

**Town of West Hartford Conservation and Environment Commission**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**July 29, 2019, 7:00 PM**  
**Town Hall, Room 314**

The Commission was called to order at 7:03 P.M.

**Roll Call:** Matt Macunas, Ted Newton, Jessica Schaeffer-Helmecki and Emilee Scott.

**Old Business:** Newton moved to adopt the minutes from the May 20<sup>th</sup> meeting, seconded by Scott.

**New Business:**

**Spicebush Swamp, 173 Mountain Road**—Application (IWW #1109) of the Town of West Hartford, requesting approval of a plan for enhancement and stabilization of McGovern Pond in Spicebush Swamp.

The applicant was represented by Helen Rubino-Turco, Director of Leisure Services for the Town. The applicant was joined by soil scientist David Lord and Rockledge Golf Club superintendent Al Adaskaveg.

Ms. Rubino-Turco narrated the planned project consistent with the written narrative the applicant plans to submit to TPZ in updated form. The narrative includes the reasons for the project, its timeline and sequence of construction, particulars on dredging and construction, and feasible and prudent alternatives. Specifically, the Town plans to dredge an area around the perimeter of the pond to remove sediment deposited from nearby neighborhoods and roadways, place the dredged material in an upland meadow area and replant with grasses and wildflowers, and remove invasive species along the pond perimeter and replace with native species. The dredging activities are planned for either winter or a dry summer period, depending upon timing of necessary approvals. In either case, the pond will be drawn down to permit wildlife to retreat to deeper water and permit access to the material to be dredged from the pond perimeter. Care will be taken to avoid compression of site soils (e.g., by use of wide load-spreading tires on long-reach equipment). The Commission did not identify any suggested improvements or concerns with respect to the Town’s approach.

**Communications, News and Administration**

**Coordination with Other Town Entities**—The Commission discussed how its activities could be more helpful to other Town entities. This included straw concepts involving commission merger exploration with the Clean Energy Commission and potentially also the Bicycle Advisory Committee. Members agreed the groups’ respective missions were distinct but did all serve overarching objectives around sustainability. Several Conservation and Environment Commission duties have gone unexercised or underutilized – one example being the investigation of pollution,

determination of pollution sources, and conducting hearings related to its abatement. Per Section 25-15 of town code, the term pollution “refers to but is not limited to the contamination by any means of the air or water, the disposal of solid wastes, the use of pesticides or herbicides, offensive odors, excessive noise, litter, junked automobiles, the control of rodents, vermin and insects, the protection of fish, wildlife and trees, the preservation of historical, cultural, educational and aesthetic values, the maintenance of public health standards and the protection of recreational facilities.”

Subject to further discussion with the Town, one considered option was for the establishment of a singular sustainability-oriented commission in service to a Town declaration, with subgroups established as appropriate. The chair encouraged members to attend a future Clean Energy Commission meeting if interested, noting upcoming meetings on August 12th involving a debrief of energy-related state legislation, and on September 9th involving a possible mayoral visit.

The group also discussed the potential around the former UConn campus and the Ideanomics proposal, and implications around wetlands management and encouragement of net zero energy new construction standards.

No action has been taken by the Commission at this time.

Adjournment at 8:14 pm motioned by Macunas, seconded by Scott.