

**SUFFIELD CONSERVATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
MEETING OF TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2023**

PRESENT:

**Art Christian, Chairman
Glen Neilson, Vice Chairman
Norm John Noble
Beth Fanous
Tom Elmore
Jessica McCue**

PARKS SUPERINTENDENT

Tom O'Brien

CONSULTANT:

Keith Morris

CALL MEETING TO ORDER- 7:00 P.M.

Chairman Christian called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. Consultant Morris read the agenda. Chairman Christian stated that alternate Commissioners McCue and Elmore shall be voting members in place of Commissioners Reilly and Wilcox who were not in attendance. Vice Chairman Neilson made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Elmore to move the Park Superintendent report down the agenda until the informal discussions have been completed. The motion carried unanimously.

INFORMAL DISCUSSION:

Solar farm – Suffield Landfill

Town resident Kevin Sullivan addressed the Commission and stated that he is working with Town personnel to construct a solar farm at two potential locations at the existing town landfill on Mountain Road. One location is on the landfill itself and the other is in the forested area below the existing dumpster. At the request of consultant Morris Mr. Sullivan retained a soil scientist to delineate any wetland areas that may impact the panel locations. A plan was presented which showed the wetland areas on site. Mr. Sullivan stated it does not appear that wetlands will impact the panel locations. Additionally, the project will not have to go before the Connecticut Siting Counsel. The developer would be responsible for maintaining the panels and removing them at the end of their lifespan.

A lengthy discussion followed on installation of the panels and maintenance over the 20-year lease. Mr. Sullivan stated that specific engineering questions would be answered during the permitting process for the solar farms. It is anticipated that the 20-year lease would generate 2.5 million dollars for the Town.

Storage Building – Suffield Highway Department

Consultant Morris stated that the Highway Department is working on plans to construct a storage building at their Ffyer Place site. The construction will take place on an area that is already impervious. There will be no work within the upland review area. Vice Chairman Neilson updated the Commission on the building design and stated that it will be used for equipment storage only. After discussion the Commission had no issues with the proposal.

Building – 1286 Mountain Road

Consultant Morris stated that the property owner at this address would like to construct a cottage on the property that already has a single-family home on it. Due to the proposed construction area looking questionable in regards to wetland Mr. Morris suggested to the property owner that a soil scientist inspect the site and delineate any regulated wetlands. The property owner has since done that and each Commissioner has a copy of the soil scientists report. Brian Denno of Denno Land Surveying addressed the Commission and stated that the septic system for the cottage would require an extension of the existing system on site. Chairman Christian polled the commissioners and there were no major issues with the proposal other than investigating other locations on site for the cottage that are further away from the wetland area.

Debris Removal – 200 Mountain Road

Consultant Morris explained that the property owner, Bill Garrity, recently purchased the property. He would like to clean up some debris adjacent to Muddy Brook which includes an asphalt pile and some cable and old wooden guard rails left adjacent to the bridge. Consultant Morris stated that the cable and wood guardrail material is on state owned property. Mr. Garrity addressed the Commission and stated he has someone who would remove the materials and a landscaper who will stabilize the site. Commissioner Elmore suggested that a hand sketched plan be submitted that shows the approximate location of the debris to be removed. After discussion vice chairman Neilson made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Elmore, to ask for a plan to be submitted, along with a brief narrative, to Consultant Morris for his review and if necessary to discuss further with the Commission. The motion was carried unanimously.

PARKS SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

Parks Superintendent Tom O'Brien presented his report to the Commission. Things at Stony Brooke Park have been fairly quiet. The State has cleared vegetation along Mountain Road north of the Park entrance which greatly helps visibility leaving the Park. The highway department has done a lot of work at the park including redoing the roadway and pathway to the beach, and improving drainage near the beach area. Funds have been transferred in order to pay for improvements to the barn foundation.

A discussion followed on the state of the Jesse Fowler Forest and the current rules for Sunrise Park. The Commission will review the rules of the park and potential revisions and discuss this the next time the Commission meets.

The Park Superintendent will discuss making improvements to Jesse Fowler Forest with the highway department.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

After a brief discussion, Commissioner Noble made a motion, seconded by Commissioner McCue, to reelect Art Christian as Chairman, Glenn Neilson as Vice Chairman, Ray Wilcox as Treasurer, and himself as Secretary. The motion was carried unanimously.

CONSULTANT'S REPORT:

Consultant Morris stated that he and Chairman Christian will be meeting with the Parks and Recreation Director to discuss this year's fishing derby. The meeting will be Tuesday March 14, 2023 at the Parks and Recreation Office. A discussion followed on potential changes and improvements to this year's derby.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE JANUARY 10, 2023 MEETING OF THE COMMISSION

Commissioner Noble made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Elmore, to approve the minutes as written. The motion was carried unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Noble made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner McCue. The motion was carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted by
Norm John Noble
Recording Secretary