



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 AGENDA
TUESDAY, APRIL 6, 2021, 7:00 PM
ZOOM MEETING**

(INSTRUCTIONS TO JOIN VIRTUAL MEETING PROVIDED BELOW)

I. CALL TO ORDER:

II. PUBLIC COMMENTS (On Non-Agenda Items):

III. ACTIVE BUSINESS:

1. Plan of Conservation and Development: Chapter 4 – Conservation Strategies, Natural Resource Preservation
2. Update – Ellington Hockanum River Committee: Harford/Nickerson – Leads
 - a. Ad Hoc Ellington Trails Committee – Monthly agenda/minutes
3. Report - Working Farmland Preservation Program: Gage/Staff – Leads
4. Report - Open Space Preservation Program: Gage – Lead

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS:

1. FY 20-21 Budget Expenditure Update
2. Approval of the March 2, 2021 regular meeting minutes
3. Correspondence:
 - a. Northern Connecticut Land Trust Landmark Newsletter March 2021

V. ADJOURNMENT:

Note: Next regular meeting is scheduled for May 4, 2021

In order to comply with COVID-19 limited in-person meetings and social distancing requirements, this meeting will be conducted using the online video conferencing service provider Zoom. Meeting details will be provided on the Agenda and posted on the Ellington webpage (www.ellington-ct.gov), Agenda & Minutes, Conservation Commission.

Join Zoom Meeting via link:
<https://zoom.us/j/98174537107>
Meeting ID: 981 7453 7107
Password: 778589

Join Zoom Meeting by phone:
1-646-558-8656 US (New York)
Meeting ID: 981 7453 7107
Password: 778589

Chapter Four: Conservation Strategies, Natural Resource Preservation

The preservation of community character is valued very highly by Ellington residents. To protect a rural landscape, the Planning and Commission and Conservation Commission will continue to give priority to the preservation of important open space assets and seek creative ways to preserve farmland and a vibrant farm economy for future generations. In addition, the preservation of key historic structures also helps to define Ellington's special character. These provide an important window into Ellington's early history and are worthy of preservation.

The on-line survey and 2 community visioning sessions (see supplemental information at the end of this report) clearly indicated strong support for both open space and farmland preservation. Residents felt passionate about preserving these assets to protect community character.

The Planning and Zoning Commission and Conservation Commission have taken several steps to preserve these assets since the adoption of the 2008 Plan of Conservation and Development including several important amendments to the zoning and subdivision regulations. These are summarized in Table 4-1. This chapter discusses additional actions which the Planning and Zoning Commission may consider to further refine regulations with the aim of accomplishing these goals. These are measures which may be implemented that do not require capital outlay by the Town.

Change to Better Preserve Farmland	Details
Adoption of density-based zoning regulations	Changes to Zoning Regulations where the presence of steep slopes, flood plain, and wetland soils limit lot yield
Adoption of more flexible farm use regulations	Residential zones: Keeping of horses, agricultural buildings, backyard poultry, bees. Commercial zones: Farm stands, farm store, brewery, brew pub, distillery.
Established an farmland acquisition fund	\$2 million referendum approved in 2007.

Table 4-1
Accomplishments Since the Adoption of the 2007 POCD

Open Space Preservation

The Ellington Conservation Commission adopted a Plan of Conservation in 2006 with updates in 2014. This plan establishes an important goal to preserve 21% of Ellington as protected open space. This is consistent with the State of Connecticut goal to preserve 21% of land statewide. Currently 3,816 acres or 17 % of Ellington have been preserved as shown in Table 4-2. This includes land that is owned by the Town, Northern Connecticut Land Trust, State of Connecticut, or where development rights have been purchased. It should be noted that the public has no rights to enter land where development rights have been purchased to preserve farmland. There are 888 acres of open space in this category. There is a total of 2,928 acres of land with public access or 13% of the Town.

INVENTORY OF OPEN SPACE, FARMLAND, AND RECREATIONAL ASSETS

(NOT INCLUDING GOLF COURSES AND CONSERVATION EASEMENTS)

DESC.	OWNER	AREA
Pinney and Windermere (Including Pinney Street Fields)	Town	67.71
Carriage Hill Open Space	Town	18.51
Crystal Ridge Estates Open Space	Town	47.89
Crystal View	Town	35.3
Ellington Highlands Open Space	Town	29.5
Rising Acres II Open Space	Town	8.3
Tripp Road Open Space	Town	8
Mosley Plains Open Space	Town	4.62
High Ridge Open Space	Town	3.46
Hatheway Road	Town	3.18
Sunset Hill - Town Access	Town	1.6
Batz Properties	Town	44.86
Kimball Forest	Town	55.61
Meadow Brook Estates Open Space	Town	15.26
Metcalf Nature Preserve	Town	15.63
Stagecoach Crossing Open Space	Town	6.64
"T" Properties	Town	73.32
Arbor Park	Town	3.3
Brookside Park	Town	41.42
Sandy Beach	Town	7.23
Crystal Lake Memorial Park	Town	0.24
Porter Road Highlands	Town	3.16
Other Town Unimproved Open Lands	Town	19.18
Properties Taken In Lieu of Taxes	Town	8.55
Subtotal		522.47
Sunset Hill	Land Trust	14
Swann Farm	Land Trust	56.01
Joy Property	Land Trust	6.86
Shenipsit Woods	Land Trust	30
Ernie Boothroyd Preserve	Land Trust	58
Bird Sanctuary	Audubon	6.67
Bellante	Land Trust	37
Subtotal		208.54

	Purchase of Development Rights (PDR)	
Way Farm	PDR	68.6
Culbro Farm	PDR	171.09
Burke Farm	PDR	119
Pinney Farm	PDR	5
Myers Farm*	PDR/Land Trust	70.59
Dzen Farm	PDR	22.25
Silverhurst/Foster Farm	PDR	97.32
Silverhurst/Foster/Thrall Farm	PDR	20.57
Charter Farm	PDR	43.39
Pease Farm	PDR	20.79
McKnight Farm	PDR	124.429
Bahler Farms	PDR	125.785
Subtotal		888.814
Shenipsit State Forest	State	1396.92
Nye Holman State Forest	State	361.21
Bradway Reservoir	State	87.93
Boat Launch, Crystal Lake	State	4.69
Subtotal		1850.75
Crystal Lake		175.51
Shenipsit Lake		170.91
Subtotal		346.42
TOTAL		3816.99

*Included in open space totals

Table 4-2
Inventory of Open Space and Recreational Assets

Source: Plan of Conservation, Ellington Conservation Commission, 2007 and 2014

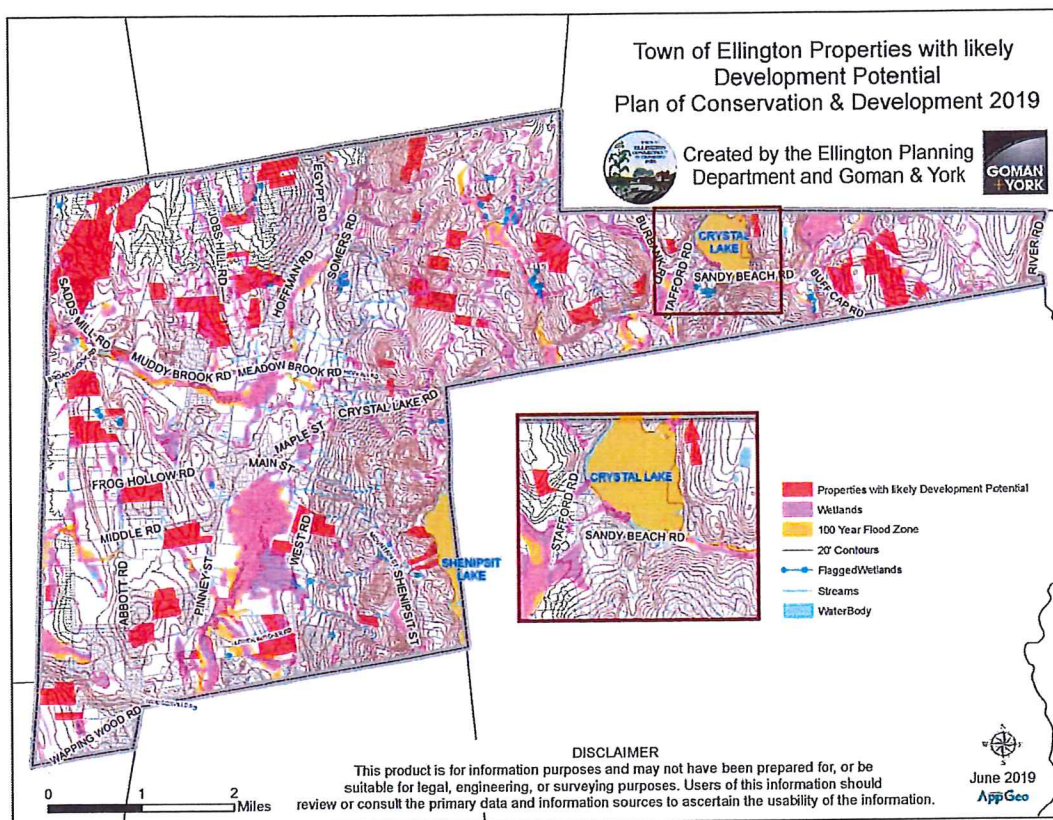
The Conservation Plan establishes five (5) “focus” areas and establishes objectives and strategies for each area. The 5 areas are:

- Western Farm Belt
- Shenipsit Lake and Forest
- Crystal Lake Watershed
- Eastern Panhandle
- Hockanum River Linear Park

The Conservation Commission's plan and its recommendations are formally adopted as part of this plan and are included as Appendix C.

It is important to note that land commonly referred to as open space, in fact, has different levels of protection regarding the certainty that the land will always remain open and undeveloped. In fact, although it is a goal of this Plan to permanently protect all existing open space assets identified in this Plan, those guarantees cannot necessarily be made in perpetuity. It is likely that these assets will remain undeveloped but that cannot always be assured. Important variables include whether the property contains restrictions in the deed, whether the property is in private or public ownership, and physical and regulatory constraints such as zoning, floodplain, wetlands, and steep slopes.

There is still a significant amount of land in Ellington which is in private ownership that has development potential. Although it is natural that residents sometimes associate these undeveloped properties as contributing to the rural landscape which they enjoy, they are not in public ownership, and may be developed in accordance with local requirements such as zoning, subdivision, wetlands, and the public health code. Map 4-1 depicts vacant parcels of land in private ownership excess of 5 acres in size. Property which has slopes in excess of 25% and where significant wetlands are present have been excluded due to limited development potential. In total there are 1,035 acres of undeveloped land with development potential.

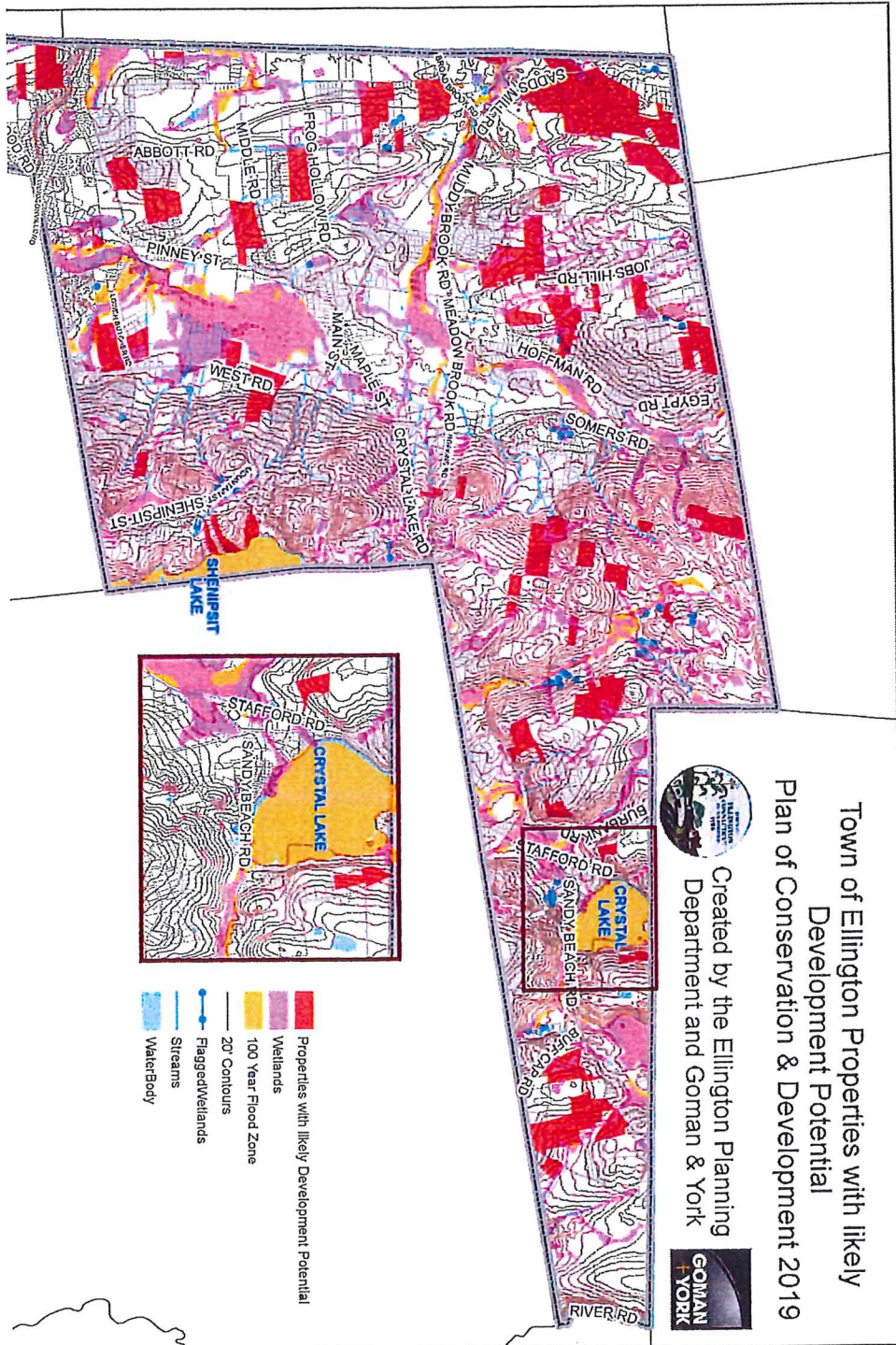


Map 4-1

Vacant land parcels >5.0 acres, privately owned, excluding steep slopes, wetlands, and flood prone areas.

Vacant land parcels >5.0 acres, privately owned, excluding steep slopes, wetlands, and flood prone areas.

Map 4-1



The Planning and Zoning Commission may wish to work with the Conservation Commission in identifying a list of high priority parcels of land to be targeted for preservation within each of the before mentioned 5 focus areas. These parcels can be selected on the basis of meeting the objectives of the conservation plan. Properties identified shall not be in a ranked order nor is it intended that the properties listed shall be the only properties that may be considered for preservation by the Town. However, identifying a list of properties can be a valuable tool for the Commission in their review of individual applications (site plan, special permit, subdivision) and by the Board of Selectmen who may consider the acquisition of certain properties when they are offered for sale.

It should be noted that the Town has a modest amount of funding available for the purchase of open space. As a rule, the Town does not on its own initiative target land parcels for acquisition, but rather reviews offers from private owners should choose to sell. The preparation of such a list may serve as notice to private landowners that there may be interest by the Town to purchase particular parcels. It may be helpful to a property owner should they be interested in selling their property. In addition, a list of priority parcels is not meant to bind the Town in any manner but to be used only as a guide for possible future consideration.

Considerations/Strategies

- ***Identify high priority parcels for preservation.***

It may be prudent that the Planning and Zoning Commission work with the Conservation Commission in developing a list of high priority parcels targeted for preservation either through acquisition by the Town, partnering with the Northern Connecticut Land Trust, or through the purchase of development rights. This list may then be used when evaluating the possible purchase of these properties or in the purchase of development rights as they become available for sale. The Planning and Zoning Commission may also use this information to encourage the partial preservation of some of these parcels. For example, if appropriate the Planning and Zoning Commission may encourage the submission of an application for an open space subdivision vs. a traditional large lot subdivision if public sewers are available and site conditions warrant this type of development.

Transfer of Development Rights

A zoning technique known as Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) offers additional opportunity to preserve open space without any capital outlay by the Town. To establish a program of TDR the official zoning map would need to be amended to include both “transfer in” and “transfer out” areas. Transfer-in areas represent those parcels where higher density development may be appropriate. Transfer-out areas represent undeveloped parcels of land which have been identified as having the highest priority for preservation. Some of the properties may include those identified by the Commission as a refinement to the Conservation Commission’s Plan of Conservation as discussed earlier in this chapter. The Commission retains maximum control as it is responsible to determine in advance which properties receive the

highest priority for preservation and which properties are appropriate for higher density development. In addition, a special permit is required. A great advantage of a TDR program is that it results in land preservation at no cost to the taxpayer. Designated “transfer out” properties can include both undeveloped land as well as property being used for agricultural purposes. If the transfer out parcel includes farmland, this land may remain in the ownership of the farmer following the sale of development rights, subject to a conservation easement, and may be sold in the future and used for similar purposes. Exhibit 4-1 shows a schematic of the mechanics of TDR.

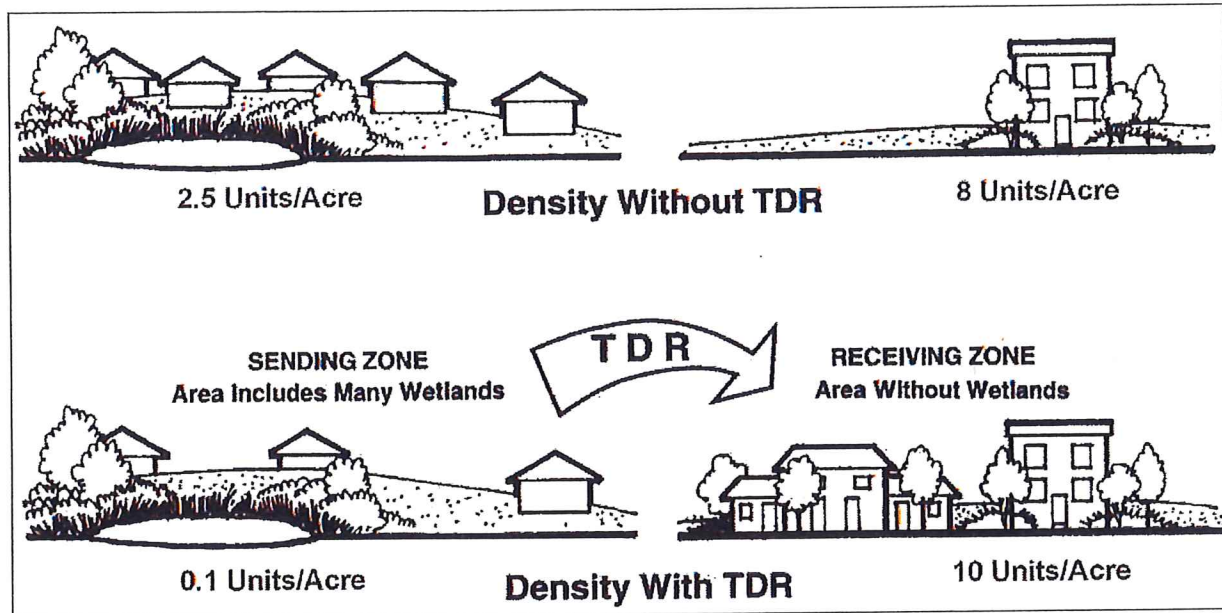


Exhibit 4-1: The Mechanics of TDR

Source: Michigan Department of Environmental Quality

A TDR program by its nature does add complexity to a potential development application. Perhaps the most significant is that it requires a developer to obtain an interest in two or more (noncontiguous) parcels of land. A developer must secure an interest in land he/she wishes to develop, as well as an interest in land to be preserved (where development rights may be transferred out). The economics must be favorable enough for a developer to pursue such a transaction, given the added costs in time and uncertainty when compared to a more conventional development application. Accordingly, TDR regulations must be carefully crafted when establishing a formula for the transfer of rights between transfer out (sending) and transfer in (receiving) parcels. It may be prudent to offer a small increase in density to be assigned to the transfer-out parcel.

TDR traditionally involves the transfer of the potential residential development in the transfer-out parcel to added residential development assigned to the transfer-in parcel. It is possible, however, to also develop a formula which permits the transfer of potential residential development in exchange for additional commercial density in commercial zoning districts. As an example, a town in Massachusetts allows an additional 2,000 square foot increment in building size plus a potential increase in lot coverage for every acre of farmland preserved. It may be appropriate to utilize a concept like this in the permitting of compact commercial development in Ellington Village Center. These ideas are also discussed in Chapter 6: Housing Strategies and Chapter 7: Economic Development.

Considerations/Strategies

Adopt a Transfer of Development Rights program (TDR)

The Commission may consider adopting a TDR program through its Zoning Regulations to achieve the preservation of additional open space in targeted areas and increased residential densities in locations deemed appropriate by the Commission. Such an approach results in land preservation without capital expenditure by the Town. However, such an approach does add a level of complexity for a potential developer. As a result, careful thought must be given in developing the metrics of the transfer formula with enough incentive, such that a potential developer is encouraged to pursue this option over a conventional subdivision.

Agriculture

The Conservation Commission and the Planning and Zoning Commission are keenly aware of the importance of agriculture in Ellington and will continue to use its authority under zoning to adopt rules that favor agricultural operations. There are many benefits farming provides to the community which include:

- Producing food locally helps meet sustainable development goals.
- Retail sales associated with farming attract customers from outside of Ellington which may benefit other commercial establishments.
- Many environmental benefits including wildlife habitat and the potential for groundwater recharge.
- Underground farmland within the floodplain and floodway can convey and store floodwaters in an unimpeded manner.
- Farms provide jobs and contribute to the local economy.
- Net positive tax revenue as compared with conventional single-family subdivision.
- There are many intangible benefits associated with farmland including a rural aesthetics, open space, and preservation of rural character.

The Planning and Zoning Commission, Board of Selectmen, Conservation Commission, and taxpayers of Ellington have, through their actions, shown great support for agriculture. This is evidenced by:

- Approval of a \$2,000,000 referendum in 2007 for the preservation of farmland.
- Including partnering with the Connecticut State Department of Agriculture in the purchase of development rights for several farms totaling 888 acres.
- Amendments to zoning regulations which significantly broaden commercial opportunities for working farms.

How Agriculture is Currently Regulated

Ellington's regulations provide generous opportunities for agriculture in all residential zones and significant commercial opportunity in all commercial and industrial zones. A number of these regulations were adopted through a comprehensive set of amendments to the zoning regulations in 2010, 2014, and 2016. All residential zones permit agricultural opportunities along with limited related commercial uses. The boarding of horses is also permitted in these zones. Recent amendments allow a Brewery, Brew Pub, or Distillery by special permit in all Commercial and Industrial Zones.

The Planning and Zoning Commission has determined that agri-tourism presents a unique opportunity to combine aspects of tourism and agriculture which provide a number of financial, educational, and social benefits to the community while allowing farmers to supplement their farming activities with activities and events directly related to the farm and farming. The Commission may consider additional amendments to further promote agri-tourism. These activities may include hayrides, petting zoos, cut your own Christmas trees, horseback riding, carriage and sleigh rides, ice cream and baked goods, and garden tours. There is also a unique opportunity to promote farm wineries, farm breweries, and farm distilleries in Residential Zones. These uses, especially farm wineries, have become increasingly more popular over the past ten years. The State of Connecticut has now granted more than forty (40) licenses for farm wineries. In 2018 the State Legislature passed Public Act 08-187 establishing rules for farm wineries. Such activities, if allowed, can provide opportunities for a more viable agricultural operation along with a modest commercial/retail component. The key in permitting any agri-tourism related activity is to establish the correct balance between "traditional" agricultural activities such as the growing of crops and "less traditional" activities such as wine and beer tastings, retail sales, and the hosting of special events.

For example, few residents would question the bucolic nature of a vineyard or even buildings necessary to process grapes and produce wines at a modest scale. Experience has shown that introducing these added commercial activities is necessary to support the economics of such a facility. Some other activities often associated with a winery such as tastings, the sale of bottles of wine, and the use of the facility for special events such as meetings or/or weddings need to be properly integrated and scaled so as not to adversely affect neighboring residents using adequate buffers for abutting residentially used property.

The Planning and Zoning Commission should consider the adoption of regulations which would permit the establishment of a farm winery, distillery, or brewery by special permit on parcels of land in excess of ten (10) acres. Regulations must strike a balance between fostering the economic success of these agricultural enterprises and safeguarding property rights of surrounding residential neighbors. It is important to note that any land use brings with it some impact/consequence on nearby properties. For example, the sale of agricultural land and its development into a “traditional” single-family subdivision results in some neighborhood impact. The key in developing a balanced regulation is to establish a set of rules which permit the operation of a viable farm, but which result in a set of impacts to nearby properties that are comparable to those that would be generated by a residential subdivision (i.e.: traffic, noise, lot coverage, etc.)

The Planning and Zoning Commission may wish to consider establishing standards for the following:

- Requiring that a certain percentage of produce sold be grown on the farm. In the case of
- a winery that a certain percentage of grapes used in wine production be grown on the property where the production facility and tasting room is located.
- Limits on the total number of gallons of alcohol which may be produced. Limits may be linked to number of acres and may differ from maximum thresholds established by the State Liquor Control Commission.
- Limiting the size of the tasting room and indoor and outdoor space that may hold special events.
- Limit the number and size of outdoor events.
- Establish noise standards, buffer zones to nearby properties, and place limits on hours that special events may take place.
- Establish parking requirements.
- Limits on the amount of food which may be sold/served. Consider differentiating between sales during “normal” tasting hours and special events.
- Prohibition on obtaining a restaurant liquor permit from the State of Connecticut Liquor Control Commission.
- Limiting the scale of the commercial activities such that the Ellington Assessor may decide the farm is still eligible for special tax consideration under public act 490.
- Requiring that the owner of the farm resides full-time on the farm.

The preservation of farmland to preserve rural character is widely supported in Ellington. In their support many residents emphasize the rural and scenic character that farmland promotes sometimes without giving due consideration to the commercial and business aspects that are required to successfully operate a farm.

Connecticut's right-to-farm law exempts farms meeting specified conditions and following generally accepted agricultural practices, from certain nuisance laws, regulations, and ordinances concerning odor, noise, and other objectionable farming by-products. But it does not exempt them from nuisances caused by negligence or willful or reckless misconduct. Towns may also adopt right-to-farm ordinances to emphasize support for local farms and agriculture. They reiterate the right-to-farm law's protections from nuisance lawsuits and often declare farming as

an accepted and valued activity within the community. The Town may wish to consider adopting a local right to farm ordinance.

The PZC might consider adopting zoning regulations that require an adequate buffer between a proposed subdivision and an existing farm. For example, regulations could require a 200-foot separation between a proposed new house and any property line that is in common with an established farm.

Regulations could also be adopted to either encourage or require the use of cluster zoning when a new subdivision is proposed adjacent to an established farm, concentrating development away from the farm. Consideration may also be given to permitting a cluster style subdivision “as of right” and requiring a special permit for a traditional large lot subdivision to encourage cluster development a significant buffer when new lots are created adjacent to an established farm.

Considerations/Strategies:

- The PZC may wish to consider amendments to the Zoning Regulations to allow farm wineries, farm breweries, and farm distilleries by special permit. Regulations must address important considerations discussed above in order to balance the need to conduct an economically viable operation while mitigating potential adverse impacts of commercial activities on nearby residential properties. Permit limited use of these facilities for special events such as weddings and other outdoor events subject to the parameters discussed in this chapter.
- The PZC may wish to consider amendments to the Zoning Regulations that require a permanent buffer between proposed new residential lots and established agricultural operations. Regulations may also be adopted which either encourage or require the use of cluster techniques to minimize conflict between proposed housing and established farms.
- The Town may wish to consider adopting a right-to farm ordinance which demonstrates the Town’s support for agriculture by limiting opportunities for nuisance damage lawsuits to established farms who otherwise follow sound agricultural practices.
- The Commission may wish to consider amendments to the Zoning and Subdivision Regulations which mandate a separation requirement between proposed new homes and established agricultural operations. The Commission may also consider regulations that either encourage or require the use of cluster zoning techniques to reduce areas of possible conflict between established farms and new homes.

Open Space or Cluster Subdivision

In 2011 Ellington adopted a density-based zoning regulation which establishes a maximum lot yield of either 0.5 or 0.6 homes per acre and minimum lot size of 40,000 square feet (except for 25,000 square feet in the lake residential zone with access to public water and sewer.) Under this regulation lots must average between 1.6 and 2 acres in size. (See sections 3.2.1 and 3.2.2 of the Ellington Zoning Regulations for more detail.

If soils are suitable or public sewers are available, the PZC may permit a reduction in lot size of 32,000 square feet. In this event overall density must still comply with the 0.5 or 0.6 requirement. To date (since 2011) there have not been any requests to seek a lot reduction to 32,000 square feet. The PZC may wish to consider an amendment to this density-based regulation aimed at the preservation of significant tracts of open space.

The following might be considered:

- Offering greater density and reduced dimensional standards when more than ten(10) acres of open space is preserved (in addition to the 10% open space requirement in subdivision regulations.) The PZC is to retain discretion on the location, shape and quality of the open space.
- Reduction in road width where the PZC determines that public roads are not required for overall road circulation and private roads are proposed.
- Identify individual parcels or areas where an open space subdivision would be preferred over a traditional large lot subdivision. In these locations permit an open space subdivision as of right and require a special permit for a traditional project. Factors to consider in identifying locations for an open space subdivision can include:
 - The presence of unique natural resources especially worthy of preservation (steep slopes, floodplain, wetlands, endangered species habitat)
 - Land which has been identified as having the highest priority for open space preservation
 - Proximity to other protected open space assets to add to areas of unfragmented open space

Considerations/Strategies

- Consider zoning amendments to Article 3 of the zoning regulations that would award a density bonus and reduction in required dimensional standards where significant amounts of open space are preserved well beyond minimum requirements established in the subdivision regulations.
- Consider identifying certain parcels or areas where an open space subdivision would be allowed as of right and where a traditional large lot subdivision would be allowed by special permit. Preparing a list of properties with the highest priority for preservation discussed in this chapter could also be used as the basis for this alternative approach.

Historic Preservation



The preservation of significant historic structures contributes to the quality of life of Ellington residents in many ways. The Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation states:

“Connecticut cities and towns are defined by the history of human impact on both the natural environment and the built environment. Rural or urban, coastal or hill town, industrial center or suburb—each of the state’s 169 cities and towns has a distinct character derived in part from the buildings, sites, and structures that represent the heritage of that community. Preserving community character enriches the lives of Connecticut residents and adds vitality to neighborhoods and downtowns.”

The 2008 POCD discussed several steps which may be undertaken to identify and help preserve important historic structures. These recommendations have not been accomplished to date. These recommendations are still relevant and are incorporated into this plan.

As a first step, the Town should consider hiring a consultant to conduct a historic resource inventory. Grants are available through the State Historic Preservation Office. A consultant must be selected that meets certain qualifications established by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior. Following this, the Town may decide what additional steps to take to add various levels of protection to these structures. These measures range from honorary to regulatory. They include listing on the National Register of Historic Places, State Register of Historic Places, and/or the creation of a local historic district.

Considerations/Strategies

- Implement the various historic preservation strategies outlined in the 2008 POCD. Begin by conducting an inventory of historic structures.
- Consider adopting a demolition/delay ordinance which would impose a 30-day delay on owners seeking a permit to demolish a structure identified on the Town’s inventory. Give preservation groups an opportunity to negotiate privately with the owner for acquisition and possible adaptive reuse.

Search in report

Previous

Next

TOWN OF ELLINGTON
BUDGET REPORT 2020-21

0270 - CONSERVATION COMMISSION			
	2020-21 Approved Budget	Trans/ Add'l Appr	Adjusted Approved Budget
01-02-00-00270-10-50103 Part Time	1,500.00	0.00	1,500.00
01-02-00-00270-20-60221 Advertising Printing Forms	550.00	0.00	550.00
01-02-00-00270-20-60222 Dues & Subscriptions	350.00	0.00	350.00
01-02-00-00270-20-60223 Travel	0.00	0.00	0.00
01-02-00-00270-20-60234 Professional Development	100.00	0.00	100.00
01-02-00-00270-20-60250 Contracted Services	1,000.00	0.00	1,000.00
01-02-00-00270-20-60254 St of Ct Surcharges	0.00	0.00	0.00
01-02-00-00270-20-60341 Office Supplies	0.00	0.00	0.00
01-02-00-00270-30-60341 Office Supplies	0.00	0.00	0.00
DEPARTMENT TOTAL	3,500.00	0.00	3,500.00

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 Search in report

Previous

Next

TOWN OF ELLINGTON
BUDGET REPORT 2019-2020
For the Nine Months Ending Wednesday, March 31, 2021

	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	YTD Detail
01-02-00-00270-10-50103 Part Time	130.00	0.00	130.00	130.00	0.00	130.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	520.00
01-02-00-00270-20-60221 Advertising Printing Forms	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
01-02-00-00270-20-60222 Dues & Subscriptions	0.00	0.00	0.00	60.00	0.00	250.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	310.00
01-02-00-00270-20-60223 Travel	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
01-02-00-00270-20-60234 Professional Development	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
01-02-00-00270-20-60250 Contracted Services	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
01-02-00-00270-20-60254 St of Ct Surcharges	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
01-02-00-00270-20-60341 Office Supplies	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
01-02-00-00270-30-60341 Office Supplies	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
DEPARTMENT TOTAL	130.00	0.00	130.00	190.00	0.00	380.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	830.00



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**CONSERVATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, MARCH 2, 2021, 7:00 PM
ZOOM MEETING**

PRESENT: Chairman Rebecca Quarno, Vice Chairman David Bidwell, Regular Members Robert Zielfelder, Sean Dwyer, George Nickerson and James Gage

ABSENT: Regular Member Laurie Burstein and Alternates Ann Harford and Jessica Fay

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 7:06 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 – Draft dated March 2, 2021

Ms. Houlihan reviewed the final draft of the Natural Resource and Wildlife Inventory with the commission and Chairman Quarno opened it to the commission for any comments or edits to discuss. The commissioners thanked the staff for all their hard work and expressed there were no further changes needed.

MOVED (GAGE) SECONDED (BIDWELL) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE THE NATURAL RESOURCE AND WILDLIFE INVENTORY DATED MARCH 2, 2021.

b. 2.7 Provide Education on Water Conservation

Ms. Houlihan reported that the newsletter in April will include the Conservation Commission's Water Conservation Tips guide.

c. Plan of Conservation and Development: Chapter 4 – Conservation Strategies, Natural Resource Preservation

Ms. Houlihan addressed the commission regarding the Sustainable Ellington Initiative on the commission's agenda and suggested focusing on the initiatives that have to do with conservation strategies and natural resource preservation by amending the Conservation Commission's Active Business to replace the Sustainable Ellington Initiative with the Plan of Conservation and Development, Chapter 4. Part of Chapter 4 addresses prioritizing parcels the commission would like to protect as open space

and farmland preservation. The commission agreed and in preparation of next month's meeting, the commissioners will review Chapter 4 and pick their top 2 items for discussion as to what the commission should start working on. Ms. Houlihan added that the Right to Farm Ordinance was passed December 2019, and the farm winery brewery distillery and cidery regulation has also been adopted.

BY CONSENSUS, AGREED TO AMEND ACTIVE BUSINESS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS AND REPLACE SUSTAINABLE ELLINGTON INITIATIVE WITH PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT CHAPTER 4 - CONSERVATION STRATEGIES, NATURAL RESOURCE PRESERVATION.

2. Update – Ellington Hockanum River Committee: Harford/Nickerson – Leads

a. Ad Hoc Ellington Trails Committee – Monthly agenda/minutes

Valerie Amsel updated the commissioners regarding the Ellington Trails Committee's upcoming activity including setting up new trails out past Crystal Lake. She reviewed the progress made last summer at the Batz property and stated that this year's focus will be the amphitheater project. The Trails Committee has also been trying to get plowing of parking at Batz accomplished to make the trails accessible during the winter months.

3. Report - Working Farmland Preservation Program: Gage/Staff – Leads

Ms. Houlihan updated the commission that Oakridge Dairy received Town Meeting approval for their farmland preservation applications for land generally located on Jobs Hill and Hoffman Roads and now the State of Connecticut and Town of Ellington can work on administrative matters and legal documents. She also reported that Oakridge Dairy received approval from both the Planning and Zoning Commission and the Wetlands Commission for their anaerobic digester and can begin pulling permits to construct in the spring.

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

Commissioner Gage reported that the Connecticut Land Trust received a package from the Department of Energy and Environment Protection (DEEP) outlining requirements for the Wraight open space preservation property. The Land Trust has satisfied the requirements and sent same to the DEEP.

III. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS:

1. FY 20-21 Budget Expenditure Update

Nothing new to report.

2. Approval of the December 1, 2020 regular meeting minutes

MOVED (GAGE) SECONDED (ZIELFELDER) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE THE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF DECEMBER 1, 2020 AS WRITTEN.

3. Election of Officers

Chairman Position:

MOVED (GAGE) SECONDED (DWYER) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO NOMINATE COMMISSIONER QUARNO FOR CHAIRMAN OF THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION FOR 2021.

**COMMISSIONER QUARNO ACCEPTED THE NOMINATION.
HEARING NO FURTHER NOMINATIONS, NOMINATIONS WERE CLOSED.**

MOVED (DWYER) SECONDED (ZIELFELDER) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO ELECT COMMISSIONER QUARNO FOR CHAIRMAN OF THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION FOR 2021.

Vice Chairman Position:

MOVED (QUARNO) SECONDED (DWYER) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO NOMINATE COMMISSIONER BIDWELL FOR VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION FOR 2021.

**COMMISSIONER BIDWELL ACCEPTED THE NOMINATION.
HEARING NO FURTHER NOMINATIONS, NOMINATIONS WERE CLOSED.**

MOVED (ZIELFELDER) SECONDED (QUARNO) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO ELECT COMMISSIONER BIDWELL FOR VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION FOR 2021.

4. Correspondence:

- a. Northern Connecticut Land Trust, Inc. Annual Report 2019-2020
- b. Thank you note from CT Land Conservation Council for membership contribution.

IV. ADJOURNMENT:

MOVED (BIDWELL) SECONDED (GAGE) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADJOURN THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEETING AT 7:44 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine Post, Recording Clerk

LANDMARK

The newsletter of the Northern Connecticut Land Trust

Number 39

March 2021

RECEIVED
MAR 17 2021
TOWN OF ELLINGTON
PLANNING DEPARTMENT



"Look deep into nature, and then you will understand everything better." – Albert Einstein

Trust Again Selected for Target Circle Program

If you shopped at Target in 2020 and entered a vote for the Land Trust in their Target Circle Guest-Directed Giving program, we thank you. The Trust received over 8700 votes that resulted in a donation from Target thanks to you and others who took the time to support their program recognizing local non-profits. We are happy to report that our Trust has again been chosen to participate in the program from Jan-March 2021, so please take the time to vote for us when you make purchases at Target and support our natural resource preservation activities.

- Guests earn one vote every time they make an eligible purchase at Target, online and in-store. In this regard, it's not your typical voting program. Members earn votes as they shop at Target.
- Earning Votes In Store: At checkout, a Target Guest may scan her/his Wallet barcode in the Target App at the time of purchase, or scan the barcode on her/his receipt with the Target App within seven (7) days of purchase.
- Earning Votes Online: To earn a vote on a Target.com or Target App purchase, a Target guest must have joined Target Circle and be signed into their Target.com account when they place an order.

Target UPDATE: "as of Feb 16, your organization has seen 14,501 votes in support from approximately 2,471 unique Target guests!"

Vernon Scouts Hike Valley Falls Lookout

Boy Scout Troop 86 of Vernon enjoyed an outing to the scenic overlook at Valley Falls Park in Vernon on the Trust's Andrew Kenneth Webster property and trails. About 20 scouts and parents/leaders participated in this event to get everyone outdoors. Troop leader Michael Lee and Trust Director Karl Hasel led the group on the 1 ½ hour walk to the Rails-to-Trails path and up to the lookout.



"Nature does not hurry, yet everything is accomplished." — Lao Tzu

Matching Grant Received from Private Donor

A generous donation from Jim and Lu Sherman and family has been granted the Trust for \$20,000 with a matching challenge, the monies to be used for an improvement project on a Trust-owned property to enhance the visibility of our organization. We are looking at significant improvements to our Scantic Riparian area in Somers along the Scantic Brook with trails and new permanent bridges and scenic areas as a way to begin utilizing these funds. As soon as the weather improves and matching funds come in, we will begin to implement the plans currently being drawn up. We plan to hold a special fundraising drive toward the end of the year to provide the matching funds to meet this challenge. Stay tuned.

Talcottville Bridge Replacement Notice (Vernon)

The State is refurbishing the old bridge at the end of Main Street in Talcottville that leads to the parking area accessing the Trust Talcottville Ravine trails on the west end. The work will replace much of the bridge structure from March thru November this year and severely limit access for that period. Walkers can still get on the trail from Dobson Road on the east end, although parking is limited to along Campbell Ave across the street from the entrance.

The bridge was built in 1891 and refurbished in 1995. The historic characteristics of the bridge will be maintained as it is in a historically significant area of town.

REMINDERS:

>The 2021 Covid relief bill signed into law in late December extends the universal charitable deduction through 2021. Notably, married couples who don't itemize may deduct up to \$600 above the standard deduction for their 2021 donations. Individuals may continue to deduct \$300 above the standard deduction for 2021.

>Membership donations can be made thru Paypal on our Website as a convenient way to keep up your support.

>The Trust is eligible for Amazon Smile donations. Amazon Smile members can designate a percentage of their purchase prices to go to their favorite charity, so keep us in mind.



Image 1: Main Street Bridge #04575 over Tankerhoosen River.

2021 Outdoor Activity Schedule

Check News and Events at www.northernctlandtrust.org for latest announcements

Sat. April 24 - Sunset / Moonlight at Skyline – 6:45 PM sharp - moonrise at 4:45, sunset at 7:41. We will hike around Trust's 65 acre Skyline Scenic Area on Stafford Rd near Somers/Stafford line. We will enjoy the sunset and beautiful view across valley towards Springfield from atop the mountain, have a snack if you would like to bring one, then return by the light of the moon. Meet at the rear of the Somers Town Hall, 600 Main St., Rt. 190 near the intersection of Rt. 83 and carpool to the site. For questions, contact Albert Grant, 860-623-5487

Sat., May 8 – Canoe and Kayak Paddle of Upper Bolton Lake in Vernon -Take a leisurely tour of this pristine lake setting, perfect for bird-watching, photo opportunities, or just a quiet morning enjoying the outdoors. Meet at the boat launch area off Hatch Hill Road at 9:00 AM. Must bring your own boat, paddles, and life vests. Call Karl at 860-649-4949 for more information

Sun, May 9 - Mother's Day hike on McCann Family Farm - 10:00 AM. Comfortable trail walk thru field and forest. Good bird-watching habitat. Mothers bring the kids – kids bring your mother! The hike will be interpreted by Ginny Patsun regarding forest history, succession and health. Meet at the rear of the Somers Town Hall, 600 Main St., Rt. 190 near the intersection of Rt. 83. For questions, contact Albert Grant, 860-623-5487

Sat, June 5 (rain date June 6)- Trails Weekend - 10:00 AM - An interpreted hike with attention to stone walls and historic farming practices on the Land Trust's 200+ acre Whitaker Woods property. This will be approximately 2 1/2 miles with diverse terrain and wildlife. Meet behind the Somers Town Hall, 600 Main St., Rt. 190, near the intersection of Rt. 83 in the center of Somers. We will car pool to the trailhead. For questions, contact Albert Grant, 860-623-5487, albert_grant@sbcglobal.net.

Sun, June 20- Father's Day Hike at Ernie Boothroyd and Bellante Preserve, Ellington - 11:00 AM. The 58-acre Ernie Boothroyd Preserve was acquired by NCLT in 2010. The Bellante Property is 36 acres abutting the Boothroyd Preserve that was recently acquired. The hike will be about 2 miles featuring abundant mountain laurel in bloom. From Stafford, take Tolland Ave south for 1.5 miles. The Boothroyd Preserve is on the right. Coming from the south; from the Tolland Green take Old Stafford Road (becomes Tolland Turnpike) 4.8 miles north to Ernie Boothroyd Preserve on the left. For further information contact leader Albert Grant, 860-623-5487.

Sun, Sept 12 – Bald Mtn. Preserve, Somers - 10:00 AM – We will hike through two Land Trust properties as well as Town of Somers and State of CT properties. These comprise the Bald Mountain Preserve, which includes the entire summit of the tallest of the surrounding mountains. The trails are steep and rocky in some places but not difficult with good shoes. The distance will be about 2 ½ miles. Meet at the rear of the Somers Town Hall, 600 Main St. Rt. 190 near the intersection of Rt. 83. For questions contact Albert Grant 860 623-5487

Sun, Oct 3 – Skyline Scenic Area – 10:00 AM - Foliage hike with great views of the valley to the west. The distance will be about 2 1/2 miles. Meet at the rear of the Somers Town Hall, 600 Main St., Rt. 190, near the intersection of Rt. 83. For questions, contact Albert Grant, 860-623-5487

Sun., October 17 – Fall foliage along Railroad Brook gorge in Vernon. Leisurely walk thru the Trust's Andrew Webster Knapp property to the Rails-to-trails, then up to the ridge overlooking Valley Falls Park and Railroad Brook for some beautiful scenery. Fairly energetic walk with up and down steep slopes, 1 to 1 ½ hours. Meet at the Valley Falls parking lot off Valley Falls Road at 9:00 AM. Call Karl at 860-649-4949 for further information.

"The clearest way into the Universe is through a forest wilderness." — John Muir



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LANDMARK: Newsletter of the

**Northern Connecticut Land Trust
PO Box 324
Somers, CT. 06071**

Ellington Conservation Commission
55 Main St
Ellington CT 06029

06029-334155



Board of Directors

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1st V. President

Rick Dewey, Stafford

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Albert Grant, Melrose

Jim Gage, Ellington

Arend Jan-Knuttel, East Windsor

George Grant, Somers

Don Smith, Somers

Gene Julian, Stafford

Richard Bailey, Somers

Josh Bodian, Somers

If you have a friend interested in joining the Trust and supporting the work of protecting our natural resources, please pass this newsletter on to them. Contributions are tax deductible.

MEMBERSHIPS: Individual \$25 Benefactor \$1000
Patron \$100
Sustaining \$50
Family \$35

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE: _____ **E_MAIL:** _____

Would you like to receive the newsletter by e-mail? _____

**Mail to: Northern Connecticut Land Trust
PO Box 324
Somers, CT. 06071**

If you would like to volunteer to work projects such as fund-raising, trail maintenance, newsletter, or others, please check YES ___ NO ___