



STATE OF CONNECTICUT – COUNTY OF TOLLAND
INCORPORATED 1786

TOWN OF ELLINGTON

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CONSERVATION COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES TUESDAY, APRIL 15, 2025, 7:00 PM

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

PRESENT: Chairman Rebecca Quarno, Vice Chairman Robert Zielfelder Jr., Regular Members James Gage, Sean Dwyer (arrived at 7:01), Laurie Burstein, Kathy Caton, and Alternate Ann Harford

ABSENT:

STAFF: John Colonese, Assistant Town Planner and Ashley DuBois, Recording Clerk (via Zoom)

I. CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Rebecca Quarno called the Conservation Commission meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

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

III. ACTIVE BUSINESS:

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

John Colonese, Assistant Town Planner, reported no new updates at this time.

2. Report - Farmland Preservation Program.

John reported the letters regarding the farmland preservation program were mailed out, dated March 25th, to the targeted 20 property owners previously discussed. Currently, the planning department has not received any responses.

3. Report - Open Space Preservation Program.

- a. Open Space Brochure – Printing.

John shared the open space brochure inventory is low and more copies are needed for the Earth Day event and other upcoming events. John requested a motion to print 100 copies utilizing the remaining advertising printing funds.

MOVED (BURSTEIN) SECONDED (DWYER) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO PRINT 100 OPEN SPACE BROCHURES FROM THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION'S ADVERTISING AND PRINTING ACCOUNT.

Commissioner Burstein commented on the upcoming Earth Day event and if there was an opportunity to enhance awareness and educate the community on recycling guidelines and procedures. Chairman Quarno responded the town has done programming and education in past years but agreed this event could be a good opportunity. Assistant Town Planner John shared with the commission that the town does have a Recycling Manager, Samuel Saunders, who is well educated on the topic and does informational sessions and outreach continuously. Chairman Quarno mentioned inviting Mr. Saunders to an upcoming meeting to discuss common goals and partnership possibilities or providing the commission with information. John will reach out to Mr. Saunders. Commissioner Dwyer asked if the commission is hosting a table at the Earth Day event and Commissioner Quarno noted that the Ad Hoc Trails Committee has a table.

b. 19 Lord Road, Open Space Ranking.

John reported the letters regarding the open space preservation program were also recently mailed out. The planning department received two responses, one from the owner of 19 Lord Road and another from an owner or property off Somers Road. John spoke with both owners and discussed the open space program with them and said he would then present the interested parties to the commission.

Regarding the property on Lord Road, the commission discussed the location and attributes of the property. Vice Chairman Zielfelder asked if there was Town of Tolland open space abutting the property and John confirmed there is not open space directly abutting it. John noted the owner has done timber harvesting on the property and there are two access points on Lord Road and off Crystal Ridge Drive.

Regarding the Somers Road property, the commission discussed the location and attributes of the property. Noteworthy aspects of the property include abuttal to current town owned land, as well as abuttal to the Shenipsit State Forest.

c. Executive Session to Discuss Possible Open Space Purchases.

The commission requested to go into an executive session to discuss potential open space acquisitions of properties on Lord Road and Somers Road.

MOVED (DWYER) SECONDED (ZIELFELDER) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO ENTER INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION AT 7:30 PM FOR THE PURPOSE OF DISCUSSING POTENTIAL OPEN SPACE ACQUISITIONS INVITING COMMISSION MEMBERS, THE ASSISTANT TOWN PLANNER, AND RECORDING CLERK.

MOVED (DWYER) SECONDED (BURSTEIN) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO EXIT EXECUTIVE SESSION AT 7:45 PM.

John shared an update on the recently acquired property at 79 Kibbe Road. Plans for the property include the town opening and repairing the roadway as an access road to the state forest. A small gravel parking area will be built by the entrance on Kibbe Road. The work is anticipated to be completed this construction season.

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS:

1. FY 24-25 Budget & Expenditure Update:

John requested a motion to renew membership of the Connecticut Farm Bureau.

BY CONSENSUS, THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION APPROVED PAYMENT OF \$195 TO RENEW MEMBERSHIP TO THE CONNECTICUT FARM BUREAU FROM THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION'S DUES AND SUBSCRIPTIONS ACCOUNT.

2. Approval of March 11, 2025, Regular Meeting Minutes.

MOVED (GAGE) SECONDED (BURSTEIN) TO APPROVE THE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF MARCH 11, 2025, AS WRITTEN.

3. Correspondence/Discussion:

d. Ad Hoc Ellington Trails Committee – Monthly Minutes.

Commissioner Harford reported invasive knotweed is emerging again along trails and efforts have begun for cleanup. Additionally, Commissioner Harford mentioned a failing bridge behind Maple Grove on Franklin Street, which connects with Vernon. Commissioner Harford reached out to Vernon Public Works and presented the solution if they were to buy the materials needed to rebuild the bridge, then the committee would build it. The committee is waiting to hear back. Commissioner Harford also noted a bridge on Hockanum River Trail that needs repair as well. Chairman Quarno asked if the committee was in contact with local scout groups and Commissioner Harford confirmed the partnership, along with partnering with high school students in need of volunteer hours.

e. Connecticut Farm Bureau – Membership Renewal.

The commission approved renewal of membership to the Connecticut Farm Bureau.

c. Community Outreach – Ellington Farmer's Market.

John shared that he reached out to the coordinator of the Ellington Farmer's Market and was told the May 31st market's theme is 'Farming in Modern Times' may be a good opportunity for the commission to host a table to further outreach efforts. Round table discussion ensued regarding planning for hosting a table. John will follow up to see if there are any other farmer's market dates that would match the commission's missions. John will also provide draft information for the commission to create a poster board should the commission host a table at the farmer's market.

IV. ADJOURNMENT:

MOVED (HARFORD) SECONDED (ZIELFELDER) TO ADJOURN THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEETING AT 7:58 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Ashley DuBois, Recording Clerk