



STATE OF CONNECTICUT – COUNTY OF TOLLAND
INCORPORATED 1786

TOWN OF ELLINGTON

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CONSERVATION COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES TUESDAY, MAY 20, 2025, 7:00 PM

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

PRESENT: Vice Chairman Robert Zielfelder, Jr., Regular Members James Gage, Laurie Burstein, Kathy Caton, and Alternate Ann Harford

ABSENT: Chairman Rebecca Quarno, and Regular Member Sean Dwyer

STAFF: John Colonese, Assistant Town Planner and Ashley DuBois, Recording Clerk

I. CALL TO ORDER: Vice Chairman Robert Zielfelder Jr. 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, notified the commission the Request for Proposal is under review in the Finance office. Once approved, it will be sent to the State Historic Preservation Office.

2. Report - Farmland Preservation Program.

Nothing new to report.

3. Report - Open Space Preservation Program.

Commissioner Gage announced that property located at 16 Penfield Avenue is now on the market. The property currently has a non-operational radio station located on it, along with currently used trails. Roughly half of the property is in the Town of Ellington and the other half is in the Town of Vernon. Previous efforts have been made to acquire some of the property for its potential to improve trails along the Hockanum River. The Town of Ellington granted a 15-foot access easement across its property in the early 1980s to allow access to the radio station. Commissioners generally agreed that acquiring the land would be a major asset. However, at this time, the land trust was not interested in pursuing the land due to the high price of the land, so the information was brought to the commission and town's attention. The commission agreed to keep an eye on the status of the property, attempt to reach out to a caretaker of the property for more information, and if the

opportunity were to arise, pose the idea of donating the land to the town. Commissioners continued to discuss the characteristics of the property.

a. Executive Session to Discuss Possible Open Space Purchases.

John Colonese asked the commission if they would like to enter an executive session to discuss the possible open space purchases of 19 Lord Road and the 20-acre property off Somers Road abutting the State Forest as he has obtained additional information from the owners of the properties.

MOVED (BURSTEIN) SECONDED (GAGE) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO ENTER INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION AT 7:20 PM FOR THE PURPOSE OF DISCUSSING POTENTIAL OPEN SPACE ACQUISITIONS INVITING COMMISSION MEMBERS, THE ASSISTANT TOWN PLANNER, AND RECORDING CLERK.

MOVED (HARFORD) SECONDED (BURSTEIN) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO EXIT EXECUTIVE SESSION AT 7:31 PM.

II. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS:

1. FY 24-25 Budget & Expenditure Update:
2. Approval of April 15, 2025, Regular Meeting Minutes.

MOVED (GAGE) SECONDED (CATON) TO APPROVE THE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF APRIL 15, 2025, AS WRITTEN.

3. Correspondence/Discussion:
 - a. Ad Hoc Ellington Trails Committee – Monthly Minutes.

Commissioner Harford updated the commission on several new developments. First, the Town of Vernon provided materials for a bridge and the Trails Committee built the bridge on the Maple Grove trail. Second, emergency signs on all trails are installed. Next, projects for the Highlands trail area, off Stein Rd, are completed. However, there is one bridge that is not big enough for an emergency quad to access, so there is consideration for rebuilding the bridge. Additionally, the committee ordered and received materials for a walkway north of the pond near 7 Nutmeg Drive that's in need of repair. Vice Chairman Zielfelder added the Scouts recently did a service project at Crystal Ridge trail where they did some general upkeep maintenance, leveled some spots, and improved some drainage in a wet area. Lastly, John Colonese added that a cover for the small amphitheater at the Batz property was approved yesterday by the Planning & Zoning Commission.

- b. Community Outreach – Ellington Farmer's Market.

The Farmers Market coordinator provided the following dates the commission could host a table: August 30th - Meet Your Community Day and October 11th - Go Green Day. The commissioners preferred the August 30th date, particularly due to the attendance of other town entities, so they plan to host an information table that day. Commissioners began discussions for booth ideas.

c. Ellington Trash, Recycling, and Disposal Information.

John Colonese noted that Sam Saunders, Recycling & Refuse Manager, provided the disposal brochure and added there is a lot more information on the Public Works website. Public Works was also at the Earth Day event providing the community with information on recycling. Sam Saunders is willing to attend a meeting to present disposal and recycling information if the commission is interested.

d. Mailing of Commission Meeting Packets

The Planning Department recently heard from the Town Administrator regarding the mailing of commission packets. The mailing of board and commission packets costs the town between \$10,000 and \$15,000 each year. The town would like to curtail this service and have boards and commissions institute alternative methods for receiving meeting packets.

The commission is currently getting a copy of the meeting packet by email. Commissioners could also come to the Annex foyer to pick up the packet prior to the meeting or it could be made available at the meeting. Commissioners generally seemed interested in having the packet available at the meeting, although some were okay with an email only.

IV. ADJOURNMENT:

MOVED (HARFORD) SECONDED (CATON) TO ADJOURN THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEETING AT 7:53 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Ashley DuBois, Recording Clerk