



STATE OF CONNECTICUT – COUNTY OF TOLLAND
INCORPORATED 1786

TOWN OF ELLINGTON

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CONSERVATION COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES TUESDAY, JULY 8, 2025, 7:00 PM

IN-PERSON ATTENDANCE: TOWN HALL ANNEX, 57 MAIN STREET, ELLINGTON, CT

REMOTE ATTENDANCE: VIA ZOOM MEETING

(ATTENDEES BELOW WERE IN PERSON UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED)

PRESENT: Chairman Rebecca Quarno, Vice Chairman Robert Zielfelder Jr., Regular Members James Gage (via Zoom), Laurie Burstein, Kathy Caton, and Alternate Ann Harford

ABSENT: Regular Member Sean Dwyer

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

OTHERS

PRESENT: Valerie Amsel, Ad Hoc Ellington Trails Committee (via Zoom)

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

John Colonese, Assistant Town Planner, reported the Request for Proposal (RFP) was approved by the Finance Department and the State Historic Preservation Office. The RFP was posted on Bonfire, an online bid site. The closing date for proposals is August 5, 2025. John noted a hopeful outcome due to a couple of questions from interested consultants and is working alongside the Finance Department for continued progress. John plans to provide proposals for review by the commission at the August meeting.

2. Report - Farmland Preservation Program.

Nothing new to report.

3. Report - Open Space Preservation Program.

- a. 16 Penfield Avenue.

John reported discussions with the real estate agent representing the sale of the property and explained what was discussed at the previous Conservation Commission

regarding accepting the parcel as a donation to the town. The property is currently listed at \$475,000. Chairman Quarno clarified the listing price is for both parcels, one located in Ellington, and one located in the Vernon. John confirmed the list price is for both parcels and noted Ellington would probably not be interested in owning land in another town. John has plans to connect with the Town of Vernon about the parcels. The commissioners reviewed the characteristics of the property, concluding with mixed interest in the property. John also confirmed he will notify the First Selectman about the listing of the property.

- b. Somers Road, Assessor Parcel 191-001-0000.

John reported that the owner of this property responded to the open space preservation letter sent out earlier this year. Through previous discussions, the commission decided this property would be best acquired by the State. John worked with the owner to complete the Connecticut DEEP Prospective Land Acquisition application. The application was submitted, along with supporting materials, to Matt Starr, the property agent in land acquisitions. The application will be reviewed at their next meeting, and they will send a decision letter to the owner. John has continued contact with the owner and shared that the State would financially support the next steps if desired. Updates will be provided at the next commission meeting.

BY CONSENSUS, THE COMMISSION DECIDED TO GO OUT OF AGENDA ORDER TO ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS.

II. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS:

1. FY 24-25 Budget & Expenditure Update:

The spreadsheet provided showed the end of year budget and all accounts were closed out. The new fiscal year budget will remain the same.

2. Approval of May 20, 2025, Regular Meeting Minutes.

MOVED (HARFORD) SECONDED (CATON) TO APPROVE THE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF MAY 20, 2025, AS WRITTEN.

3. Correspondence/Discussion:

- a. Ad Hoc Ellington Trails Committee – Monthly Minutes

Valerie Amsel, Ad Hoc Ellington Trails Committee Representative, provided updates. Two repair projects, one for a bridge at the Hockanum trail and one to widen the bridge at Highlands trail, are ready to get started. The storage bin for the committee has been painted as well. The committee submitted a grant application for the Batz property to construct a covering over the existing amphitheater. Commissioner Harford added the committee cleaned up a section on the Hockanum River trail that was overgrown, and they are also experimenting with tarping knotweed to potentially kill the roots.

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

Chairman Quarno confirmed the commission chose August 30th Ellington Farmers Market to attend and host a table. John presented two mockups for a poster board, a map and chart about farmland and open space preservation information. The floor opened to suggestions and Chairman Quarno added reaching out to the recycling

coordinator to see if there are some ideas. John will follow up on collecting brochures and information from previous years as well.

BY CONSENSUS, THE COMMISSION DECIDED TO GO BACK TO ACTIVE BUSINESS #3 REPORT – OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION PROGRAM.

c. Executive Session to Discuss Possible Open Space Purchases

MOVED (ZIELFELDER) SECONDED (QUARNO) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO ENTER INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION AT 7:39 PM FOR THE PURPOSE OF DISCUSSING POTENTIAL OPEN SPACE ACQUISITIONS INVITING COMMISSION MEMBERS, THE ASSISTANT TOWN PLANNER, AND RECORDING CLERK.

MOVED (HARFORD) SECONDED (ZIELFELDER) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO EXIT EXECUTIVE SESSION AT 7:50 PM.

IV. ADJOURNMENT:

MOVED (QUARNO) SECONDED (BURSTEIN) TO ADJOURN THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEETING AT 7:51 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Ashley DuBois, Recording Clerk