



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, JULY 9, 2024, 7:00 PM

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

PRESENT: Chairman Rebecca Quarno, Regular Members James Gage (Remote), Sean Dwyer (Remote), George Nickerson, Laurie Burstein (Remote) and Alternate Ann Harford

ABSENT: Vice Chairman David Bidwell, Regular Member Robert Zielfelder, and Alternate Jon Kaczmarek

STAFF: John Colonese, Assistant Town Planner and Acting Recording Clerk

OTHERS PRESENT:

I. CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Rebecca Quarno called the Conservation Commission meeting to order at 7:06 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.

John Colonese, Assistant Town Planner, noted that the commission left off on the historic resources inventory and potential benefits to completing an inventory. He said he spoke with Mary Dunne at the State Historic Preservation Office (SPHO), and she noted that the inventory is an information gathering tool that identifies where there might be historical resources in the town. The Inventory will have a historical write-up on the town and will make recommendations for the National Registry. It will also identify properties that were associated with women and minority history. He added that there is still time for 2024 grant cycle and application can be made for September or October SHPO meetings although application would have to be made by August 9th to be reviewed at the September meeting and there is limited funding for grants this year.

Mr. Colonese clarified some information presented at the last meeting. He received a list of residential and commercial buildings by property address from the Assessor and was able to sort them by date of construction and that 100 homes and commercial buildings would bring the list through the 1840s according to this information. This does not include those homes in the 1990 National Register of Historic Places downtown historic area. It also doesn't include independent barn and shed structures,

which may add more. The minutes from the last meeting read that there were only 100 historic homes and commercial buildings on this list in total.

Commissioner Quarno asked the commission if they want to move forward with pursuing the inventory. Mr. Colonese added that the inventory fulfills the Plan of Conservation & Development (POCD) recommendation and may help with other POCD historic resource preservation recommendations.

Commissioner Dwyer said he thinks it should be pursued since it is in the POCD and that it may help owners of historic homes in the future.

Commissioner Burstein stated that the inventory may motivate owners to take care of their historic properties.

Chairman Quarno said she supports the inventory since it is recommended in the POCD.

MOVED (DWYER) SECONDED (BURSTEIN) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPLY FOR A STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE GRANT FOR \$20,000 TO CREATE A HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY AS RECOMMENDED IN THE PLAN OF CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT.

2. Report - Farmland Preservation Program.

Mr. Colonese noted that there was a notice posted on the town's Facebook page for farmland preservation. Chairman Quarno said she saw the post. Mr. Colonese asked if there were other locations they would like the information posted such as the Ellington Newsletter. Chairman Quarno said posting in the newsletter is a good idea.

Mr. Colonese noted the Board of Selectman recommended the adoption of the tax abatement for eligible farming operations ordinance and referred it to the Board of Finance for review and approval yesterday. The ordinance under statute 12-81M will allow municipalities to abate up to 50% of property tax on certain farms like dairy farms, vegetable farms, orchards, and nurseries. After the Board of Finance, the proposed ordinance will have to go to Town Meeting. Ultimately, it will be a tax abatement that is processed by the Assessor's office.

3. Report - Open Space Preservation Program

a. Open Space Brochure.

Mr. Colonese reviewed the existing brochure and the draft open space brochure with the commission and asked for input on the draft brochure. He said he feels the old graph was a bit confusing, so he updated the graph. He also included an updated map and added public access properties to the list.

Commissioner Gage noted that a portion of the graph for town, land trust and water company land needs to have the percentage of land included. Mr. Colonese noted that the graph information was cut off by accident and he will correct the information. The commission agreed that the draft brochure looked good.

Commissioner Quarno asked that the open space brochures be made available in different locations in town once they are printed.

- b. Open Space/Farmland/Recreational Assets Inventory, Revised June 2024.

Mr. Colonese said the open space, farmland and recreational asset inventory was updated for the approved purchase of the 27-acre Brady property at 79 Kibbe Road.

- c. Executive Session to Discuss Possible Open Space Purchases.

Mr. Colonese asked the commission if they would like to go into executive session to discuss potential open space acquisitions for properties on Penfield Avenue and Green Road.

MOVED (HARFORD) SECONDED (GAGE) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO ENTER INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION AT 7:35 PM FOR THE PURPOSE OF DISCUSSING POTENTIAL OPEN SPACE ACQUISITIONS INVITING COMMISSION MEMBERS AND THE ASSISTANT TOWN PLANNER.

MOVED (HARFORD) SECONDED (QUARNO) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO EXIT EXECUTIVE SESSION AT 7:44 PM. NO MOTIONS OR DECISIONS WERE MADE DURING THE EXECUTIVE SESSION.

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS:

- 1. FY 23-24 Budget & Expenditure Update.

Mr. Colonese noted that this is the end of the fiscal year's closing budget but doesn't show the donations and memberships to the Connecticut Farmland Trust and Connecticut Farm Bureau. The Connecticut Farmland Trust sent a thank you letter.

- 2. Approval of June 11, 2024, Regular Meeting Minutes.

MOVED (DWYER) SECONDED (HARFORD) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE THE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF JUNE 11, 2024, AS WRITTEN.

- 3. Correspondence/Discussion:

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

Commissioner Harford noted they removed substantial amounts of knotweed by the pond on the Windermere Trail and the new walkway is almost complete on the Windermere Trail spur. Kiosks for some trails will be installed by the Department of Public Works. The June 5th Ellington Trails Committee meeting minutes were included with the agenda information.

- b. Beech Leaf Disease.

Mr. Colonese noted Commissioner Bidwell was going to provide additional information on the processes such as the types of experimental treatments they are doing and what materials they would use, but Commissioner Bidwell was not present tonight. Chairman Quarno noted this item will stay on the agenda.

Commissioner Harford asked when the dirt road on 79 Kibbe Road would be open. Mr. Colonese wasn't sure of the schedule and said he would check with the Department of Public Works. Mr. Colonese added that the dirt road had been covered with logs and wood

by the owner to prevent it from being used by motorized vehicles. It would also depend on when the property transfer is complete.

V. ADJOURNMENT:

**MOVED (HARFORD) SECONDED (DWYER) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO
ADJOURN THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEETING AT 7:58 PM.**

Respectfully submitted,

John Colonese, Acting Recording Clerk