town of Stonington implemented a pay as you throw program, they reduced that number by 40-45% a person. Woodbury decreased its waste by 13.5% from the same time last year by using the program. In general, there was a very positive response from the participants and people were proud that Woodbury participated. Some concerns with the program were that the bags were not the right size and people had to reorganize their trash bins.

NVCOG will be making a presentation to the Board of Selectman in October or November with some financial projections for a permanent program. Ms. O'Neill asked for any questions or recommendations. Chairman Taylor asked if the program implies that there is wasted food and a program could be to educate people on buying less. Ms. O'Neill stated that they do try to give tips to compliment less food waste but that is not currently part of their education. T. Clark asked how much Stonington charges. Ms. O'Neill responded that (5) 33 gallon bags was \$9; and (5) 15 gallon bags are \$6.00. Woodbury can design a program that works for them. B. Hickey spoke of the sticker shock the town experienced with the \$25 transfer sticker. Ms. O'Neill explained that Woodbury could design a program such as where taxes paid for most of the trash but there was a \$.50 per bag charge. L. Peters spoke of having access for the condo complexes. Ms. O'Neill said she would love to get condo complexes involved.

Ideas and methods will be presented to the Board of Selectmen and hopefully go to a vote by December. NVCOG was hoping the Conservation Commission could write a letter to the BoS in support of the program. Chairman Taylor asked the Commission to come up with some concrete ideas that could be forwarded to the BoS.

b) **Pollinator Pathway Presentation at Woodbury Library**

Marla Martin of the Woodbury Library spoke with the Commission. She is very excited to proceed with a pollinator pathway presentation. She had looked at the calendar and suggested two Wednesday meetings in November. Upon discussion, the consensus was that it would be better to

have the presentations in February as people are getting excited for spring to come and planting. The first presentation could have a speaker such as a master gardener, a beekeeper, or maybe someone from Earth tones regarding native plants. The second presentation could be with a panel of local community members from the Garden Club, Flanders, Leroy Anderson, Parks & Rec, Bud Neil, and the Shade Tree Commission.

The consensus was to move forward with this. T. Clark said to make sure this is included in the Newsletter at that time. Ms. Martin will compile information and come back to the Conservation meeting in January.

c) Town Clean-up Day

J. Sherman informed the members that everything is ready for clean-up day on Saturday, October 7th. The signs and posters are up and the email blast has been sent. There will be an ad in the paper, and there is the online sign-up sheet. T. Clark will post the information on the Woodbury Group page. The Commission will be sharing the pavilion at the park with another party and need to be done by noon.

d) Stomski Way, Minortown Road

J. Sherman stated that he has been checking to see if the knotweed is flowered off. Currently it is about 80% done. He will check again next week. The contractor won't plan until the flowering is done. Once that is established J. Sherman will make sure that all necessary departments are aware and notices of spraying will be put up. This all should happen within the next month.

e) Follow-up from Joint Land Use Meeting

Chairman Taylor noted that it was an interesting meeting. Some groups have accomplished items that other groups were not aware of. L. Peters was able to speak with Superintendent Murphy and Mike Olsen. She found out that Mr. Murphy had responded to Mary Connolly in detail regarding the POCD. The members would like for that information to be shared. L. Peters also spoke to Mr. Olsen regarding the completed paving project at Mitchell school and that there will likely be another paving project coming up for the middle school. She had found an article about porous asphalt and cement for paving. The advantages are that salt and sand are not used and the paved surface can last twice as long. She will forward the article to Chairman Taylor. The members hope that this product could be used for the middle school parking lot paving. The rain garden at the elementary school has been removed because no one maintained it. Chairman Taylor also noted that the meeting was good for reenergizing monthly meetings for the chairs of committees.

f) Hollow Park Master Plan

Chairman Taylor reported that this was a meeting of the general public to gather ideas of how people would like to use the park. There were many diverse opinions and input. The Parks & Recreation Department will be working with a consulting firm to bring a plan forward. There was discussion about possibly irrigating the ball fields which presents a variety of issues. The consulting firm has a civil engineer on staff to work on such issues.

g) Open Space Brochure

There has not been any progress on this item.

h) Newsletter

T. Clark had not heard from C. Aberg to finish the formatting for the newsletter.

i) Open Space Issues and input to Departmental Budgets

Chairman Taylor noted that departments start organizing in December to present items to the Selectmen in January for the budget. He advised the members to compile any significant maintenance items that need to be a line item to pass on to the respective departments before they submit for the budget. The Commission should be prepared to spend some time on this the next meeting.

T. Clark inquired about the gate and parking area at Stomski Way once the knotweed project is completed. Chairman Taylor noted that the town is looking for funds. Discussion about grants available and grant writers ensued.

5. MEMBER TIME

B. Hickey informed the Commission about a beech leaf disease that is coming. This will wipe out most of the beech trees in North America. Bud Neill will be holding a seminar on November 18th at the Senior Center on this topic. This will have a huge impact on the parks and trails.

He also noted the cornfields near Three Rivers Park with the last two flooding rains. He recommends planting hay rather than corn because the flooding would be devastating without the corn there. The lease contracts for those farmers are up for renewal in 2025. That allows a few years to work on this initiative to review the agricultural leases.

J. Sherman noted that Thursday, October 5th at 7:00 p.m. there will be a Zoom presentation by Flanders entitled “Mowing for Pollinators.” Speaker Laura Johnson, a pollinator support specialist from UVM Extension will be giving the presentation for mowing with considerations for insects, birds, and mammals.

L. Peters stated that at the August 28, 2023, Inland Wetlands Agency meeting Kyle Turoczi stated how all projects should be reviewed. He was unhappy about the paving at the school and that the rain garden had disappeared. L. Peters felt that he could be a good ally.

Also, Region 14 has a new elective course this year for juniors and seniors entitled “Conservation and Sustainability.” She thinks this is very good and will contact the teacher to get students involved. Seniors need to have 100 hours of community service and the students in this class could be volunteers to help with conservation projects.

6. PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

Charmagne Samoska, 180 Minortown Road, addressed the Commission. Ms. Samoska was interested to know whose responsibility it is to walk trails to monitor or report any issues. Chairman Taylor noted that the Parks & Rec Department is responsible, but they are not heavily staffed so it is harder to manage. The town does rely on people on the trails to alert the Parks & Rec Department. This led to discussion about a couch and mattress at Orenaug Park. Discussion continued on what type of system could be implemented. Maybe a phone number or QR code at the bottom of trails would be a good way to alert the department to trail issues.

7. NEXT MEETING AGENDA ITEMS

The next meeting is scheduled for November 7, 2023.

8. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION:

To adjourn the meeting at 8:57 p.m.

Made by J. Sherman, Seconded by L. Peters
Consensus of the Commission in favor 5-0-0

Respectfully Submitted,

Robyn Wright

Robyn Wright
Clerk for the Conservation Commission

Copies of documents and meeting audio are available at the Land Use Office

RECEIVED & FILED
IN WOODBURY, CT
This 5th day of Oct 2023
at 2:10 o'clock P M
Maria M. Mancini
Town Clerk