



Town of Woodbury Conservation Commission

281 Main Street South
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WOODBURY CONSERVATION COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, June 4, 2024

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

MEMBERS PRESENT:

L. Peters
J. Sherman
T. Clark
D. West
W. Ryan

MEMBERS ABSENT:

D. Taylor, Chairman
C. Aberg

1. DETERMINATION OF QUORUM

Vice Chairman Sherman began the meeting at 7:07 p.m. A quorum was established.

2. APPROVAL OF MAY MEETING MINUTES

Vice Chair Sherman presented the minutes of the May 7, 2024, Conservation Commission meeting for consideration.

MOTION:

To approve the minutes of the May 7, 2024, Conservation Commission meeting as presented.

Made by T. Clark, Seconded by D. West

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

Ayes: Peters, Sherman, Clark, West, Ryan

Nays: None

Abstain: None

3. CORRESPONDENCE & OPENING REMARKS

There was nothing to consider at this time.

4. CURRENT BUSINESS

a) **Three Rivers Park Restoration**

Vice Chair Sherman provided an update from the May 15, Three Rivers Ad-hoc Advisory meeting. Permits are in process for the project. Carol Haskins submitted a grant to the Long Island Futures Fund (LIFF). It was suggested at that meeting that the town should have a regular budget line for grant matching funds. Members of the committee are interested in being educated on technical issues, such as soil, river geographics and velocity. He explained how the geography of a river determines the river velocity and whether it digs out the soil or if it spreads out and slowly recedes. When the river digs out the soil, then tree roots are exposed and then they collapse. He spoke to a representative from The Natural Resource Conservation Services (NRCS), which is a federal program, about education on the topic of a good riparian buffer.

b) **Stomski Way**

Vice Chair Sherman found the deed for the property which has a conservation easement that DEEP holds. That easement protects that property in perpetuity for natural resources in natural conditions. The purpose of the easement is to ensure the protected property will remain forever for natural resources for passive recreation. Discussion ensued about the property and the farm lease. There is the thought that the Conservation Commission might manage the property rather than the Parks & Rec Department. This would need to go to the BoS first. J. Sherman has received an email from Pete Picone, a DEEP wildlife biologist. He hopes to walk the property with him to create a plan for invasives and start some planting. The next step is to have the P&R Department mow a path. The best time to mow an entire field is in December. W. Ryan spoke of the meadow he created on his own property by using solarization to kill invasives.

c) **Pollinator Pathway Program**

D. West spoke to the president of the Pomperaug Valley Garden Club about the program. The consensus is that at one of the meetings during July to September they will start to get information together. The Garden Club will be a good place to start. D. West will do more research on the Pollinator Pathway website about posting properties online rather than trying to color in a physical map. That would be easier to keep things current. The Commission would like to put a QR code link to the pollinator pathway website either on this newsletter or the next.

d) **Next Newsletter**

T. Clark has not heard anything from C. Aberg to know where the newsletter is at.

e) **Open Space Issues**

T. Clark asked about the quality of the fields at the Hollow with the recent car show. She felt there is no rhyme or reason of what is allowed on the fields and what were not. Discussion commenced about how the town uses the Hollow for different events that are intrinsic to the town. Irrigation of the fields was talked about and how that would be a hinderance. It was also discussed that since the High School is regional, the town cannot easily use the school area for events. The consensus was that the Park & Recs Department can clarify the parameters for using any of the fields.

D. West spoke of the monitoring of open space properties and the strategy for obtaining and maintaining the properties. L. Peters mentioned there is grant funding for trail maintenance but

there needs to be a plan before grant writing can even be considered. D. West wonders how much a part the Conservation Commission can play.

L. Peters stated that she is not sure what she is supposed to be doing to monitor open space areas. She needs clarification on what she is looking for. Members said to look for storm damage, dangerous conditions, tree limbs or inaccessibility. Flanders has a form that J. Sherman will use to put together a preliminary form for the members.

D. West also mentioned how she went to an educational talk this past weekend about old growth forests and their part in sequestering carbon. These forests need to be protected. There was discussion about having more informational talks around town to help educate people.

5. MEMBER TIME

L. Peters was asked if invasive plants can be put into the compost bags. The Commission spoke of how it would be cooked in the anerobic digester. She will ask DEEP if it is allowed.

L. Peters spoke about the nip bottles that were collected on clean-up day. They require a \$.05 deposit when purchased which implies they are recyclable. Further investigation revealed that the towns get back the deposit money from the local liquor stores and those funds are to be used towards something related to the clean-up of the bottles. The bottles essentially end up in the garbage and cannot be recycled. One town used their funds to purchase a street sweeper. She feels this program is inefficient. J. Sherman stated that legislators had tried to pass a bill banning them but it did not go through. He recommended coming up with a suggestion of what to do with the money from the bottles.

6. PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

Chris McDevitt, 465 Main St. N., addressed the Commission. Ms. McDevitt stated that she had gone to the Pollinator Pathway program at the library and she learned of the Conservation Commission. She is interested and would like to be involved. She walks Strong Meadow often and tracks bobolink birds, which are a ground nesting bird. This past weekend, the entire meadow was mowed and the bobolinks seems to be gone. She does not see or hear them. Her research has found that DEEP and the Audubon Society have stated that bobolinks are a bird of concern. Any areas that have them can be safely mowed after August 1st. Ms. McDevitt will get information to J. Sherman and he will speak to Rich Lamothe about it.

Lisa Nelson, Scratchville Road, addressed the Commission. Ms. Nelson walks Strong Meadow several times a day. She has many concerns. She follows wood turtles, which are endangered. Strong meadow is the perfect ecosystem for the turtles. They live under water and tree roots and need water and land to survive. They nest in fields. She has not seen any now for two years. She noticed that invasives are creeping further and further into east meadow brook. The property is listed with DEEP as an area designated to be preserved and protected open space for endangered species. They test the water and spend time monitoring the area. It is an essential habitat for endangered species. She feels that it is somewhat ignored by the town.

She spoke with the Parks & Rec Department saying that she could help them to identify invasives before they cut. They said they would call her, but they didn't and then cut everything. She feels that the Department needs to be more educated. She would do some of the work herself but was told by the Department not to since it is a liability to the town. W. Ryan wondered if people could get "deputized" or "certified" as volunteers to help out. The consensus was that there needs to be discussions on how to leverage volunteer help. Maybe some volunteer days could be instituted like the town clean-up day. The Commission will look into this.

7. NEXT MEETING AGENDA ITEMS

The next meeting is scheduled for July 2, 2024.

8. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION:

To adjourn the meeting at 8:54 p.m.

Made by D. West, Seconded by T. Clark
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 6th day of June 2024
at 6:10 o'clock PM
Marisa M. Mancini
Town Clerk