



STATE OF CONNECTICUT - COUNTY OF TOLLAND

INCORPORATED 1786

TOWN OF ELLINGTON

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CONSERVATION COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING AGENDA TUESDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2023, 7:00 PM

IN-PERSON ATTENDANCE: TOWN HALL ANNEX, 57 MAIN STREET, ELLINGTON, CT
REMOTE ATTENDANCE: VIA ZOOM MEETING, INSTRUCTIONS PROVIDED BELOW

I. CALL TO ORDER:

II. PUBLIC COMMENTS (On Non-Agenda Items):

III. ACTIVE BUSINESS:

1. Review Plan of Conservation & Development, Chapter 4-Conservation Strategies, Natural Resource Preservation. (*Distributed January 10, 2023*)
 - a. Draft Text Amendment to Section 7.14.3 – Agricultural Special Permit Uses in Residential Zones, Pursuant to Recommendations from the Plan of Conservation and Development.
2. Review Sustainable CT Certification Action Overview Worksheet - Conservation Sections
 - a. Report from Sustainable CT - Review of Preliminary Certification Submittal.
 - 3.4 Develop an Open Space Plan
 - 3.5 Create a Natural Resource and Wildlife Inventory
 - b. 5.3 Develop Agriculture-Friendly Practice.
3. Report - Farmland Preservation Program.
4. Report - Open Space Preservation Program.

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS:

1. FY 23-24 Budget & Expenditure Update.
2. Approval of September 12, 2023, Regular Meeting Minutes.
3. Correspondence/Discussion:
 - a. Ad Hoc Ellington Trails Committee - Monthly Agendas/Minutes.
 - b. FEMA Notice dated September 27, 2023, for the Draft Risk Map Project for the Thames and Shetucket Watersheds.
 - c. US Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Letter dated September 25, 2023, for the Connecticut Statewide Important Farmland Criteria Update.

V. ADJOURNMENT:

The next regular meeting is November 14, 2023.

Instructions to attend remotely via Zoom Meeting listed below. The agenda is posted on the Town of Ellington webpage (www.ellington-ct.gov) under Agenda & Minutes, Conservation Commission.

Join Zoom Meeting via link:

Link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88465952695>

Meeting ID: 884 6595 2695

Passcode: 974950

Join Zoom Meeting by phone:

1-646-558-8656 US (New York)

Meeting ID: 884 6595 2695

Passcode: 974950

COMMISSIONERS: TO ASSIST IN ESTABLISHING QUORUMS REQUIRED TO CONDUCT MEETINGS, PLEASE CONTACT THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO ATTEND A SCHEDULED MEETING.

Town of Ellington Planning Department

55 Main Street, PO Box 187, Ellington, CT 06029/Phone: 860-870-3120/ Email: lhoulahan@ellington-ct.gov



DATE: October 3, 2023

TO: Conservation Commission

FROM: Lisa M. Houlihan, AICP, Town Planner

RE: Draft Text Amendment to Section 7.14.3 – Agricultural Special Permit Uses, Section 3.1 Permitted Uses in Residential Zones, Section 4.1 Permitted Uses in Commercial and Industrial Zones, and Article 10 Definitions of the Ellington Zoning Regulations, pursuant to recommendations from the Plan of Conservation and Development.

Chapter Six – Economic Development from the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD/Plan) covers “Agriculture as an Economic Sector” and recommends reviewing existing regulations to remove barriers to farming and allow more agritourism. Page 95 from the Plan includes the below statement, and the underlined text represents agritourism uses NOT currently listed in the Ellington Zoning Regulations.

- Amend the Zoning Regulations to allow agritourism and specific agritourism uses. This may include banquet spaces or functions, farm-to-table dinners, tasting rooms and restaurants, vineyards, breweries, tours, outdoor activities, bakeries, etc.

When the Economic Development Commission (EDC) evaluated the POCD strategy, they reviewed agritourism regulations from other Connecticut towns like Simsbury, South Windsor, and Stafford (copies enclosed) and drafted the attached text amendment for the Planning and Zoning Commission (PCZ). The PCZ accepted the proposal and scheduled the draft amendments for consideration and possible adoption on October 23, 2023.

Chapter Four - Conservation Strategies, Natural Resource Preservation from the POCD, starting on Page 56 (copy enclosed), includes recommendations for agritourism consistent with the economic development chapter. Please review the attached text amendment and the conservation strategies from the POCD in preparation for discussion at the Conservation Commission on October 10, 2023.

DRAFT TEXT AMENDMENT (9/19/2023)

Additions are **bolded and underlined**,

Deletions are [~~bracketed and strikethrough~~],

Otherwise text is as currently adopted.

7.14.3 Special Permit Uses:

The Commission may approve an application for special permit for the following **agricultural related uses and shall consider proximity to existing uses, traffic volumes, anticipated commercial traffic, suitability of land, hours of operation, and impact on future farming uses.**

- A. Agricultural enclosures, buildings, or structures including farm stores and seasonal farm stands when closer than 50 feet from any side or rear property line [~~as long as~~] **if** the setback of the underlying zone is met.
- B. Farm Store when a minimum of 3 contiguous acres under single ownership and/or leasehold in any zone and subject to the following standards:
 1. At least 20% of gross product sales shall be from farm products produced on the owner's farm or processed products made from raw materials that were produced on the owner's farm, and an additional 20% of gross product sales from Connecticut-Grown farm products or products made from raw materials produced from Connecticut-Grown farm products. Farm products produced on land owned by the owner of the farm store separate from the farm store land or processed products made from raw materials on other land owned by the owner of the farm store separate from the farm store land shall be counted towards meeting minimum gross product sales.
 2. Adequate off-street parking and safe ingress and egress is provided to ensure public safety. A reasonable parking area not to exceed three square feet for every one square foot of store area (where products are displayed for sale whether inside or outside of a structure), shall be provided. Permeable parking surfaces are recommended.
 3. Farm stores may be used to support farmers' market activities, promote agricultural ideals, and host agricultural related workshops.
 4. Farm stores may include kitchen facilities for the preparation and sale of food for consumption on or offsite, **tasting rooms and restaurants, farm-to-table dinners, bakeries, and banquet spaces** and shall be subject to approval from the Health Officer and in accordance with applicable federal, state and local codes.

SIMSBURY – ZONING REGULATIONS FOR AGRITOURISM

06/15/2020

The purpose of this regulation is to allow Agri-tourism uses in Simsbury, while maintaining the rural character, preserving farmland, and protecting the health, safety and welfare of the citizens. Agri-tourism presents a unique opportunity to combine aspects of tourism and agriculture to provide a number of financial, educational and social benefits to the community while allowing farmers to supplement their farming activities with activities and events directly related to the farm and farming.

Ag-Activities and Agricultural Events Ag-Activities and Agricultural Events are considered to be customary and incidental to the operation of a farm and therefore these uses are as of right.

General Requirements for Non-Agriculturally Related Uses:

1. **Parcel Size:** The minimum parcel size shall have 10 acres. Multiple parcels under the same ownership may be included. All parcels must be owned and occupied by the applicant.
2. **Neighboring premises:** The proposed use and improvements shall not adversely affect the enjoyment, usefulness, and value of premises in the general neighborhood thereof. The location of outdoor events and activities shall take into consideration the current use of the surrounding properties. The Commission may require specific separating distances and/or appropriate buffer strips with plantings, fences, or walls that screen the activity from adjacent properties.
3. **Parking:** No parking shall occur within 100 feet of any abutting residential property line. The applicant shall demonstrate that the parking spaces are of sufficient number to accommodate the proposed use. There shall be no on-street parking.
4. **Noise:** Amplified music is allowed Sunday through Thursday 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. and Friday and Saturday 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. No noise shall exceed 75DB at the property line.
5. **Lighting:** Lighting shall be contained to the property and shall not emit outside of the property boundaries onto abutting properties or the public right-of-way.
6. **Number of Events:** The number of events to be held shall be specified. Non-agricultural related events shall be limited to 15 times within a calendar year.
7. **Approval for operation of a child care facility** such, as summer day camp, is not subject to this section of the regulations.
8. **Hours of Operations:** the hours of operation for all activities shall not begin before 9:00 a.m. nor finish after 10:00 p.m. Sunday through Thursday. Friday and Saturday hours of operation shall be 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. These times do not include event set up or clean up.
9. **Temporary Structures-** Temporary accessory structures such as tents shall not exceed 4800 sq. ft. of floor area. Temporary structures shall not remain up for more than 6 months in a calendar year.
10. **Overnight Lodging:** No overnight lodging is allowed for non-agricultural events

Approval Process: Non-Agriculturally related uses:

A site plan approval is required, provided events are limited to no more than 15 times per calendar year for any site and that all other applicable zoning, building, fire and State codes are satisfied. Once a site plan has been approved, approval for non-agricultural related uses may be granted administratively by the Zoning Enforcement Officer. Should the property change ownership, approval for non-agriculturally related uses site plan must be by new property owner.

Additionally, if, in the opinion of the Zoning Enforcement Officer, there is a concern with any information provided as part of the application process, or if complaints were received from the previous year's events, the Zoning Enforcement Officer may refer the application to the Zoning Commission for site plan approval.

Application Requirements:

- a. The location of the parcel(s) to be used for the events, by street address or assessor's parcel number,
- b. Documentation of an agricultural or farming principal use.
- c. The specific types of event(s) to be conducted,
- d. The date of such event(s),
- e. The maximum number of attendees for each event requested,
- f. A site plan may be required if deemed necessary by the Commission; however, at a minimum of plan drawn to scale showing areas of parking, event location, lighting, distance to nearest property/residence and other necessary information for the Commission to make a decision is required.
- g. An agricultural or farming principal use shall be determined by the Commission and is required for any application for these accessory uses. Supporting documentation, to be provided by the applicant, shall provide a copy of the following:
 - i. The Tax Assessor's designation of the parcel as PA 490 (Farmland, Open Space, Forest Land)
 - ii. Farmer's Tax Exemption Certificate (issued by the Department of Revenue Services, State of Connecticut)

SOUTH WINDSOR - ZONING REGULATION - AGRITOURISM

Section 5.9 Agri-Tourism Overlay Zone

5.9.1 Purpose The purpose of the Agri-Tourism Overlay Zone is to allow by special exception additional agricultural related activities to facilitate the preservation of farms by allowing them to diversify the use of structures and conduct on-site activities (e.g. corn maze, sales of farm produce, weddings, educational events, special events, wineries with wine tastings) where deemed appropriate by the Commission, taking into consideration such factors as proximity to existing uses in the area, traffic volumes, amount of commercial traffic anticipated, and the suitability of the land for proposed business, hours of operation, and impact on future farming use of the property.

ARTICLE 5 – OVERLAY ZONES

5.9.2 Permitted Uses

A. All uses permitted in the underlying zone

B. Agri-tourism uses shall be permitted by Special Exception

5.9.3 Special Exception Criteria Special Exception for Agri-tourism may be granted subject to public hearing and the review of criteria of Section 8, submission of a site plan of development, and the following conditions:

1. The farm is a minimum of 5 acres.
2. The lot has to have frontage for access from a public road. Adequate line of sight entering and exiting the site shall be demonstrated based on Connecticut Department of Transportation standards and able to accommodate anticipated traffic volumes.
3. Adequate internal access thereto and be provided with sufficient parking to accommodate projected visitors. Pervious parking areas are encouraged.
4. Any building proposed for commercial use shall be located not less than 100 feet from any street or property line.
5. Maximum impervious coverage shall be 25%.
6. Side and rear yards shall contain landscaped buffers of 10 feet in width. The provisions of Section 6.2.4 Buffers shall apply.
7. All local, state, and federal applicable regulations must be complied with prior to the issuance of a zoning permit.
8. Activities are generally conducted during day time hours. The Commission may set restrictions on entertainment to mitigate the potential noise to surrounding properties. Limitations may include, but are not limited to, time of day, limitation on outdoor entertainment, and use of amplified equipment.

Agri-tourism: As it is defined most broadly, involves any agriculturally based operation or activity that brings visitors to a farm.

STAFFORD ZONING REGULATIONS - AGRITOURISM

Accessory Agricultural Activities

Accessory Agricultural Activities (Ag-tivities) - The following fee-based activities are considered to be accessory to an established agricultural operation. A Site Plan Review shall be required when the following uses may reasonably be expected to require parking for twenty (20) or more motor vehicles, used by visitors to the farm, at any given time. Otherwise, such uses require only an Agricultural Activity "Activity" Permit.

1. Agricultural Engagement- The opening to the public of a working farm or any agricultural, horticultural, or agribusiness operation for the purpose of enjoyment, education, or active involvement in the activities of the farm or operation, including (but not limited to) "U-Pick", Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), Wine tours & associated tastings, agricultural workshops, classes, and demonstrations.

2. Agricultural Events- Events of limited duration on a farm that are incidental to agricultural uses, including (but not limited to) hayrides, corn mazes, festivals, petting zoos, and other similar activities.

B. Non-agriculturally Related Uses- Fee-based activities that are part of an agricultural operation's overall offering, but are not incidental to agriculture, are allowed by permit. Such uses may include (but not limited to) outdoor recreation such as bird watching, snow-shoeing, cross country skiing, mountain biking, and other passive recreational activities, as well as rental of farm property for small and large-scale events, such as parties, weddings, and other non-agricultural events.

1. "Small-scale Farm Events" are allowed with an Agricultural Activity "Activity" Permit. Only low-volume amplified sound or music (as determined by the ZEO) will be allowed during these events. A Site Plan Review will only be required if these events happen more than ten (10) times per year, or they require parking for more than twenty (20) vehicles, at any given time.

2. "Large-scale Farm Events" at which the use of loud amplified music is planned, and more than twenty (20) vehicles are expected, require a Special Permit. In order to satisfy the conditions of a Special Permit, the Planning & Zoning Commission may limit the number of events per year. The Planning & Zoning Commission may also impose additional restrictions on the use if it determines, after a hearing for which the owner of the farm is given written notice that the noise levels, or other factors, are causing a nuisance to nearby properties. The ZEO retains the right to meet annually with the farm owner to discuss any possible concerns. In the case of events when more than twenty (20) vehicles are expected, but loud amplified music is not a consideration, only a Site Plan Review is required.

C. General Requirements

1. Parking. Parking for all permitted agricultural accessory uses shall, to the maximum extent possible, be located in areas on the site where they will be the least visible from access roads and adjoining properties but must allow for adequate sightlines for drivers traveling on the adjacent road and entering and exiting such spaces from such road. Setback requirements apply to all parking areas. Due consideration shall be given to the posted speed limit and other pertinent factors. The ZEO and/or Commission may require additional buffering to meet the intent of the parking and landscaping regulations.

2. Location, Lighting and Noise. The location of outdoor events and activities associated with “Ag-tivities” on the farm shall take into consideration the current use of surrounding properties. The Commission and/or ZEO may require a specific separating distance and/or an appropriate buffer strip that screens any such activity from adjacent properties. If the proposed activity or agricultural use regularly employs the use of an amplified sound system, there shall be a sound absorption plan in place that confirms compliance with the State of Connecticut DEEP noise standards (§22a- 69-1 through §22a 69-7-4) as amended. All lighting must be shielded so that it does not impact neighboring properties. The Commission may impose additional restrictions on the use if it determines, after a hearing for which the owner of the farm is given written notice, the noise levels are causing a nuisance to nearby properties.

The Planning and Zoning Commission, Board of Selectmen, Conservation Commission, and taxpayers of Ellington have, through their actions, shown great support for agriculture. This is evidenced by:

- Approval of a \$2,000,000 referendum in 2007 for the preservation of farmland.
- Including partnering with the Connecticut State Department of Agriculture in the purchase of development rights for several farms totaling 888 acres.
- Amendments to zoning regulations which significantly broaden commercial opportunities for working farms.

How Agriculture is Currently Regulated

Ellington's regulations provide generous opportunities for agriculture in all residential zones and significant commercial opportunity in all commercial and industrial zones. A number of these regulations were adopted through a comprehensive set of amendments to the zoning regulations in 2010, 2014, and 2016. All residential zones permit agricultural opportunities along with limited related commercial uses. The boarding of horses is also permitted in these zones. Recent amendments allow a Brewery, Brew Pub, or Distillery by special permit in all Commercial and Industrial Zones.

The Planning and Zoning Commission has determined that agri-tourism presents a unique opportunity to combine aspects of tourism and agriculture which provide a number of financial, educational, and social benefits to the community while allowing farmers to supplement their farming activities with activities and events directly related to the farm and farming. The Commission may consider additional amendments to further promote agri-tourism. These activities may include hayrides, petting zoos, cut your own Christmas trees, horseback riding, carriage and sleigh rides, ice cream and baked goods, and garden tours. There is also a unique opportunity to promote farm wineries, farm breweries, and farm distilleries in Residential Zones. These uses, especially farm wineries, have become increasingly more popular over the past ten years. The State of Connecticut has now granted more than forty (40) licenses for farm wineries. In 2018 the State Legislature passed Public Act 08-187 establishing rules for farm wineries. Such activities, if allowed, can provide opportunities for a more viable agricultural operation along with a modest commercial/retail component. The key in permitting any agri-tourism related activity is to establish the correct balance between "traditional" agricultural activities such as the growing of crops and "less traditional" activities such as wine and beer tastings, retail sales, and the hosting of special events.

For example, few residents would question the bucolic nature of a vineyard or even buildings necessary to process grapes and produce wines at a modest scale. Experience has shown that introducing these added commercial activities is necessary to support the economics of such a facility. Some other activities often associated with a winery such as tastings, the sale of bottles of wine, and the use of the facility for special events such as meetings or/or weddings need to be properly integrated and scaled so as not to adversely affect neighboring residents using adequate buffers for abutting residentially used property.

The Planning and Zoning Commission should consider the adoption of regulations which would permit the establishment of a farm winery, distillery, or brewery by special permit on parcels of land in excess of ten (10) acres. Regulations must strike a balance between fostering the economic success of these agricultural enterprises and safeguarding property rights of surrounding residential neighbors. It is important to note that any land use brings with it some impact/consequence on nearby properties. For example, the sale of agricultural land and its development into a “traditional” single-family subdivision results in some neighborhood impact. The key in developing a balanced regulation is to establish a set of rules which permit the operation of a viable farm, but which result in a set of impacts to nearby properties that are comparable to those that would be generated by a residential subdivision (i.e.: traffic, noise, lot coverage, etc.)

The Planning and Zoning Commission may wish to consider establishing standards for the following:

- Requiring that a certain percentage of produce sold be grown on the farm. In the case of a winery that a certain percentage of grapes used in wine production be grown on the property where the production facility and tasting room is located.
- Limits on the total number of gallons of alcohol which may be produced. Limits may be linked to number of acres and may differ from maximum thresholds established by the State Liquor Control Commission.
- Limiting the size of the tasting room and indoor and outdoor space that may hold special events.
- Limit the number and size of outdoor events.
- Establish noise standards, buffer zones to nearby properties, and place limits on hours that special events may take place.
- Establish parking requirements.
- Limits on the amount of food which may be sold/served. Consider differentiating between sales during “normal” tasting hours and special events.
- Prohibition on obtaining a restaurant liquor permit from the State of Connecticut Liquor Control Commission.
- Limiting the scale of the commercial activities such that the Ellington Assessor may decide the farm is still eligible for special tax consideration under public act 490.
- Requiring that the owner of the farm resides full-time on the farm.

The preservation of farmland to preserve rural character is widely supported in Ellington. In their support many residents emphasize the rural and scenic character that farmland promotes sometimes without giving due consideration to the commercial and business aspects that are required to successfully operate a farm.

Connecticut's right-to-farm law exempts farms meeting specified conditions and following generally accepted agricultural practices, from certain nuisance laws, regulations, and ordinances concerning odor, noise, and other objectionable farming by-products. But it does not exempt them from nuisances caused by negligence or willful or reckless misconduct. Towns may also adopt right-to-farm ordinances to emphasize support for local farms and agriculture. They reiterate the right-to-farm law's protections from nuisance lawsuits and often declare farming as

an accepted and valued activity within the community. The Town may wish to consider adopting a local right to farm ordinance.

The PZC might consider adopting zoning regulations that require an adequate buffer between a proposed subdivision and an existing farm. For example, regulations could require a 200-foot separation between a proposed new house and any property line that is in common with an established farm.

Regulations could also be adopted to either encourage or require the use of cluster zoning when a new subdivision is proposed adjacent to an established farm, concentrating development away from the farm. Consideration may also be given to permitting a cluster style subdivision “as of right” and requiring a special permit for a traditional large lot subdivision to encourage cluster development a significant buffer when new lots are created adjacent to an established farm.

Considerations/Strategies:

- The PZC may wish to consider amendments to the Zoning Regulations to allow farm wineries, farm breweries, and farm distilleries by special permit. Regulations must address important considerations discussed above in order to balance the need to conduct an economically viable operation while mitigating potential adverse impacts of commercial activities on nearby residential properties. Permit limited use of these facilities for special events such as weddings and other outdoor events subject to the parameters discussed in this chapter.
- The PZC may wish to consider amendments to the Zoning Regulations that require a permanent buffer between proposed new residential lots and established agricultural operations. Regulations may also be adopted which either encourage or require the use of cluster techniques to minimize conflict between proposed housing and established farms.
- The Town may wish to consider adopting a right-to farm ordinance which demonstrates the Town’s support for agriculture by limiting opportunities for nuisance damage lawsuits to established farms who otherwise follow sound agricultural practices.
- The Commission may wish to consider amendments to the Zoning and Subdivision Regulations which mandate a separation requirement between proposed new homes and established agricultural operations. The Commission may also consider regulations that either encourage or require the use of cluster zoning techniques to reduce areas of possible conflict between established farms and new homes.

C. Horse Boarding / Riding Arena if it finds that the proposal will conform to the following standards:

1. A minimum of 10 contiguous acres under single ownership and/or leasehold.
2. The use is conducted only by the resident of the premises as an accessory use.
3. The primary and any accessory structures shall not be less than two hundred (200) feet from any street line, side, and rear lot lines.

In considering such special use, the Commission shall weigh the agricultural and rural aspects of the area, as well as the residential or commercial character or potential of the area and shall find that the granting of such land use shall result in an appropriate use of the land and will not have a detrimental effect on the value or enjoyment of existing residential or other uses in the area.

D. ~~[Farm Brewery, Cidery, Distillery and Winery]~~ **Agricultural Related Uses**

1. Permitted uses include **banquet space, farm breweries, farm cideries, farm distilleries, farm wineries, farm-to-table dinners, tasting rooms**, tours, retail and wholesale sales of products grown or manufactured on the premises, sale of merchandise related to the products grown or manufactured on the premises or sale of merchandise unrelated to the products grown or manufactured on the premises when unrelated merchandise is no more than 40% of all merchandise for sale.
2. Minimum Lot Size: 10 contiguous acres under single ownership and/or leasehold in any zone.
3. Setbacks Requirements: Buildings and structures shall be located a minimum of ~~[400]~~ **200** feet from all property lines. Areas used for outdoor activities like outdoor seating and tastings shall be located a minimum of ~~[200]~~ **150** feet from all property lines. However, buildings, structures and outdoor activities may be located not less than 10' to a rear yard or a side yard when located adjacent to permanently protected farmland, open space, or forestland.
4. Parking ~~[and Access]~~ Requirements: A reasonable parking area **shall be provided and be** a minimum of one and a half square feet per square foot of retail, tasting and **other** area accessible to the public ~~[with the potential to]~~ **and may be increased** to three square feet of parking area per square foot of area accessible to the public ~~[shall be provided]~~ as required by the commission. **No parking shall be permitted within 100 feet to an existing off-site residence or residential zone boundary. A [P]ermeable parking surface is recommended. There shall be no on-street parking.**
5. **Access Requirements: Access shall be from a public road and have adequate line of sight for in/egress based on Connecticut Department of Transportation standards.**
- ~~5-6.~~ Refuse areas shall be properly screened from public view and shall be located adjacent to buildings and at least 100['] **feet** from adjacent properties.

6-7. Buffer Standards: A 10 foot wide vegetated buffer, 6 foot high privacy fence or combination thereof may be required along side and rear yards to reduce disturbance to adjacent residential zones or residences. When plantings are required they shall comply with Section 6.1.C – Buffer Requirements.

7-8. Lighting: Exterior lighting shall be fully shielded, downward directed, and shall not create glare or emit light beyond the property boundary it serves. Exterior lighting, other than the minimum extent required for safety, shall be extinguished beyond the permitted hours of operation.

8-9. Signs [~~standards~~] shall [~~be in compliance~~] comply with Section 6.3 Signs.

9-10. Hours of operation may be permitted on [~~Sunday, 11am to 8pm; Wednesday noon to 8pm; Thursday – Saturday 11am to 9pm.~~] Sunday 10am to 8pm, Monday – Wednesday 9am to 9pm, Thursday – Saturday 9am to 10pm.

10-11. Food trucks may be permitted, subject to obtaining all required health department approvals, but shall be subordinate to the [~~farm brewery, cidery, distillery or winery~~] agricultural related use. Establishments may allow visitors to bring prepared food.

11-12. Outdoor entertainment may be permitted by the commission but shall be subordinate to the agricultural related use [~~farm brewery, cidery, distillery or winery~~] and shall not be amplified.

12-13. Deliveries and pick-up shall not occur between 10pm and 6am, when adjacent to an existing off-site residence or residential zone.

ARTICLE 3 RESIDENTIAL ZONES

Section 3.1 Permitted Uses

The following table establishes those uses allowed in the residential zoning districts.

P	Permitted Use	SP	Use Allowed by Special	
3.1.1	AGRICULTURAL USES (See Section 7.14)		Rural Agricultural / Residential	Lake Residential
1.	[Related & Agricultural Uses] <u>Agricultural Related Uses</u>	SP	SP	SP

ARTICLE 4 COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL ZONES

Section 4.1 Permitted Uses and Uses Requiring Special Permit

The following uses are permitted in Commercial and Industrial Zones:

Table 4.1 Permitted Uses and Uses Requiring Special Permit				
P = Permitted Use, Site Plan Approval SP = Special Permit Blank= Not Permitted				
Uses	C	PC	I	IP
[Agriculture] Agricultural Related [& Non-Related] Uses	SP	SP	SP	SP

ARTICLE 10 DEFINITIONS & INTERPRETATION

Section 10.2 DEFINITIONS

Agriculture. The use of land for agricultural purposes, including farming, the growing of crops, raising of livestock, and the storing, processing and sale of agricultural and horticultural products and commodities, including those defined in Connecticut General Statute Section 1-1q, as incidental to agricultural operations.

Agricultural Buildings and Structures. Buildings, structures and portions thereof, used in connection with agriculture, including shelter for livestock and storage for farm machinery, equipment and supplies; excludes farm stores and seasonal farm stands.

Agricultural~~[ly]~~ Related Uses. Events ~~[of limited duration]~~ on a farm that are incidental to agriculture~~[al-uses]~~e, including farm stores, tasting rooms, farm-to-table dinners, bakeries, [events such as] corn mazes, pick-your-own, farm tours, harvest festivals, educational demonstrations, hayrides, petting zoos, farm breweries, farm cideries, farm distilleries, farm wineries, or other agricultural uses approved by the commission.

Farm-to-table diners serve Ellington-grown or Connecticut-grown food at restaurants, school cafeterias, and agricultural-related uses through direct sales, a community-supported agriculture arrangement, a farmer's market, or local distributor where the origin of the food is identifiable to consumers.

TOWN OF ELLINGTON--Sustainable CT Fall 2023 OFFICIAL Certification Results Summary

Thank you for participating in the review process! We are excited and inspired by the amazing work happening in your community. Here are a few important notes below:

- Each action that was submitted has been marked either "Approved" or "Must Revise."
- For actions marked "Approved," there may still be an opportunity to earn further points in a future certification cycle. Please review your comments. If you would like to edit particular "Approved" actions, e-mail info@sustainablect.org to have them unlocked.
- Some applications include exceptional action submissions. Reviewers have designated these "success stories." They may be featured in Sustainable CT story-telling or posted as examples for other communities.
- On your Municipal Dashboard, every action has a "submission information" box. It's the place where you told us what actions you applied for, for how many points and when they were completed. For any action marked "Approved," we may have edited that box. It now only lists the components you were actually approved for.

Action	Status	Approved Points	Success Story?	Reviewer Comment to Municipality
3.4	Approved	60		3.4.1: Thank you for submitting an open space inventory for Ellington using the provided data template. Using this standardized template to track open space will help make regional and statewide compilation of data and study of open space needs possible. 10 points awarded to the town. Excellent Work! 3.4.2: The provided documentation thoroughly explains the prioritization of locally-important resources. 5 points awarded. 3.4.3: Ellington's Plan of Conservation is thorough and thoughtful in describing the town's plans for open space, and fulfills the requirement to "prioritize acquisitions, enhance your local ecosystem, connect open space parcels, offer recreational benefits, and ensure long-term viability of your open space (including management policies)". Nice work! 10 Points awarded to the town. 3.4.4(a) Legal protection status of town owned land is clearly indicated in Ellington's open space inventory. 10 points awarded. 3.4.4(b): It is clear from the submitted documentation that the town is actively expanding open space, including the Wraight property purchased in 2021. 10 points awarded. 3.4.4(c): 5 points have been awarded, specifically for the Metcalf Project as it was clear in the meeting minutes the improvements were completed. In the future, it would strengthen your submission to write a short narrative describing your projects with dates of project completion. 3.4.4(d) From the provided documentation, it is clear that Ellington has an active open space fund. 10 points awarded to the town! Great Work! Very impressive work overall in the effort to preserve open space in Ellington and congratulations on earning all possible points for this action!
3.5	Approved	10	Yes	Thank you for your submission Ellington! This GIS map is wonderful, we loved seeing all the extra data available that extends beyond the natural resource and wildlife inventory. You have earned 10 points for 3.5.1! This inventory could earn an additional 10 points for 3.5.2 if this inventory tool is included on the municipal website, used in municipal decision making protocols, etc. Keep up the great work!
4.2	Approved	10		Good job Ellington, you have earned the 10 points requested. The cultural diversity night sounded like a really wonderful event to celebrate the differences that make our communities so vibrant!
10.4	Approved	15	Yes	Thank you for your submission! Ellington earns 15 points for 10.4.1. Ellington has done a wonderful job providing affordable growing space for the community. It was awesome to see the town also has a sensory garden and other nearby amenities for gardeners. Keep up the great work!

TOTAL

95

Town of Ellington

General Ledger - On Demand Report

Fiscal Year: 2023-2024 From Date:10/1/2023 To Date:10/31/2023

Account Mask: ?????00270???????

☒ Print accounts with zero balance
 ☐ Include Inactive Accounts
 ☐ Filter Encumbrance Detail by Date Range
 ☐ Print Detail
 ☐ Include PreEncumbrance

Account Number / Description	Budget	Range To Date	YTD	Balance	Encumbrance	% Remaining Bud
1000.02.00270.10.50103	\$1,600.00	\$0.00	\$260.00	\$1,340.00	\$0.00	\$1,340.00
Part Time---Conservation Commission--						83.75%
1000.02.00270.20.60221	\$400.00	\$0.00	(\$200.00)	\$600.00	\$0.00	\$600.00
Advertising Printing---Conservation Commission--						150.00%
1000.02.00270.20.60222	\$1,350.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,350.00	\$0.00	\$1,350.00
Dues & Subscriptions---Conservation Commission--						100.00%
1000.02.00270.20.60223	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Travel---Conservation Commission--						0.00%
1000.02.00270.20.60234	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Professional Development---Conservation Commission						0.00%
1000.02.00270.20.60250	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Contracted Services---Conservation Commission--						0.00%
1000.02.00270.20.60254	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
St of CT Surcharges---Conservation Commission--						0.00%
1000.02.00270.20.60341	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Office Supplies---Conservation Commission--						0.00%
1000.02.00270.30.60341	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Office Supplies---Conservation Commission--						0.00%
Fund: 1000	\$3,350.00	\$0.00	\$60.00	\$3,290.00	\$0.00	\$3,290.00

Town of Ellington

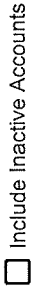
General Ledger - On Demand Report

Account Mask: ?????00270??????



Print accounts with zero balance

Account Type: All



Include Inactive Accounts

Account Number / Description

Include Encumbrance Detail by Date Range

YTD

Balance

Encumbrance

% Remaining Bud

Fiscal Year: 2023-2024

From Date:10/1/2023

To Date:10/31/2023



Print Detail



Include PreEncumbrance

Grand Total:

\$3,350.00

\$0.00

\$60.00

\$3,290.00

\$0.00

\$3,290.00

End of Report



STATE OF CONNECTICUT – COUNTY OF TOLLAND
INCORPORATED 1786

TOWN OF ELLINGTON

55 MAIN STREET – PO BOX 187
ELLINGTON, CONNECTICUT 06029-0187
www.ellington-ct.gov

Tel. 860-870-3120 Town Planner's Office Fax. 860-870-3122

CONSERVATION COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2023, 7:00 PM

IN-PERSON ATTENDANCE: TOWN HALL ANNEX, 57 MAIN STREET, ELLINGTON, CT
REMOTE ATTENDANCE: VIA ZOOM MEETING, INSTRUCTIONS PROVIDED BELOW

PRESENT: In-Person: Chairman Rebecca Quarno, and Regular Member James Gage
Remote Attendance: Regular Members George Nickerson, Robert Zielfelder,
and Laurie Burstein

ABSENT: Vice Chairman David Bidwell, Regular Member Sean Dwyer, and Alternates
Jessica Fay and Ann Harford

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

OTHERS

PRESENT: Valerie Amsel, Ad Hoc Ellington Trails Committee Liaison (Remote)

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

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

III. ACTIVE BUSINESS:

1. Review Plan of Conservation & Development, Chapter 4-Conservation Strategies,
Natural Resource Preservation. (*Distributed January 10, 2023*)
 - a. Develop strategies for raising awareness about open space and farmland
preservation.

An article was put in the June newsletter about raising awareness about open space and farmland preservation. The commission discussed the potential of having a booth at the farmers market. Ms. Houlihan reiterated that August 5 and August 26 were unavailable dates, which have already passed. She also said there hasn't been a lot of time to devote to the property owners on Green Road. Chairman Quarno said they could refocus on this agenda item when other initiatives quiet down.

This agenda was tabled until next meeting.

2. Review Sustainable CT Certification Action Overview Worksheet – Conservation
Sections

Ms. Houlihan noted that everyone is enthusiastic with Sustainable CT. She and Tom Modzelewski, Public Works Director, have put together a team of town officials to focus on some initiatives to apply for bronze certification from Sustainable CT in April 2024. The group meets every third Wednesday of the month in the morning. In July and August, the group had

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DRAFT - Motions & Decisions

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assistance from a fellow at the Capitol Region Council of Governments who attended their meetings and gave an overview of what Sustainable CT is about as well as how to submit action items. For the August 15 submission deadline, the team submitted four action items it had completed for preliminary review. These four action items would potentially qualify for up to 90 points. Two of the action items are largely due to the work of the Conservation Commission. Some additional work was needed to bring the action items up to Sustainable Ct standards, which the group completed. She believes some product will be seen from the Board of Education and Ellington Youth Services by the end of the year. She would like for the Conservation Commission to work more on agriculture-friendly practices. She will report more on what she would like the commission to focus on at the next meeting.

- a. 3.4 Develop an Open Space Plan
 - b. 3.5 Create a Natural Resource and Wildlife Inventory
 - c. 5.3 Develop Agriculture-Friendly Practice
3. Report - Farmland Preservation Program.

Ms. Houlihan has been communicating with the Department of Agriculture. The last farm for Oakridge Dairy has not gone before the Board of Selectmen because they are still working on their surveys. The surveys need to be finalized in order to determine how much the town of Ellington would be contributing. The amount the town will be contributing will still be 10%, and Ms. Houlihan said the last she knew the amount was going to be around \$49,800. She will continue communicating with them.

Ms. Houlihan has not heard anything more about the 40-acre Hombach property since when she last reported on it in July. She said she spoke with the property owners twice and gave them the application.

4. Report - Open Space Preservation Program.

Ms. Houlihan said she hopes to work on Green Road this fall. The Planning Department has also been under some deadlines for the Route 83 sidewalk project. There are approximately 40 properties that have permanent or temporary easements (or both) on them. Ms. Houlihan and the town engineer have been meeting with those property owners. Out of all of the properties, only three are remaining. There was a special appropriation expiration date at the end of August which is why they had to focus on it this summer. Once all easements are secured, the town engineer will submit plans to the Department of Transportation for review and the Capital Region Council of Governments will peer review. They are hoping the project will be put out for a bid this spring. The project consists of two miles of sidewalks from the Vernon town line to Scotty's Daycare and crosses over to Agway, goes past Big Y, and goes all the way down Route 83 to connect to sidewalks on Main Street. Chairman Quarno asked if it would be similar to what they did in the center of town. Ms. Houlihan said it would be a brushed concrete. This project will be paid for by the Department of Transportation and was originally delayed due to things like COVID-19 and budget issues. The path is not on a road, but is not meant for bike riding, just walking. Commissioner Burstein asked if there were plans to continue the sidewalks along Abbott Road. Ms. Houlihan said she knew there were some sidewalks involved with the school and there are some efforts going on to use sidewalks to connect neighborhoods and businesses to the schools.

5. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS:

1. FY 23-24 Budget & Expenditure Update.

The only budget expenditure is for the services of the recording clerk.

2. Approval of July 11, 2023, Regular Meeting Minutes.

MOVED (GAGE) SECONDED (QUARNO) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE THE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF JULY 11, 2023 AS WRITTEN.

3. Correspondence/Discussion:

- a. Ad Hoc Ellington Trails Committee – Monthly Agendas/Minutes.

Ms. Amsel said she hopes that some Boy Scouts will come to Kimball to put the bridge back and stabilize it. The trailhead for the Crystal trail has been moved from Crystal Ridge Road to Sandy Beach Road. This will now be the official trailhead and some blazing needs to be done there along with the Metcalf trail. This trail now has more stone as well as a bench. She indicated that she took some brochures from the Conservation Commission to give out at the Farmers' Market to support the commission.

- b. CT Association of Conservation and Inland Wetlands Commissions, Inc. (CACIWC), Sat. November 11, 2023 Annual Meeting and Environmental Conference and a copy of CACIWC Membership Renewal (July 1, 2023 thru June 30, 2024).

Ms. Houlihan shared that commissioners can attend this conference if they want to, and that \$60 will be paid to renew membership. This money will either come out of the Dues & Subscriptions portion of the budget or the Town Planner's budget.

- c. CT Land Conservation Council contribution thank you letter (July 11, 2023).

The CT Land Conservation Council sent a letter to the commission thanking them for their donation.

- d. Notice of Petition for Declaratory Ruling for a 5MW battery energy storage system, KCE CT 5, LLC, Village Hill Road, Willington/Stafford, CT.

Ms. Houlihan said this notice is required to the town. The CT Siting Council granted a solar farm but asked for some improvements, such as additional landscaping.

- e. CT Siting Council, Petition No. 1558 Decision and Order (August 3, 2023), for a 4MW solar photovoltaic facility, Community Power Group, LLC, 28.4 acres, 24 Middle Road, Rural Agricultural Residential (RAR) Zone.

The CT Siting Council approved a solar farm on Middle Road in the beginning of August. Ms. Houlihan noted that the town cannot bring petitioners in for special permits before the Planning and Zoning Commission because it is a public utility and has a greater need, however they can comment through that commission. The facility will be located on 28 acres of private property and has met the requirements of the CT Siting Council.

- f. Notice of Petition for Declaratory Ruling for a 3MW solar photovoltaic facility, USS Somers Solar, LLC, 19.2 acres, 360 Somers Road, Industrial (I) Zone.

USS Somers Solar, LLC. talked with the Planning and Zoning Commission about a solar farm at 360 Somers Road. The project did receive a \$500,000 steep grant, but the Planning and Zoning Commission was concerned because the town has spent a lot of money extending the sewer out there in that location and that this farm could be hazardous to skydivers in the area because sometimes jumpers miss the drop zone and land in that area. This application is scaled back from

the original application. It is no longer in the area where the airport runway could potentially be extended and has been reduced by one megawatt. Commissioner Burstein said it was a shame they were picking the airport for this facility since the airport is valuable to the area. The town did complete a feasibility program a while ago to determine if the town should buy it, but the matter has since been tabled. Commissioner Nickerson asked if the runway extension has been tabled. Ms. Houlihan said all the town has done is study extending it, and a consultant informed the town that the runway would need to be extended if it were to become a more active airport. Chairman Quarno asked if the airport would lease their land to the solar company. Ms. Houlihan said they would generally enter in a 20-year lease with a 10-year right to extend.

6. ADJOURNMENT:

**MOVED (ZIELFELDER) SECONDED (NICKERSON) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO
ADJOURN THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEETING AT 7:50PM.**

Respectfully submitted,

Nathaniel Trask, Recording Clerk



TOWN OF ELLINGTON

Ad Hoc Ellington Trails Committee

55 MAIN STREET – PO BOX 187
ELLINGTON, CONNECTICUT 06029-0187

CHAIRMAN
LINDA ANDERSON

VICE CHAIRMAN
CYNTHIA VAN ZELM

SECRETARY
DEANNA WAMBOLT-GULICK

VALERIE AMSEL
JUDI MANFRE
LARRISSA BURKE
DONNA ALLEN
LINDSAY NEUBECKER
BILL SCHULTZ

Ad Hoc Ellington Trails Committee
Regular Meeting Minutes
August 2, 2023
Town Hall Annex

MEMBERS PRESENT: Linda Anderson, Cynthia van Zelm, Valerie Amsel, Judi Manfre, Donna Allen, Bill Schultz

MEMBERS ABSENT: Deanna Wambolt-Gulick, Larissa Burke, Lindsay Neubecker

OTHERS PRESENT: Tom Palshaw

I. Call to Order

Ms. Anderson called the meeting to order at 6:40 PM. She took a moment to acknowledge Bill Schultz as a new member of the Committee.

II. Citizens' Forum

No citizens came forward for comment.

III. Approval of Minutes

A. June 14, 2023

MOVED (MANFRE), SECONDED (VAN ZELM) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE JUNE 14, 2023 MEETING.

IV. Old Business

A. Hockanum River Crew Report

Mr. Palshaw shared that the crew's activities have been hindered by excessive rain throughout the months of June and July. They have been doing their best to stay on top of the mowing and have temporarily laid some planks over flooded areas to keep the trail open.

He reported that there has been some vandalism on the West Street Trail. A sign was torn down and bent, but he expects to be able to repair it and put it back up. The ramp to the bridge near the horse trailer has been stolen.

Ms. Anderson stated that Tom Modzelewski and Walter Lee have instructed the Trails Committee to cease all work on the West Street Trail until the sale of the property is finalized and easements have been attained for Town usage; further discussion can be found in Article V. New Business below.

B. Conservation Commission Report

Ms. Amsel shared that the Conservation Commission would like to get their information to more people in Town. She asked if the Committee would place the CC pamphlets on its table at the Farmer's Market on August 5.

She shared that there has been a new push for the Sustainable CT campaign and asked that the Trails Committee help educate the Town residents about participation in the program.

Ms. Anderson shared that some people have been concerned about the un-mowed areas near the amphitheater at the Batz Property. She will publish information in the next newsletter about the mowing schedule to educate why areas are mowed or not mowed to help protect the pollinators.

C. Parking at Crystal Ridge

Ms. Anderson shared a map regarding proposed parking on Old Sandy Beach Road. The map indicated parking to be allowed on one side of the road approaching the cul-de-sac. Parking will not be allowed in the cul-de-sac to allow access for emergency vehicles, Verizon, and Frontier.

Mr. Palshaw asked for clarification regarding the placement of emergency markers near the trail head at the cul-de-sac (to be identified as Entrance #1). Ms. Spielman said all abutters will be sent a letter regarding parking on Old Sandy Beach Road. No kiosk or emergency markers will be placed until approved.

D. Girl Scout Project at Batz – Gold Star

Ms. Anderson shared that Laurel's Gold Star project has been approved. She is collecting clay pots to bring to the Farmer's Market on August 5. Children and adults will be invited to decorate a pot to make toad houses. She will organize a group to place the decorated toad pots at the Batz Property.

She is continuing her campaign to get information about her project to members of the community. She is also working toward getting the tool shed built at Batz.

E. New Storage Unit

Ms. Anderson shared that all our materials were moved to the storage unit. It has been requested that the exterior be painted. Ms. Manfre will contact Kat Lanz (EHS Art Teacher) to ask if students would like to take on the project as a community service project.

F. Bluebird Houses – Batz

Ms. Anderson shared that the Girl Scouts are still planning to build bluebird houses. She has contacted Jane Seymour (DEEP Steward) about coordinating with the Scouts regarding the specifications and placement of the houses.

G. Ellington Highlands Update

Ms. Anderson said there was no word about Disc Golf at the Ellington Highlands property. She will speak with Mr. Modzelewski regarding closing the parking lot.

V. New Business**A. West Road and Franklin Street**

As discussed during the Hockanum River Crew Report, Ms. Anderson stated that Tom Modzelewski and Walter Lee have instructed the Trails Committee to cease all work on the West

Street trail until the sale of the property is finalized and easements have been attained for Town usage.

Ms. Anderson shared that a small portion of the land may be conveyed to Vernon as part of their new soccer field project. The Planning and Zoning Commission have allowed giving Ellington rights for passive (recreational) usage.

VI. Subcommittee Reports

A. Treasurer

Ms. Anderson asked Felicia LaPlante to send her a breakdown of the Trails Committee budget for FY 2024.

B. Maintenance

1. Bridge at Crystal Ridge

Ms. Anderson stated that, under the direction of Ms. Amsel and with the help of Trails Committee members and volunteers from the community, the bridge over the Aborn Brook at Crystal Ridge has been built and has survived the recent floods. Ms. Amsel would like to put some stones at each end of the bridge.

2. Batz – Weed Whacking, Weed Control, Poison Ivy Control

Ms. Anderson, Ms. Allen and Mr. Schultz spent a morning clearing all the weeds from the amphitheater area and spraying poison ivy at the Batz Property. Ms. Manfre and a young assistant pulled weeds around the garden area and entrance sign.

Ms. Anderson also spent some time weed whacking around the base of the trees in the orchard area.

3. Metcalf – New Bench, New Path Gravel, Signs, Poison Ivy Control, Emergency Signs

Ms. Anderson shared that the DPW put new gravel from the road to the trail entrance at the Metcalf Trail. As part of the original grant, a bench will also be placed near the entrance.

During a recent walk through, Ms. Anderson and Ms. Amsel observed that the ground cover has grown in well and the remaining trees are starting to spread out, filling the area where the trees had been cleared. No poison ivy was seen.

Mr. Palshaw placed emergency signs and Ms. Amsel put up boundary signs and warning signs regarding motorized vehicles. Mr. Palshaw placed the emergency markers high on trees to try to avoid vandalism. He suggested that the Committee paint bright yellow blazes on the trees with emergency markers to make them more visible.

It was observed that private property signs have been posted by abutters.

4. Kimball – Bridges

Ms. Anderson reported that the bridges at Kimball have survived the floods. She asked the Boy Scout Leaders if the scouts would take on a project to help put stairs back at the base of the bridges.

C. Community Outreach

1. Astronomy Event in June – Cancelled

This event was cancelled due to poor weather.

2. Raptor Program – July 19th

The program was moved to the library due to oppressively hot weather. Approximately 35 people attended.

3. Farmers Market – August 5th

The Committee will set up a table at the Farmers Market to educate the community about Ellington's trails. Members will hand out maps, information about the upcoming Stargazing Event, and brochures about the Conservation Committee's Open Spaces.

4. Astronomy-Stargazing – August 10th, 9pm-midnight, Pinney Field

A table will be set up at 8:45 and Committee members will assist the library and the astronomy club as needed.

5. Zen Animals: Critters for Adults – August 16th, 6p, Hall Memorial Library

Ms. Anderson asked if anyone was available to help with this program; please pre-register with the library.

6. Website Information Update

Ms. Anderson shared that the trails information on the Town website is dated. She would like it to be updated annually. Julia Connor would be able to update it for us, but we will need to get her the information. Ms. van Zelm volunteered to coordinate with Ms. Connor.

7. Lori's TV Show – October 17th

Ms. Anderson will be a guest on Ms. Spielman's Community Voice Channel program.

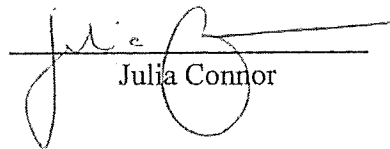
VII. Additional Business

Ms. Anderson said the Lions Club invited her to a planning meeting for the Trail of Treats to share her notes from previous years.

VIII. Adjournment

MOVED (MANFRE), SECONDED (VAN ZELM) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADJOURN THE TRAILS COMMITTEE MEETING AT 7:54 PM.

Prepared by Donna L. Allen; submitted by


Julia Connor



TOWN OF ELLINGTON

Ad Hoc Ellington Trails Committee

55 MAIN STREET – PO BOX 187
ELLINGTON, CONNECTICUT 06029-0187

CHAIRMAN
LINDA ANDERSON

VICE CHAIRMAN
CYNTHIA VAN ZELM

SECRETARY
DEANNA WAMBOLT-GULICK

VALERIE AMSEL
JUDI MANFRE
LARRISSA BURKE
DONNA ALLEN
LINDSAY NEUBECKER
BILL SCHULTZ
TOM PALSHAW
DAN CHAMBERLIN
ROBERT BARONE
ANN HARFORD

Ad Hoc Ellington Trails Committee
Regular Meeting Minutes
September 6, 2023
Town Hall Annex

MEMBERS PRESENT: Valerie Amsel, Linda Anderson, Cynthia van Zelm, Deanna Wambolt-Gulick, Tom Palshaw, Dan Chamberlin

MEMBERS ABSENT: Donna Allen, Larrissa Burke, Judi Manfre, Ann Harford, Robert Barone, Lindsay Neubecker, William Schultz

OTHERS PRESENT: Andrew Boan, Laurie Boan

I. Call to Order

Ms. Anderson called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

II. Citizens' Forum

Boy Scout Andrew Boan discussed his proposed plan to add picnic tables to the Highland Trail as an Eagle Scout project. The Committee provided feedback on the plan and how to help ensure it is cohesive with the mowing needs of the planned site. The Committee suggested that he install the mulch pad and picnic tables in October or later.

III. Approval of Minutes

A. August 2, 2023

A quorum was not present, so this item will be revisited at the next meeting.

IV. Old Business

A. Hockanum River Crew Report

There is currently a crew of four that maintains the area. These individuals recently joined the Committee, but aren't necessarily planning to attend every meeting, as they meet and work weekly. Ms. Anderson raised a concern that this may make it challenging for the Committee to achieve a quorum; the Hockanum River Crew will discuss this concern to ensure that it does not create a difficulty in terms of having a quorum at meetings.

Mr. Palshaw discussed the Crew's work for the past month, sharing that he and Ms. Harford put three new maps (via QR code) on the trail. He also noted that the volume of rain made it challenging to achieve everything they had initially planned.

Mr. Palshaw asked questions regarding working on trails that are not on town property. He showed a map of the West Road trail and noted that there are parts of this trail, and the Franklin Road Trail, that are not on town property, and noted that the Committee is not maintaining those trails because of this. Ms. Anderson shared that the West Road Trail has been removed from the Committee's public information. Mr. Palshaw is concerned about the liability on those trails and thinks that the Committee should work to get approval to use those trails. Ms. Anderson suggested that in the winter, the Committee could work on obtaining easements for the area of the West Road Trail that is not on town property so that the Committee can maintain these trails. The Franklin Trail will not be maintained by the Committee going forward since it is not on town property; however, emergency signs will remain since it is a trail that is used by nearby residents.

Mr. Palshaw let the Committee know that the Hall Memorial Library is now capable of creating posters. This is something the Committee may wish to utilize in the future for kiosk maps, etc.

B. Conservation Commission Report

Ms. Amsel reported that there is nothing new to share, and that there should be a meeting next week.

C. Parking at Crystal Ridge – Emergency Markers

Ms. Anderson shared that the parking site has been approved, and that the official entrance for Crystal Ridge will be on Old Sandy Beach Road. The signs have not gone up yet. Ms. Anderson needs to walk it to update the map with the most accurate information. This will then need to be updated into the map. Mr. Palshaw says he will add the emergency signs once the trail has been fully blazed. The two entrances are planned to be 1 (Crystal Ridge) and 2 (Old Sandy Beach Road).

D. Girl Scout Project at Batz – Gold Award

Ms. Anderson shared that Girl Scout Laurel Feindel installed toad houses that were decorated by children at a recent Farmer's Market. She has built and installed a tool bin. The bin is locked, and community gardeners will be given a code to access it. Ms. Anderson shared that the Committee is likely going to store sensory signs there and asked Ms. Amsel if there is anything she thinks the Committee should store there.

E. New Storage Unit – Painting

Ms. Anderson shared that she spoke to Ms. Manfre who had not heard back from the art teacher yet. Ms. Anderson asked the Committee to keep their ears open for someone who may want to volunteer.

F. Bluebird Houses at Batz

These are done, though not in the possession of the Committee yet. The Committee will need to determine how to install them on the property. Ms. Amsel, Ms. Anderson, and Mr. Palshaw discussed possible ways to install the houses; once they are received, a determination on the installation method can be made.

G. Ellington Highlands Update – Eagle Scout/Emergency Markers

This item was discussed during Citizens' Forum. Ms. Anderson also shared an update on the map and discussed trail colors with the Committee. She suggested changing the red on the draft

to blue, changing the yellow to orange, and the green to white. She suggested removing the pink, as that field is not well maintained at the moment. Ms. Anderson shared a concern that it would need to be brush hogged, and it might be better left as a natural space/forest. Mr. Palshaw suggested that the Committee seek the opinion of an expert to see how to best use the space.

Ms. Anderson shared that blazing is still needed, at which point the Committee can move on to emergency signage.

H. West Road and Franklin Street

These trails have been removed from the Town's public information, due to the property concerns addressed earlier.

V. New Business

A. Boy Scouts – September 16th, 9:00 am at Kimball

Ms. Anderson shared that the Boy Scouts, pending weather, have agreed to help put the old stairs, which were previously flooded out, back under the bridge. Additional help may be needed with the installation of the stairs, as it will include heavy lifting, but it should be a quick project. Afterwards, the Committee is hoping to walk the trail and do some maintenance.

B. Maps

Ms. Anderson has been in contact with Rebecca at MapGeo; she is requesting feedback from the Committee on the Metcalf Trail map. She noted that peach is being changed to white on the current draft. It is also planned to place a "B" to denote a bench along the trail. Once approved, this map will be updated and a QR code will be created for it.

C. Historical Society's Fall Festival – October 14th (Raindate 10/21)

Ms. van Zelm presented this event to the Committee for participation consideration, though she expressed concern that the dates could make it challenging for the Committee to participate. It was decided to forego the event due to the proximity to the Trail of Treats dates.

VI. Subcommittee Reports

A. Treasurer

The budget has been adjusted to \$5,800, with \$1,000 designated for contracted services; these funds are planned to be used for the creation of new maps. Printing is \$600, with Education at \$700; some of this has already been used for the Horizon Wings payment. Technical Equipment is \$3,300, and food is \$200. Ms. Anderson shared that the money can be shifted between categories, but the Committee must not exceed the overall budget amount.

1. Maps

As previously discussed, the Committee is currently working to map out trails using MapGeo, for a maximum cost of \$1,000.

B. Maintenance

1. Metcalf – Boundary Signs/Weeds/Re-blazing

Ms. Amsel shared that she is working on the blazing, noting that it has been challenging to find the previous peach color that was used. Therefore, since the map has not been completed, this blaze color will be changed to white. Ms. Amsel suggested that, for the ease and efficiency of future blazing, that the Committee consider standardizing the colors used on trails.

There is currently a tree down, which has been shared with Tom at Public Works to be taken care of. There is a large pile of poison ivy which Ms. Amsel sprayed, and the trails need clipping.

2. Crystal Ridge – Missing Blazing/Litter Clean-up/Weed-Brush Control

This work has been outlined previously; there was no additional discussion.

3. Kimball – Brush Control

This work has also been discussed previously, noting the planned work between the Boy Scouts and the Committee.

4. Batz – Weed Control/Invasive Removal (Front Field)

Ms. Anderson is hoping the field can be cleaned up before the 3 Foragers event planned in September, and plans to get out do work there in the coming week.

C. Community Outreach

1. August Astronomy Event – Cancelled

This event was cancelled due to rain.

2. Farmers Market – August 5th

This was a successful event and was well attended; the Committee handed out over 75 maps and conservation flyers. Ms. Amsel, Ms. Burke, Ms. van Zelm, and Ms. Anderson worked the event.

3. Zen's Critters – August 16th

Ms. Anderson shared that this was a very successful event with over 38 attendees; the Committee hopes to have her back again.

4. 3 Foragers at Batz – 10:00 am to Noon, September 23rd

Ms. Allen is planning to be at the event as the Committee representative. This has been a very successful event when held at the Library, and this one will actually include foraging.

5. Ginny Apple Talk on Fishers – 6:30 pm, September 19th

This event is upcoming.

6. Trail of Treats – October 23rd (Raindate 10/24) – Assisting Lions Club, Setup/
Working Committee Booth

The Committee plans to decorate a booth as in past years.

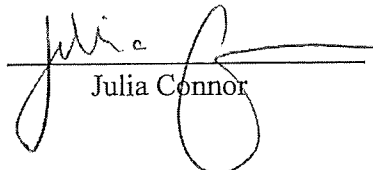
7. Ginny Apple Talk on Batz – October 24th?

This date may need to be changed, as it conflicts with the Trail of Treats rain date.

VII. Adjournment

MOVED (VAN ZELM), SECONDED (WAMBOLT-GULICK) AND PASSED
UNANIMOUSLY TO ADJOURN THE TRAILS COMMITTEE MEETING AT 7:45 PM.

Prepared by Linda Anderson, Chairman; submitted by


Julia Connor

Barbra Galovich

Subject: FW: FEMA draft data review notice to Town of Ellington (090158) in Thames and Shetucket Watersheds

Attachments: thames-shetucket_621_090158_CT_Tolland_Ellington.pdf

From: Smith, Melissa M <melissasmith@usgs.gov>
Sent: Thursday, September 28, 2023 8:30 AM
To: Lori Spielman <lspielman@ELLINGTON-CT.GOV>
Cc: John Colonese <jcolonese@ELLINGTON-CT.GOV>; Jack Turner <jturner@ELLINGTON-CT.GOV>; Ken Radziwon <kradziwon@ellingtonct.onmicrosoft.com>; Planner <planner@ELLINGTON-CT.GOV>; Raymond Martin <Rmartin@ELLINGTON-CT.GOV>; Walter Lee <wlee@ellington-ct.gov>; Lisa Houlihan <LHoulihan@ELLINGTON-CT.GOV>
Subject: FEMA draft data review notice to Town of Ellington (090158) in Thames and Shetucket Watersheds

September 27, 2023

Lori L. Spielman
First Selectman, Town of Ellington
Town of Ellington, Tolland County, Connecticut (090158)

Dear First Selectman Spielman,

We are writing to present the Draft Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) Database for the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Risk MAP project in the Thames and Shetucket Watersheds in Connecticut and Massachusetts. The database has been prepared by the U.S. Geological Survey in partnership with FEMA. The database was first announced at the Workmap Review meeting held on Tuesday, June 20, 2023, to which your community was invited, and the workmaps provided at that meeting were developed using the data in this database. The attached letter contains much more information about the database, the workmaps, and the Risk MAP study. The draft data can be reviewed [online](#) on FEMA's Flood Hazard and Risk Data Viewer. Liz Ahearn is the USGS Project Manager for the Thames and Shetucket Watersheds Risk MAP project. As described in the attached letter, she should receive all information regarding flood risk in the watershed and is the primary contact for questions relating to technical aspects of the project. Liz can be reached at eaahearn@usgs.gov.

Please note that the following contact list is the intended distribution for this letter and email. It is not being sent by post to any of these contacts. We have attempted to include as many as possible by email, but our email list is limited and some may have been excluded. Please feel free to forward this email and letter to excluded members of this list and any other relevant officials in your community. This letter and the Draft FIRM Database are not intended to be distributed to community members or residents without official roles.

Lisa M. Houlihan, AICP, Town Planner, Town of Ellington
Arthur G. Aube, Chairperson, Zoning Board of Appeals, Town of Ellington
Daniel Parisi, Chairperson, Water Pollution Control Authority, Town of Ellington
John Turner, Chairperson, Emergency Services Committee, Town of Ellington
Ken Radziwon, PE, Director, Department of Public Works, Town of Ellington
Kenneth Braga, Chairperson, Inland Wetlands Agency, Town of Ellington
Raymond F. Martin, III, Building Official, Town of Ellington
Rebecca Quarno, Chairperson, Conservation Commission, Town of Ellington
Walter Lee, Director, Department of Emergency Management, Town of Ellington

We look forward to working together with your community throughout the Workmap process and the whole lifetime of the Risk MAP project in your watershed.

Sincerely,
The USGS Risk MAP Project Team



FEMA

September 27, 2023

Lori L. Spielman, First Selectman
Town of Ellington
Town Hall
P.O. Box 187
Ellington, Connecticut 06029

Subject: Town of Ellington, Tolland County, Connecticut
Community No.: 090158

RE: 30-Day Data Submission Notification

Dear First Selectman Spielman:

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is currently validating the draft Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) database for Tolland County, Connecticut (All Jurisdictions). Completing this draft database is a significant milestone for the flood risk project, as it concludes the collection and analysis of the project's initial engineering data. As discussed during the Thames and Shetucket Watersheds Flood Risk Review Meeting (or "Workmap" Meeting) held on June 20, 2023, FEMA's goal is to offer useful and credible data to help you make informed decisions to continue building a safer and stronger community. These datasets, developed by FEMA's mapping partner, U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), provide the best available calculation of where water will collect and flow in the event of a flood (outlined below), based on current conditions.

The engineering data will form the basis for mapping the proposed Special Flood Hazard Areas (SFHAs) on the Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) for your community. An SFHA is an area that is subject to inundation by the 1-percent-annual-chance flood (also called the base flood). Over time, water flow and drainage patterns in your area may have changed dramatically due to surface erosion, land use, and other forces. These factors may have increased or decreased the likelihood of flooding in certain areas, which would result in changing SFHA boundaries and types.

The proposed SFHAs are available for your community's review [online](#) on FEMA's Flood Hazard and Risk Data Viewer. If your community would like to review a local copy of the draft database or other flood hazard data, please speak to the FEMA Project Monitor, Colleen Bailey, as soon as possible. Contact information is listed below. We encourage you to share this data with elected officials and staff to allow a thorough review the database before the formal community coordination meeting. However, please note that this data is considered draft/provisional and is subject to change. It has not yet been through final reviews or an appeal period.

Your community has 30 days to review the draft FIRM database and provide additional data to supplement or modify the draft data. Any data you provide must be consistent with prevailing engineering principles. Your community will have several additional opportunities to comment on and provide feedback about the resulting SFHAs and other flood hazard information before the data are finalized.

Please note that some areas of Zone A, or approximate flood hazard (areas for which detailed analyses have not been performed), on the current effective FIRM dated February 5, 1997, have been removed or

converted to Zone X (shaded) to denote areas of moderate flood hazard outside of the SFHA. This removal or conversion is due to small drainage areas and/or lack of model backing of the effective SFHA. Instances of Zone A to Zone X (shaded) conversion are located in panels 0170E, 0178E, 0179E, and 0190E. Consistent with FEMA Standard ID 645, we are alerting you to these Zone A removals. Please let us know if the community would prefer that any of these areas remain mapped as Zones A. Structures in Zone A may be subject to the local floodplain management ordinance and to mandatory flood insurance purchase requirements. If you wish to discuss any of these implications, please reach out to the contacts at the end of this letter. If we do not receive any response within the 30 days, we will assume that you concur with the changes. There will be additional opportunities for your community to comment on or provide feedback about the resulting SFHAs, including an official 90-day appeal period.

FEMA Region 1 wants to use the most up-to-date and accurate technical data to develop flood risk products for your community. FEMA Region 1 relies on your feedback, partnership, and knowledge during this important project to determine the extent of flood risk in your community, in support of your efforts to reduce those risks. We also look forward to working with community officials and other stakeholders in Tolland County to increase flood risk awareness and reduce the risk to life and property from flooding. Your initial feedback will not affect your community's ability to provide feedback later or to formally appeal the flood hazard information during a future appeal period.

Please ask questions, send any data, and provide comments on the draft FIRM database by October 27, 2023 to Colleen Bailey, FEMA Project Manager, by email at colleen.bailey@fema.dhs.gov or by phone at (202) 710-9766. Also available to answer any questions is Liz Ahearn, the USGS Technical Lead for the study, by email at eaahearn@usgs.gov, or by phone at (860) 291-6745.

Sincerely,



Kerry Bogdan
Risk Analysis Branch Chief
Mitigation Division
FEMA Region I

cc: Lisa M. Houlihan, AICP, Town Planner, Town of Ellington
Arthur G. Aube, Chairperson, Zoning Board of Appeals, Town of Ellington
Daniel Parisi, Chairperson, Water Pollution Control Authority, Town of Ellington
John Turner, Chairperson, Emergency Services Committee, Town of Ellington
Ken Radziwon, PE, Director, Department of Public Works, Town of Ellington
Kenneth Braga, Chairperson, Inland Wetlands Agency, Town of Ellington
Raymond F. Martin, III, Building Official, Town of Ellington
Rebecca Quarno, Chairperson, Conservation Commission, Town of Ellington
Walter Lee, Director, Department of Emergency Management, Town of Ellington
Diane Ifkovic, State NFIP Coordinator, Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection
Karen Michaels, State RiskMAP Coordinator, Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection
Liz Ahearn, Project Manager, U.S. Geological Survey

Please note that the above contact list is the intended distribution for this letter, but it is not being sent by post to any of these contacts. The letter will be sent instead by email to all recipients whose email addresses are known. Please forward this letter to any community officials in the list above who did not receive a copy. Please also feel free to forward it to any other relevant community officials who are not

included in the list, such as community leaders, emergency managers, GIS specialists, planners, and floodplain managers. This letter and the draft FIRM database are not intended to be distributed to community members or residents without official roles.



September 25, 2023

TO: Town of Ellington
First Selectman's Office and/or
Conservation Commission
55 Main Street
Ellington, CT 06029

RE: CONNECTICUT STATEWIDE IMPORTANT FARMLAND CRITERIA UPDATE

To help maintain the productive capacity of American agriculture, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has developed criteria and guidelines to inventory important farmlands. Earlier this year, Connecticut NRCS proposed to update its farmland designation criteria for *Farmland of Statewide Importance* to allow for "not more than 3 percent of the soil surface is covered by stones 10 in (25 cm) to 24 in (60 cm) diameter." This change would allow for some *very stony* soil map units to be designated as Farmland of Statewide Importance. The result of these changes is a more equitable designation across Connecticut, as these designations are used to assess eligibility and ranking for certain USDA program benefits. Further, the new designations are consistent with criteria/designations in other states of our region such as Massachusetts.

The proposal was accepted following notification to the State Technical Advisory Committee and a 30-day comment period. Edits reflecting this criteria change were made to the farmland designations in the official soil survey data for the State of Connecticut. The new version of soil survey data will be published in late-September 2023. Official soil survey data is available from Web Soil Survey.

These farmland designation criteria changes result in the following changes to the Soil Survey of the State of Connecticut:

- 339,153 acres changed to Farmland of Statewide importance.
 - **Some of this acreage was previously designated as *Locally Important Farmland* in select towns including Ellington. This change to Farmland of Statewide importance supersedes the Locally Important Farmland designation, resulting in a more equitable designation across the state as these designations are used to assess eligibility and ranking for certain USDA program benefits.**
- 8 map units currently designated as Locally Important Farmland in select towns would *not* be changed to Farmland of Statewide Importance, so the Locally Important designation would not become obsolete as a result of the proposed change.
 - These unchanged map units are associated with bedrock-controlled landforms. Connecticut and Massachusetts currently have consistent farmland designation criteria as related to amount of bedrock outcrop/exposures.



- Please see the attached proposal correspondence from March 2023 with supplemental figures and tables that illustrate and detail the changes that result from the proposed surface stoniness criteria change.

Changes to Local Important Farmland lists in Ellington:

The soil map units listed in Table 1 were designated in Ellington as Farmland of Local Importance in previous versions of the Soil Survey of the State of Connecticut:

Table 1. Soil Map Units changed from Farmland of Local Importance (in Ellington) to Farmland of Statewide Importance

Soil map unit symbol	Soil map unit Name
44B; 46B; 51B; 54B; 58B; 61B; 61C; 64B; 64C; 67B; 67C; 83B; 85B; 85C; 88B; 88C	Rainbow silt loam, 2 to 8 percent slopes, very stony; Woodbridge fine sandy loam, 0 to 8 percent slopes, very stony; Sutton fine sandy loam, 0 to 8 percent slopes, very stony; Wapping very fine sandy loam, 2 to 8 percent slopes, very stony; Gloucester gravelly sandy loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes, very stony; Canton and Charlton fine sandy loams, 0 to 8 percent slopes, very stony; Canton and Charlton fine sandy loams, 8 to 15 percent slopes, very stony; Cheshire fine sandy loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes, very stony; Cheshire fine sandy loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes, very stony; Narragansett silt loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes, very stony; Narragansett silt loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes, very stony; Broadbrook silt loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes, very stony; Paxton and Montauk fine sandy loams, 3 to 8 percent slopes, very stony; Paxton and Montauk fine sandy loams, 8 to 15 percent slopes, very stony; Wethersfield loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes, very stony; Wethersfield loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes, very stony

The soil map units listed in Table 2 were designated in Ellington as Farmland of Local Importance are unaffected by this year's farmland designation criteria change:

Table 2. Soil Map Units that will remain designated as Farmland of Local Importance in Ellington in the updated version of the Soil Survey of the State of Connecticut

Soil map unit symbol	Soil map unit Name
73C	Charlton-Chatfield complex, 0 to 15 percent slopes, very rocky

This change in designation from Farmland of Local Importance to Farmland of Statewide importance has no adverse effect to Ellington town citizens applying for USDA benefits or related conservation benefits from partner agencies that use USDA farmland classification data.



This correspondence letter functions to provide transparency regarding changes to the town's Farmland of Local Importance list, and no action is required on behalf of the Town of Ellington.

If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to Jacob Isleib at jacob.isleib@usda.gov.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jacob Isleib".

Jacob Isleib
State Soil Scientist, Connecticut & Rhode Island
US Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service