



# Town of Woodbury Conservation Commission

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## WOODBURY CONSERVATION COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

**Tuesday, April 4, 2023**

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

### MEMBERS PRESENT:

D. Taylor, Chairman  
L. Peters  
J. Sherman  
T. Clark  
D. West  
C. Aberg

### MEMBERS ABSENT:

B. Hickey

**Also Present:** Garden Club members Terry Clarke & Mary Kavicke; Members of the public Dennis Roberts & Charmaine Samoska

### 1. DETERMINATION OF QUORUM

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

### 2. APPROVAL OF MARCH MEETING MINUTES

Chairman Taylor presented the minutes of the March 7, 2023, Conservation Commission for consideration. He called for discussion. Chairman Taylor noted that there were guests at last month's meeting also that were not noted in the minutes. He would like to ensure that this month's guests are recognized for tonight's meeting.

### **MOTION:**

To approve the minutes of the March 7, 2023, Conservation Commission meeting as presented.

Made by D. West, Seconded by L. Peters

Vote: 6-0-0 – Approved – Motion Passed

Ayes: Taylor, Aberg, Peters, Sherman, Clark, West

Nays: None

Abstain: None

### **3. CORRESPONDENCE**

Chairman Taylor notified the Commission that there is a meeting sponsored by NVCOG regarding invasive species management to be held on April 27, 2023, at 12:00 to 1:30 p.m.

### **4. CURRENT BUSINESS**

**a) Library Display**

Chairman Taylor commended the members on the library display. He has received several compliments on it already. The members commented on how colorful it is.

**b) Town Clean-up Day Recap**

J. Sherman commented that there were 10 people who signed up along with some more online. It was a low turn-out day due to the bad weather. The members commented on how the new signs were good and readable.

**c) CT Trails Day Hike Leader**

The PRWC is sponsoring a hike for CT Trails Day and was looking for a hike co-leader. J. Sherman had originally volunteered. However, he now has to decline. The hike will be on June 3, 2023, at 10:00 a.m. at Nonnewaug Falls. L. Peters and T. Clark volunteered to participate.

**d) Highlands Grant Program**

Chairman Taylor informed the Commission of a conservation grant used for the funding of preserving forest areas. Originally the grant covered the eastern Connecticut boundary and did not include Woodbury; however, now Woodbury is included. The Town leaders would need to send a letter to the organization in order to participate. This would then open up the bucket of funds for use in restoration and purchase of land in highland areas. There is no obligation with the program. In addition this program can also help with other grants that need a match in funds. This items needs to go before the Board of Selectmen. D. West inquired if it is just for town properties, or can land trusts be included. Land trusts can be included as long as the town itself is participating. L. Peters asked if they need to inform the BoS. Chairman Taylor stated that a motion will be needed. He called for discussion. Chairman Taylor will provide a letter to the Board of Selectmen's office.

### **MOTION**

The Conservation Commission recommends that the Town apply for inclusion in the Highlands Conservation Act

Made by L. Peters, Seconded by J. Sherman

Vote: 6-0-0 – Approved – Motion Passed

Ayes: Taylor, Aberg, Peters, Sherman, Clark, West

Nays: None

Abstain: None

**e) Earth Day Planning**

Discussion commenced on the plans for Earth Day and who will be responsible for what details. C. Aberg will obtain the items from the library display prior to set up. T. Clark will look into highlighting some walking trails on poster board and maybe add a QR code to lead to the Parks & Recreation link to the trail map. Chairman Taylor will bring compost buckets to hand out.

**f) Stomsky Way, Minortown Road**

J. Sherman reported that he is working on the IWA application for knotweed removal. He is contacting Parks & Rec Superintendent Mike Lodice to go over a mowing schedule and paths that will be needed. In early to mid-August the knotweed will need to be cut down. Since there is nesting the field will not be mowed entirely until November. He will also check on the debris removal.

**g) Pollinator Pathway**

B. Hickey was not present to provide an update on this subject. Mary Kavicke of the Pomperaug Valley Garden Club spoke on attending a seminar in Bethlehem provided by a biologist from Deep. The subject was on the pollinator pathways and invasive plant management. The speaker explained that chemicals are used in order to get invasive plants under control. He also covered how to properly mow meadows. She provided some information that was covered to the members. The Garden Club is going to try to have him to come and speak as well. The Conservation Commission and the First Selectman would be invited to attend.

**h) Open Space Brochure**

Chairman Taylor spoke about keeping the project moving forward. The focus will be on hike-able open space. The Commission is deciding about whether to include land trusts and Flanders in the brochure.

**i) Newsletter**

C. Aberg had emailed the draft to the Commission that afternoon. T. Clark will help with the formatting. She asked for the Commission to email her any revisions. They will try to have these done by Earth Day.

**j) HWA Update**

J. Sherman stated that he has ordered one colony of the predator beetles. The beetles will be shipped around May 16<sup>th</sup> and then be released. There is a new area of infestation at Nonnewaug Falls that will be treated. Most other areas were doing well after the deep freeze this winter.

**k) POCD Items**

There were no POCD items to cover at this time.

**l) Open Space Issues (if any)**

Chairman Taylor asked if there are any issues that members have noticed. He noted at Hollow Park a stand of trees had been cut down near a parking area in the rear of the park. There had been damage from a storm. This has opened up an area near a turn on the river bank and has increased the risk of erosion. The IWA will have to weigh in on that area.

**5. MEMBER TIME**

L. Peters showed the Commission a trash retriever pick and trash bag holder. She posed the idea of having a raffle or contest at the next clean-up day for a “Clean-up kit” to make the job easier.

**6. PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR**

Charmaine Samoska, 180 Minortown Road, addressed the Commission. She would like to thank the Commission for the clean-up day efforts. She also thanked them for the action being taken on the knotweed at Stomsky Way. She was wondering how the Commission sees the timeline for Stomsky Way to be ADA compliant again. The gate has made the park non-compliant. The Commission needs to work with the Park & Rec department to fix this. Chairman Taylor stated that the focus is on knotweed removal to make it worth going there. The Commission has not worked with the Park & Rec department yet, but intends to.

Dennis Roberts, 2 Minortown Road Ext., addressed the Commission. He has gone to several meetings and worked with the new Park & Rec director to move the gate. He stated that the Park & Rec department and the BoS use the Conservation Commission as an excuse to do nothing. He has been told that they are waiting for the knotweed to be taken care of before doing anything else. He walked the area with the Park & Rec director and her assistant. They discussed making it similar to Three Rivers with a good parking and gate system. Currently, the situation is very dangerous. The assistant had to direct traffic out in the street to be able to exit the park safely. The gate was originally put in because kids were partying at night. He feels that the gate is a good idea but it needs to be moved down about 150 feet. There also needs to be access around it for horses and wheelchairs. The park is almost always closed. Both Mr. Roberts and Ms. Samoska feel that the park is in such disarray since the Town took over the property and the Conservation Commission is being blamed for it. The State trout stocking truck can no longer get in to access the river, so now there have been no fish for 4 years.

The members do not want the knotweed removal plan to impact use of the park in any way. T. Clark suggested a joint meeting with the Park & Rec department since they meet at the same time. Then everyone could work together and be on the same page. Chairman Taylor stated his first action will be to speak to the First Selectman and make clear that the Conservation Commission is not hindering any solutions with the gate issue. The Commission has no objections to the gate being moved back.

**7. NEXT MEETING AGENDA ITEMS**

The next meeting is scheduled for May 2, 2023.

**8. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION:**

To adjourn the meeting at 8:18 p.m.

Made by D. West, Seconded by L. Peters  
Consensus of the Commission in favor 6-0-0

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 11<sup>th</sup> day of April 2023  
at 4:30 o'clock PM  
Maria Brancini  
Town Clerk