



STATE OF CONNECTICUT – COUNTY OF TOLLAND
INCORPORATED 1786

TOWN OF ELLINGTON

55 MAIN STREET – PO BOX 187
ELLINGTON, CONNECTICUT 06029-0187

www.ellington-ct.gov

Tel. 860-870-3120 Town Planner's Office Fax. 860-870-3122

CONSERVATION COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES TUESDAY, JULY 7, 2020, 7:00 PM ZOOM MEETING

**(IN-PERSON ATTENDANCE NOT PERMITTED DUE TO COVID19)
(PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROVIDED VIA ZOOM)**

PRESENT: Chairman Rebecca Quarno, Regular Members Sean Dwyer, Laurie Burstein, James Gage and George Nickerson

ABSENT: Vice Chairman David Bidwell, Regular Member Robert Zielfelder and Alternate Ann Harford

STAFF: Lisa Houlihan, Town Planner and Christine Post, Recording Clerk

I. CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Rebecca Quarno called the Conservation Commission meeting to order at 7:05 PM.

I. PUBLIC COMMENTS (On Non-Agenda Items): None

II. ACTIVE BUSINESS:

1. Sustainable Ellington Initiative
 - a. 2.5 Create a Natural Resource and Wildlife Inventory

Ms. Houlihan reported that the changes to the Natural Resource and Wildlife Inventory which the Commission agreed to at the June 2, 2020 meeting, have been made. Ms. Houlihan reached out to the Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP) requesting an endangered species list to include in the Inventory and received correspondence from the DEEP indicating their agency does that twice per year, therefore, that information is fluid and changeable. Ms. Houlihan read the letter to the Commission from the DEEP explaining what they can provide and giving their suggestions for how to handle conserving special species. The DEEP encourages a Natural Diversity Data Base (NDDB) review be required by the local approving authority for any project that falls within a buffered area. Ms. Houlihan suggested incorporating language into the Inventory following the DEEP's recommendation and potentially asking Planning and Zoning to include same in the zoning and subdivision regulations so that this practice is memorialized and carries on. Chairman Quarno asked if the DEEP would provide a general list and then the Commission can review the list and decide whether or not to include it in the Inventory. Ms. Houlihan will request the current list from the DEEP.

- b. 2.7 Provide Education on Water Conservation – Newsletter article, 2nd Quarter 2020

Ms. Houlihan reported that she worked with the local water company and that the 2nd quarterly town wide newsletter, which is going out this month, will include the Ellington Conservation Commission Tips for Water Conservation. Ms. Houlihan will ask the First

Selectman's office to post it on the Town's Facebook page per Commissioner Dwyer's suggestion.

2. Update – Ellington Hockanum River Committee: Harford/Nickerson – Leads
 - a. Ad Hoc Ellington Trails Committee – Monthly agenda/minutes

Chairman Quarno asked if the process of merging the Hockanum and Trails Committees has been started. Ms. Houlihan reported she is in the process of drafting a memo and should hopefully have more information by next month's meeting.

Commissioner Dwyer asked if there was any update on Stein Road parking situation and Ms. Houlihan replied that she will ask and try to get an answer for the next meeting.

3. Report - Working Farmland Preservation Program: Gage/Staff – Leads
 - a. Status - Oakridge Dairy Application, Jobs Hill and Meadow Brook Roads.

Oakridge Dairy accepted the offer from the Department of Agriculture, which the Commission last discussed at the May 2020 meeting. Ms. Houlihan contacted Paula Stahl to present the study, thinking the Commission would be asking for a bond authorization. It had been suggested that the Town forgo a bond authorization due to the expiration date and establish a special fund instead, however, The Board of Finance did not support this idea. Ms. Houlihan reached out to the permanent Finance Officer for some direction and hopes to present a proposal to the Board of Selectman in August.

- b. Farms Under Threat: The State of the States, Executive Summary, American Farmland Trust.

Ms. Houlihan summarized the purpose of the Executive Summary because she thought it would be of interest to the Commission. She specifically pointed out that the Agricultural Land Protection Scorecard evaluated 6 common policies and programs throughout the United States for municipalities, which protect agricultural land from development and rated them from lowest to highest. Connecticut scored in the highest category.

Ms. Houlihan advised the Commission that the Connecticut Resource Conservation and Development issued a press release regarding their 3rd annual Tour des Farms Fundraiser, which is a cycling tour of farms, she thought commission members might be interested in as a summer activity.

4. Report - Open Space Preservation Program: Gage – Lead

Ms. Houlihan reported that she sent a letter to Scott Brady indicating the Town is interested in preserving his land on Kibbe Road.

Commissioner Gage updated the Commission that the Land Trust received the \$90,000.00 from the Town of Ellington for the purchase of the Wraight property and that they are waiting for the DEEP to release their grant money at which point they will be able to close on the property.

III. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS:

1. FY 20-21 Budget Expenditure Update

Nothing new to report

2. Approval of the June 2, 2020 regular meeting minutes

MOVED (GAGE) SECONDED (NICKERSON) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE THE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF JUNE 2, 2020 AS WRITTEN.

3. Correspondence: None

The Commission agreed that next month's meeting will be a Zoom meeting in keeping with social distancing practices.

IV. ADJOURNMENT:

MOVED (DWYER) SECONDED (BURSTEIN) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADJOURN THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEETING AT 7:42 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine Post, Recording Clerk