



STATE OF CONNECTICUT – COUNTY OF TOLLAND
INCORPORATED 1786

TOWN OF ELLINGTON

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**CONSERVATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2022, 7:00 PM
IN PERSON ATTENDANCE: TOWN HALL ANNEX, 57 MAIN STREET, ELLINGTON, CT
REMOTE ATTENDANCE: ZOOM MEETING**

PRESENT: Remote: Chairman Rebecca Quarno, Regular Members George Nickerson, James Gage, and Laurie Burstein; In Person: Regular Member Sean Dwyer

ABSENT: Vice Chairman David Bidwell, Regular Member Robert Zielfelder, and Alternates Ann Harford and Jessica Fay

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

OTHERS

PRESENT: Remote: Valerie Amsel (arrived 7:40 PM), Ellington Trails Committee

I. CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Rebecca Quarno called the meeting to order at 7:10 PM.

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

III. ACTIVE BUSINESS:

1. Review of conservation sections from the 2022 Sustainable CT Action Overview Worksheet

Ms. Houlihan used the 2022 Sustainable CT Action Overview Worksheet to create a worksheet for conservation-focused actions to be more user friendly. She researched the number of known brownfields in Ellington. A brownfield is a property that has potentially been contaminated. According to the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, Ellington has no known brownfields. To add a property on the listing, the property owner's consent is needed. Examples of brownfields could be a former dry cleaners or a property such as Sullivan Tire. Submission requirements regarding brownfields are in Section 2.1 of the 2022 Sustainable CT Action Overview Worksheet.

Ms. Houlihan said the commission can also focus on actions for Section 3.4, which is to develop an open space plan. She believes a lot can be accomplished in this area given the commission already has an open space plan, however updates may be needed. This item is worth up to 60 points toward certification. To be eligible to apply, applicants must have a minimum of 200 points with one completed action item in each of the 13 categories. The open space inventory needs to include things such as protected agricultural lands, open space or forests, land trusts, and water company property. Ms. Houlihan said she will work on that over the next several months and the next certification period is sometime at the beginning of next year.

A task force will be created of different department heads to work on accomplishing goals related to the Sustainable CT certification. Ms. Houlihan said that the town has never applied for certification before. The Shared Services Committee held a Sustainable CT presentation to illustrate how to get certified. Ms. Houlihan said First Selectman, Lori Spielman, said the creation of a task force is in the works. The task force is expected to involve Ms. Houlihan, the public works director, the library director, the senior services director, and the human services director (which will include youth services and parks and recreation). The task force will coordinate efforts to achieve the necessary 200 points that are required for certification.

Chairman Quarno asked if a representative from Sustainable CT could meet with the commission to update the commission on the program. Commissioner Dwyer suggested that if a representative from Sustainable CT were to come and visit with the commission that they should instead visit with members of all the groups that are involved. Ms. Houlihan said that once the First Selectman's office establishes the task force, the presentation given before the Shared Services Committee could be presented to the task force and anybody else who wants to come. She also said a representative from Sustainable CT could attend one of the Conservation Commission meetings via Zoom.

Ms. Houlihan said she would check in with the First Selectman's office about a timeline for establishing the taskforce and about having the taskforce see the presentation from Sustainable CT. Many of the members who will be on the taskforce have already seen the presentation. She said if the presentation turns out to be redundant, she will contact Sustainable CT to ask for a representative to meet with the commission.

Chairman Quarno asked if there was time before action items needed to be completed. Ms. Houlihan said 6-8 months would be needed and that she would like to focus on the open space plan and the agricultural stuff the commission has accomplished.

BY CONSENSUS, THE COMMISSION AGREED TO FOCUS ON ACTIONS FOR SECTIONS 3.4 - DEVELOP AN OPEN SPACE PLAN AND 5.3 - DEVELOP AGRICULTURE-FRIENDLY PRACTICES FOR THE SUSTAINABLE CONNECTICUT INITIATIVE.

Ms. Amsel asked if the commission would like the Ad Hoc Ellington Trails Committee to take pictures of the pollinator gardens. Ms. Houlihan detailed some ways the town can use the pollinator gardens to educate people according to the Sustainable CT requirements. Sustainable CT requires photos be submitted. Ms. Houlihan asked if the trails committee has anything on the trails they maintain that would fulfill the pollinator garden requirements. Ms. Amsel said the Batz property is the most important one.

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

Ms. Houlihan said some actions for Sustainable CT may also be goals in the Plan of Conservation and Development. Chairman Quarno said that if the commission identifies the linkages, then this item no longer needs to be on future agendas.

3. Report - Working Farmland Preservation Program:
 - a. Ellington Farm Day, September 17, 2022, 10am-3pm, Event flyer

Ellington Farm Day is on Saturday, September 17, 2022, from 10am-3pm. An advertisement was in the *North Central News* last Saturday and promoted on social media. The goal of the farm day is to promote agriculture in Ellington. Participants include The Cohen Farm, 112 West Road; Dzen Garden Market, 187 Windsorville Road; Ellington Farmer's Market – Arbor Park, Main Street; Hall Memorial Library, 93 Main Street; Ellington Historical Society, 70 Main Street; Farm Fresh, 31 Frog Hollow Road; Hillside Stables, 267 Jobs Hill Road; Johnny Appleseed, 185 West Road; Oakridge Dairy and The Modern Milkman, 11 Jobs Hill Road; Rothe Veggie Stand, 224 Windsorville Road; SJ Riding Camp, 130 Old Sandy Beach Road; and Sunset Valley Farm, 55 Kreyssig Road. This will help Ellington achieve Sustainable CT certification as well.

4. Report - Open Space Preservation Program:

Commissioner Gage said a property owner on Porter Road offered to sell 10 acres. He worked with the owner to negotiate a price, but they could not come to an agreement. He offered a little more than the town appraised value of the property. Commissioner Gage estimated that the property owner owns a total of 60 acres.

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS:

1. FY 22-23 Budget & Expenditure Update

The only expenditure for this budget period is part-time services of the recording clerk.

2. Approval of the August 9, 2022 regular meeting minutes.

MOVED (GAGE) SECONDED (NICKERSON) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE THE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF AUGUST 9, 2022 AS WRITTEN.

3. Correspondence:

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

Ms. Valerie Amsel, the Ad Hoc Ellington Trails Committee liaison, said the regular meeting has been moved to tomorrow night.

Ms. Houlihan said she is not able to attend next month's meeting and asked if the commission would like her to arrange other coverage to run the meeting or if they'd like to cancel. In the event something time-sensitive comes up, a special meeting will be scheduled.

MOVED (DWYER) SECONDED (QUARNO) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO CANCEL THE NEXT REGULAR MEETING ON OCTOBER 11, 2022.

V. ADJOURNMENT:

MOVED (DWYER) SECONDED (NICKERSON) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADJOURN THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEETING AT 8:08 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Nathaniel Trask, Recording Clerk