



STATE OF CONNECTICUT – COUNTY OF
TOLLAND INCORPORATED 1786

TOWN OF ELLINGTON

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CONSERVATION COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 2021, 7:00 PM

IN PERSON ATTENDANCE: TOWN HALL ANNEX, 57 MAIN STREET, ELLINGTON, CT

REMOTE ATTENDANCE: ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCING

- PRESENT:** IN PERSON: VICE CHAIRMAN DAVID BIDWELL AND ALTERNATE ANN HARFORD.
ZOOM ATTENDANCE: CHAIRMAN REBECCA QUARNO, REGULAR MEMBERS
SEAN DWYER, JAMES GAGE AND GEORGE NICKERSON, AND ALTERNATE
JESSICA FAY
- ABSENT:** REGULAR MEMBERS LAURIE BURSTEIN AND ROBERT ZIELFELDER
- STAFF:** IN PERSON: LISA HOULIHAN, TOWN PLANNER AND ACTING RECORDING CLERK

I. CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Quarno called the meeting to order at 7:04 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 reviewed five separate parcels from the list of priority parcels and scored them using the Open Space Ranking form. The parcels are off Kibbe and Porter Roads and ranked between 5 and 13 points from a potential 16 points. Lisa Houlihan, Town Planner, will provide GIS printouts of five more parcels from the priority list for review next month.

2. Report - Working Farmland Preservation Program:

Ms. Houlihan explained recent discussion with the Department of Agriculture and the expectation that Farm 3 for Oakridge Dairy will close by the end of September. Farm 3 includes land on Jobs Hill Road, and will permanently protect 51.45 acres.

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

Commissioner Gage reported Northern Connecticut Land Trust took ownership of the Wraight parcels on the west side of Webster Road in June. He thanked the commission for endorsing the open space project and staff for presenting the proposal to the Board of Selectmen (BOS). The Town contributed \$90,000 towards to \$265,000 purchase price, and without Ellington's participation the project may not have been possible.

Scott Brady, owner of 79 Kibbe Road and a parcel of interest for open space, recently contacted Ms. Houlihan. He's getting ready to list the property and wanted to give Ellington the option of buying it before it's listed. Mr. Brady explained his family turned down a cash offer to purchase the property for \$350,000. He also shared a report from his realtor advising him 21 acres along Windermere Avenue in Ellington sold for \$450,000. Ms. Houlihan informed Mr. Brady the sales information was incomplete explaining the land transfer on Windermere Avenue included three separate parcels equaling about 40 acres. Online assessment records for 79 Kibbe Road reflect an appraised value of \$171,190. The commission agreed they would support an offer to purchase around \$200,000, but would not support offering more than \$350,000.

Emergency services is interested in 79 Kibbe Road so access to Sykes Road can be reestablished. Many local residents are interested in regaining access because the property once served as the main access point in Ellington to the Shenipsit State Forest. The BOS could take the lead on negotiating purchase of the property for emergency serves and public access and those reasons may support offering more than appraised value.

Commissioner Dwyer noted the land along Windermere Avenue that recently sold is flat, accessible and has public utilities increasing its value. The Kibbe Road parcel is steep, not served by public utilities and has low development potential.

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS:

1. FY 20-21 Budget Expenditure Update and approval of donations for FY 19-20 from encumbered funds balance.

Authorization is present to use unused funds from FY20/21 for contributions to conservation organizations. In the past the commission donated to the Connecticut Land Conservation Council, Northern Connecticut Land Trust, the Ellington Hockanum River Trail Committee and AdHoc Ellington Trails Committee - the two trail committees have been merged.

MOVED (DWYER) SECONDED (HARFORD) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY (GAGE ABSTAINED) TO DONATE \$525 TO CONNECTICUT LAND CONSERVATION COUNCIL, \$525 TO THE NORTHERN CONNECTICUT LAND TRUST, AND \$525 TO THE ADHOC ELLINGTON TRAILS COMMITTEE.

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

MOVED (HARFORD) SECONDED (BIDWELL) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY (NICKERSON ABSTAINED) TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF JULY 6, 2021 AS WRITTEN.

3. Correspondence:
 - a. Ad Hoc Ellington Trails Committee - Monthly agenda/minutes

V. ADJOURNMENT:

MOVED (GAGE) SECONDED (NICKERSON) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADJOURN AT 8:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Houlihan, Acting Recording Clerk