



STATE OF CONNECTICUT – COUNTY OF TOLLAND
INCORPORATED 1786

TOWN OF ELLINGTON

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CONSERVATION COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES TUESDAY, MARCH 8, 2022, 7:00 PM

IN PERSON ATTENDANCE: TOWN HALL ANNEX, 57 MAIN STREET, ELLINGTON, CT
REMOTE ATTENDANCE: ZOOM MEETING
(ATTENDEES BELOW ATTENDED REMOTELY UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED)

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

ABSENT: Regular Member Robert Zielfelder and Alternates Ann Harford and Jessica Fay

STAFF: Lisa Houlihan, Town Planner (In Person) and Nathaniel Trask, Recording Clerk

I. CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Rebecca Quarno called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM.

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

III. ACTIVE BUSINESS:

1. Plan of Conservation & Development, Chapter 4 - Conservation Strategies, Natural Resource Preservation:

Chairman Quarno introduced the Protected Land Inventory for the Town of Ellington.

- a. Review of Plan of Conservation for potential updates to Chapter 2 – Protected Land Inventory and Table 1.

Ms. Houlihan said she will work on the updates to the Protected Land Inventory and prepare a draft of revisions. Ms. Houlihan indicated that the page is outdated at this point. The document lists that Ellington is 22,138 acres, which is consistent with the 2008 Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD), however the 2019 POCD lists Ellington as having 22,075 acres of land. The Bellante (Sandy Beach Road) property, the Wraight (Webster Road) property and the Pearl property, which amount to 163.97 acres will need to be added to the inventory. Ms. Houlihan asked the commission if they would like her to update the total acreage of Ellington to be consistent with the current POCD. She also added that the Wraight's sold 36.62 acres of land for development rights to the Connecticut Farmland Trust and that there was a deed placed on the land records in 2019, which she also would like to update. The commissioners indicated that they do not see any issues with making the updates.

Ms. Houlihan said she will work with the GIS consultant on the changes. When speaking with her, the consultant recommended she wait until May to make any updates because that is when the annual update is done for all GIS. An open-space brochure that was created several years ago is also outdated because of the changes, however the original document cannot be located. Ms. Houlihan said that some consultant services money may have to be used to devise a new brochure if the original one cannot be located.

b. Review & Update List of Priority Parcels for Farmland and Open Space.

Ms. Houlihan spoke with First Selectman, Lori Spielman, about approaching the Board of Selectmen and some of the property owners about an open-space purchase on the west side of Green Road. Ms. Spielman agreed and recommended presenting a package to the Board. If the Board does not agree or there are no willing participants, then the project cannot move forward. A letter will be drafted to send to property owners to gauge interest before approaching the Board.

2. Report - Working Farmland Preservation Program:

Ms. Houlihan spoke with the Finance Department about an open-bond authorization for Oakridge Dairy. Finance asked when Oakridge Dairy would close on Farm Easement 1, which is an area of about 116 acres. The Connecticut Department of Agriculture (DoAg) was contacted, and they said they had to revise the survey of the land, which is currently under review. The purchase is expected to close in May. A press release will be worked on in conjunction with the DoAg to promote the success of the program once the property closes, and a new letter of interest will be sent to farm owners to see if they want to participate in the program.

3. Report - Open Space Preservation Program:

First Selectman, Lori Spielman, spoke with Ms. Houlihan about contacting Scott Brady, the landowner of 79 Kibbe Road. A detailed phone message was left with Mr. Brady last week about the potential purchase of the 25 acre parcel or placing an easement over the area known as Sykes Road that runs through the property.

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS:

1. FY 21-22 Budget & Expenditure Update.

Chairman Quarno introduced the budget update. There is nothing new to report. Commissioner Bidwell asked if funds are need for the open space pamphlet. Ms. Houlihan said she would search again for the original document before soliciting estimated costs from local sources for creating a new pamphlet for report in April.

2. Approval of the February 8, 2022 regular meeting minutes.

MOVED (GAGE) SECONDED (QUARNO) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE THE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 8, 2022 AS WRITTEN.

3. Correspondence:

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

Valerie Amsel, representing the Ad Hoc Ellington Trails Committee, addressed the commission. According to Ellington Parks and Recreation, there is no plan to put a disc golf course on Stein Road. The committee is planning to proceed with the trails on Stein Road. Ms. Amsel said there is nothing new to report on the cross-town trails and that the Crystal Ridge trails will be finished after a meeting with the Board of Selectmen. Commissioner Dwyer asked if the trails had been blazed at Stein Road. Ms. Amsel said that there is still work that needs to be done at the trails on Stein Road.

V. ADJOURNMENT:

**MOVED (DWYER) SECONDED (BIDWELL) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO
ADJOURN THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEETING AT 7:24 PM.**

Respectfully submitted,

Nathaniel Trask, Recording Clerk