



Town of Woodbury Conservation Commission

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**WOODBURY CONSERVATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, November 7, 2024
7:00 p.m., – Shove Building, 281 Main Street South**

MEMBERS PRESENT:

D. Taylor, Chairman
J. Sherman
T. Clark
D. West
W. Ryan

MEMBERS ABSENT:

L. Peters
C. Aberg

1. DETERMINATION OF QUORUM

Chairman Taylor began the meeting at 7:01 p.m. A quorum was established.

2. APPROVAL OF OCTOBER MEETING MINUTES

Chairman Taylor presented the minutes of the October 1, 2024, Conservation Commission meeting for consideration. He called for comments. There were none.

MOTION:

To approve the minutes of the October 1, 2024, Conservation Commission meeting as presented.

Made by D. West, Seconded by J. Sherman

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

Ayes: Taylor, Sherman, West, Ryan, Clark

Nays: None

Abstain: None

3. CORRESPONDENCE & OPENING REMARKS

Chairman Taylor inquired if anyone was planning on attending the CACIWC conference. No one is planning to at this time.

Chairman Taylor mentioned that two members are up for renewal. He stated that it is required for the members to submit their forms to him. He will approve them and then submit it to the First Selectman. He needs these before Thanksgiving.

4. CURRENT BUSINESS

a) Fall Cleanup Day Review

J. Sherman stated that all went very well. He pointed out the photo on the front page of the Voices. There were about 30 people who volunteered. Some positive feedback is that several others have since requested to be put on the mailing list, and others have started carrying trash bags with them when walking.

b) Trail Monitor Education Feedback

D. West and L. Peters attended the program at Flanders. D. West thought it was a very organized, well presented model that the Commission can easily use. There were three main components for monitors.

- 1) Know the property they are monitoring
- 2) Make notes of concern
- 3) Bring back any notes to a management committee

These steps will help to develop a history for the property. D. West will obtain a copy of the information from Flanders to share with the Commission and have a discussion of the processes at the next meeting.

c) Nominating Committee for Officers

T. Clark will be taking the nominations for any positions. Elections will be held January 7, 2025.

d) Annual Meeting Schedule

Chairman Taylor presented the proposed Annual Meeting Schedule for consideration.

MOTION:

To accept the schedule as written.

Made by D. West, Seconded by J. Sherman

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

Ayes: Taylor, Sherman, West, Ryan, Clark

Nays: None

Abstain: None

e) General Discussion on Solar Farms

W. Ryan shared his research on solar farms through a visual presentation. He hopes this will allow the Conservation Commission to provide feedback as applications are presented to the Town. He had examined the plan put together for the Fawn Meadow project, and then put together what would be the ideal plan. He noted that the current Green Skies plan's priority is business. They squeezed a lot of panels in without a lot of room between rows. A lot of vegetation will be lost. This may result in water runoff and impact on home values. The proposed plan is fencing in the whole project. He felt that this is unnecessary and will cut off wildlife. An

ideal plan would not think of just solar panels but also how to use the land. There is not a lot of movement on this initiative yet. By using agrivoltaic planning, water and heat are retained, which is better for the land and the solar panels. Solar panels are less efficient in energy production if they overheat. Water runoff is reduced and the groundwater is recharged when agrivoltaic practices are used. Meadows sequester carbon and nourish pollinators which benefits farmers. He presented the state of Minnesota as a model for planning. Minnesota has legislation requiring solar meadows and they have perfected how to implement them. A solar meadow will take 3-5 years to install. The seeds can be costly, but many business will donate seeds. The State incentivizes solar meadows. Neighbors are very happy since they have a three season flowering meadow. Massachusetts is catching up on this initiative as well. They are enforcing that any fencing installed must have holes for animals to pass through, and bee boxes and bird houses must be installed on new projects.

W. Ryan handed out the standards for both Minnesota and Massachusetts as a model to work from. He recommended that the Commission put together a packet of information to hand out to other boards and departments to raise awareness for any future applications. This information could include the pros and cons of solar farms along with recommended optimal panel spacing and height. He also invited the members to join him in trying to lobby State legislature in this same direction to get laws passed. The consensus was that the Commission will try to make this presentation to the Board of Selectmen especially since one of the Selectmen is a State Representative and on an environmental committee. They will also try to see if a workshop can be scheduled on the topic with CLCC (Connecticut Land Conservation Council).

f) Pollinator Pathway

D. West commented that there are not a lot of updates on the initiative except that enthusiasm is picking up. She had met with the Southbury Land Trust to see a garden and was informed of grant funding organizations that can be pursued. She will not be able to work on this project until January.

g) CACIWC

Chairman Taylor stated that this was on the agenda in error.

h) Minortown Project

J. Sherman stated that the contractor had sprayed the Japanese Knotweed in October. There was a frost two weeks after spraying, so it should be effective. The results will be seen in the spring. There was discussion about a meadow on site. J. Sherman noted that there are a lot of wildflowers already on the site. It will be about one to two years before there can be any planning.

i) 2025 Budget Proposals

Chairman Taylor stated that the First Selectman is interested in setting up a pool of money for matching grants. This will need to go through the Board of Finance to get into the budget. She would like to be able to build a case for justification of allocating these funds. Chairman Taylor is asking the members to think of projects and real scenarios where this could apply for next month's meeting. He would like to include funding for adding a fence and gate at the Minortown area.

j) Three Rivers Park Restoration

Chairman Taylor noted that the committee is still waiting for Trout Scapes to get through the permit process. In the meantime, nature is working itself out in that the tree on the riverbank already has plants growing to stabilize it. D. West brought up the topic of a large hole near Jack's Bridge. She wondered if that is included in the Three Rivers restoration project. Chair Taylor explained that the restoration project is downstream. It was recommended that she take pictures and forward them to the Parks & Rec Department. T. Clark also mentioned some trees down at Orenaug Park that she will contact Parks & Rec about too.

k) Next Newsletter

C. Aberg was not present to discuss the topic.

l) Open Space Issues

Most issues were already discussed. Chairman Taylor stated that the Trolley Bed area was not good after the storm damage. This could be used as an example for grant funds.

5. MEMBER TIME

There were no comments from the members

6. PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

There were no comments from the floor.

7. NEXT MEETING AGENDA ITEMS

The next meeting is scheduled for December 3, 2024.

8. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION:

To adjourn the meeting at 8:21 p.m.

Made by D. West, Seconded by W. Ryan
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 12th of Nov 2024
at 8:05 A M
Maria M. Mancini
Town Clerk