



STATE OF CONNECTICUT – COUNTY OF TOLLAND  
INCORPORATED 1786

# TOWN OF ELLINGTON

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## CONSERVATION COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES TUESDAY, JUNE 14, 2022, 7:00 PM

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

**PRESENT:** In Person: Alternate Ann Harford; Remote Attendance: Chairman Rebecca Quarno, Regular Members George Nickerson, James Gage, Robert Zielfelder and Laurie Burstein (arrived at 7:15)

**ABSENT:** Vice Chairman David Bidwell, Regular Member Sean Dwyer, and Alternate Jessica Fay

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

### **OTHERS**

**PRESENT:** Valerie Amsel, Ad Hoc Ellington Trails Committee Liaison (In Person)

**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**

Ms. Houlihan said she attended the Board of Selectmen's Recognition Program for Elected and Appointed Officials Meeting. The Board wanted to thank Chairman Quarno for her 15 years of service on the Conservation Commission as well as Ms. Amsel for her five years of service serving on the Ad Hoc Ellington Trails Committee.

### **III. ACTIVE BUSINESS:**

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

Eight letters were mailed on June 13, 2022, to property owners on Green Road. Some property owners own multiple parcels on Green Road. The letter states that Ms. Houlihan is writing to them on behalf of the Conservation Commission, the town's lead advocacy group for open-space and farmland preservation and that their property is located within the western farm belt. The letter also states that this is an area of significant open-space preservation interest and that there are programs in place to compensate landowners for land purchase or sale of development rights. The letter directs the landowners to contact Ms. Houlihan on behalf of the Conservation Commission if they are interested in preserving their land.

Ms. Houlihan said the letter was mailed later than originally planned, but Chairman Quarno said there is no real urgency involved in this matter. Ms. Houlihan said there was conversation at the Shared Services Commission meeting to establish a committee in the town to begin the process of getting Ellington to be certified as a Sustainable Connecticut town. She hopes the committee is established soon so Ellington can receive assistance from fellows working with the University of Connecticut through the Capitol Region Council of Governments to have them come in and look at what the town has accomplished already and seek their guidance.

Chairman Quarno asked what was driving the decision to establish a separate committee. Ms. Houlihan said there was a presentation by leaders from the Sustainable Connecticut program at the Shared Services Commission meeting.

2. Report - Working Farmland Preservation Program:

In January, Ms. Houlihan contacted the Connecticut Department of Agriculture about the status of the closing for the second farm preservation program for Oakridge Dairy. She sent a follow-up email two weeks ago but has not received a response yet. The property has not yet been closed on. Once the property is closed on, Ms. Houlihan will send a letter to other farmland owners in town. Chairman Quarno said she would like the letter to include testimonials from others that preserved their land for what the program has done for them.

Chairman Quarno asked Ms. Houlihan if anybody has reached out or visited the Planning Department to ask questions or inquire about the Working Farmland Preservation Program. She answered that it has generally been quiet.

3. Report - Open Space Preservation Program:

Ms. Houlihan said the Green Road properties qualify for the Open Space Program. Commissioner Nickerson asked if there had been any contact with Scott Brady. Ms. Houlihan explained recent outreach to him and said that the purchase price has not decreased and that the matter is still status-quo.

**IV. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS:**

1. FY 21-22 Budget & Expenditure Update

The budget for the Economic Development Commission was mistakenly sent to the Conservation Commission members instead of their own budget ahead of this month's meeting, so a detailed budget document was not available to the members.

Ms. Houlihan indicated that there were no expenditures between last month and this month for the commission.

2. Approval of the April 12, 2022 regular meeting minutes.

**MOVED (HARFORD) SECONDED (ZIELFELDER) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE THE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF APRIL 12, 2022 AS WRITTEN.**

3. Correspondence:

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

Ms. Amsel, the Ad Hoc Ellington Trails Committee liaison, addressed the commission. She said the committee has replaced one bridge, built an additional one and fixed a third at the Stein open space property. There is one more bridge remaining. Commissioner Bidwell and First Selectman Spielman have been helping at the property. On Tuesday, June 7, 2022, 30 people came to the Hockanum River trails, including 22 representatives from Key Bank and a few members of the community. The people were divided into three groups who spread mulch, picked up trash and debris on the trails and worked on a bridge. Mulch is also being spread at the Batz Trails. Ms. Amsel noted that a local Boy Scout is working on the Crystal Ridge property for their Eagle Scout project. The scout will be blazing a trail and building a bench on the property.

Commissioner Harford said that she noticed that signs were installed at the Hockanum River and Batz trails warning people to not eat the fish after discussions at last month's meeting.

Ms. Houlihan said Ken Radziwon, the town's new Public Works Director, served on the trails committee prior to town employment and is finishing updates to the trail maps. Once the maps are finished, Ms. Houlihan will give the maps to the town's GIS consultant and have them linked to the trails layer on the town's GIS map. This will allow people to open the map and hover over trails and a PDF document will pop up with a map of the trail that indicates amenities like parking, benches, bridges, and emergency locator signs.

**V. ADJOURNMENT:**

**MOVED (HARFORD) SECONDED (NICKERSON) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO  
ADJOURN THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEETING AT 7:30 PM.**

Respectfully submitted,

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Nathaniel Trask, Recording Clerk