



STATE OF CONNECTICUT – COUNTY OF TOLLAND
INCORPORATED 1786

TOWN OF ELLINGTON

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CONSERVATION COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES TUESDAY, JUNE 1, 2021, 7:00 PM ZOOM MEETING

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

ABSENT: Vice Chairman David Bidwell, Regular Member Robert Zielfelder and Alternate Jessica Fay

STAFF: Lisa Houlihan, Town Planner and Acting Recording Clerk

I. CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Rebecca Quarno called the 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

a. List of Priority Parcels for Farmland and Open Space - Draft May 4, 2021

The commission discussed the draft list of priority parcels and Open Space Ranking form. After roundtable discussion, Lisa Houlihan, Town Planner, will provide the commission with a GIS printout showing the locations of the parcels listed on the draft list for review next month to aide them with ranking individual parcels. Commissioner Gage mentioned a separate ranking form for farmland. Ms. Houlihan will provide the farmland ranking once they get to that portion of the parcel list.

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

Commissioner Harford reviewed ongoing maintenance and recent repairs to an existing bridge.

a. Memo from First Selectman Lori Spielman for Request to Combine Ellington Hockanum River Committee with the Ad Hoc Ellington Trails Committee.

Ms. Houlihan summarized actions taken by the Board of Selectmen and explained the Ellington Hockanum River Committee (EHRC) will now report directly to the Ellington Trails Committee (ETC). She also explained the ETC membership was increased to enable EHRC to become official members. Commissioners Harford and Nickerson chose to continue as Conservation Commission members but will continue to work with volunteers to work on Hockanum River trails. Commissioner Harford explained that Tom Palshaw, Ellington resident

and Hockanum River trail volunteer, attends ETC meetings and reports EHRC projects to them. The EHRC will no longer be a standing item on future CC agendas, and minutes and agendas for the ETC will be listed under Administrative Business.

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

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

Ms. Houlihan explained administrative matters are underway.

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

Commissioner Gage reported the Land Trust received funds from the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection and a closing is expected by the end of the week.

a. Memo from Water Pollution Control Authority Administrator for potential expansion to the sanitary sewer district to include Planned Commercial and agricultural properties along Jobs Hill Road and Tomoka Avenue.

Ms. Houlihan reviewed the potential sanitary sewer expansion and benefits it will present for The Modern Milkman and commercially zoned land in proximity to Tomoka Avenue and Jobs Hill Road. The expansion may include the T-Parcel for future community buildings.

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS:

1. FY 20-21 Budget Expenditure Update

Chairman Quarno asked if they should evaluate unexpended funds and approve donations to conservation groups like authorized in past years. Ms. Houlihan explained a new Finance Officer/Treasurer has taken steps to change some past practices to align them with generally accepted accounting practices. Ms. Houlihan will ask the Finance Department if donations are permissible. In the event they may be granted and since the current fiscal year ends prior to the commission's next meeting, she'll have unspent funds encumbered so donations can be approved in July.

Commissioner Harford explained efforts to increase signage along trails and how they are coordinating with 911 leadership. Funds are needed to pay for sign supplies and funds available to the ETC are earmarked for the amphitheater project. Commissioner Harford will seek quotes for sign supplies and submit them to the Planning Department.

MOVED (DWYER) SECONDED (BURSTEIN) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE SPENDING A PORTION OF UNUSED FUNDS FOR SIGNS SUPPLIES FOR TRAILS.

2. Approval of the April 6, 2021 regular meeting minutes

MOVED (DWYER) SECONDED (HARFORD) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE THE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF APRIL 6, 2021 AS WRITTEN.

3. Correspondence:

- a. Letter from Pullman & Comley for CTEC Solar, LLC, dated April 13, 2021, submittal of a Petition for Declaratory Ruling to the Connecticut Siting Council for two solar-based electric generating facilities at 277 Sadds Mill Road, Ellington, CT.

The commission discussed if they would like to continue digital meetings, hybrid meetings, or resume 100% in-person meetings. Chairman Quarno and Commissioner Dwyer had no preference, Commissioner Gage prefers attending meetings remotely, and Commissioners Harford and Nickerson expressed interested for resuming in-person meetings. Ms. Houlihan explained that starting next month provisions will be available for hybrid meetings.

V. ADJOURNMENT:

MOVED (NICKERSON) SECONDED (DWYER) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADJOURN THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEETING AT 8:05 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Houlihan, Acting Recording Clerk