



STATE OF CONNECTICUT – COUNTY OF TOLLAND
INCORPORATED 1786

TOWN OF ELLINGTON

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CONSERVATION COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES TUESDAY, APRIL 6, 2021, 7:00 PM ZOOM MEETING

PRESENT: Chairman Rebecca Quarno, Regular Members Sean Dwyer, Laurie Burstein, James Gage and Alternates Ann Harford and Jessica Fay

ABSENT: Vice Chairman David Bidwell, Regular Members Robert Zielfelder and George Nickerson

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.

II. PUBLIC COMMENTS (On Non-Agenda Items): NONE

III. ACTIVE BUSINESS:

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

Chairman Quarno introduced the topic and asked if any of the commissioners had read the chapter and had any ideas that the commission could start addressing. Commissioner Gage stated he felt that a good direction would be to establish a list of high priority parcels the town could acquire for preservation farmland and open space and indicated that he had 18 properties on his list so far. Ms. Houlihan offered to utilize the GIS map system to assist in identifying ownership and property conditions to create a data base. Ms. Houlihan also suggested the commission can use the current open space ranking system to determine a hierarchy of priority parcels.

Chairman Quarno speculated there might be a value to go through this process and present the commission's findings to the Board of Selectmen to get a baseline reaction from them with regard to specific parcels and gauge the Board's support and potentially involve the Trails Committee as well.

Ms. Houlihan gave the commissioners an overview of how to use the GIS map system and she will create a priority list based upon Commissioner Gage's list and include it in next month's meeting packet to review and discuss along with a blank ranking sheet.

Commissioner Dwyer asked if there were any properties that should be considered for historical preservation. Ms. Houlihan replied that there was a commission established in 1990's and there are over 100 parcels listed on the National Registry of Historic Places but there is no formal historic district commission and there are no parcels that she's aware of that have not been identified and/or aren't already somewhat protected.

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

Commissioner Harford reported that the Trails Committee started assessing for spring cleanup last week and she has walked all of the trails and noted they were well used over winter. They will be fixing a bridge by the radio station tomorrow. Trash pickup is being maintained and the trail maps are being used by the public.

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

Ms. Houlihan reported that the proposal for Oakridge Dairy has all town approvals as of December and they are now working on the administrative paperwork such as the formal surveys, deeds and easements which can be time consuming so she doesn't anticipate any movement on this project until June. Ms. Houlihan also mentioned that the new farm winery, brewery and cidery regulations are in place if anyone wants to pursue such a venture.

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

Commissioner Gage reported the DEEP is working directly with the land trust's lawyer for the Wraight open space property and they should have a closing this month. Ms. Houlihan reported that despite all her efforts dating back to 2017, there are no new updates regarding the Brady property.

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS:

1. FY 20-21 Budget Expenditure Update

Nothing new to report.

2. Approval of the March 2, 2021 regular meeting minutes

MOVED (GAGE) SECONDED (DWYER) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE THE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF MARCH 2, 2021 AS WRITTEN.

3. Correspondence:

- a. Northern Connecticut Land Trust Landmark Newsletter March 2021

V. ADJOURNMENT:

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

Respectfully submitted,

Christine Post, Recording Clerk