



STATE OF CONNECTICUT – COUNTY OF TOLLAND
INCORPORATED 1786

TOWN OF ELLINGTON

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CONSERVATION COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 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 Sean Dwyer, Laurie Burstein (arrived 7:05pm), Kathy Caton, Jamison Boucher (arrived 7:05pm), and Alternate Ann Harford

ABSENT: Regular Member James Gage

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

OTHERS

PRESENT: Ad Hoc Ellington Trails Committee Chairman Linda Anderson and Regular Member Valerie Amsel (arrived via Zoom 7:15pm)

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:

BY CONSENSUS, THE COMMISSION WENT OUT OF AGENDA ORDER AND REVIEWED AGENDA ITEM #2 FIRST.

1. Report - Open Space Preservation Program.

a. 25 Tolland Turnpike – Review Option to Purchase

John Colonese, Assistant Town Planner, announced a letter was submitted on behalf of the owner of property known as 25 Tolland Turnpike to the Town Administrator. The submission included a map and an assessor ID card. The owner is looking for interest from the Town to purchase before pursuing outside interest. John spoke with Matt Reed, Town Administrator, and the town administration is currently not interested in the parcel. The price is not stated; however, the land is currently valued at \$196,410 within the Assessor's information. Vice Chairman Zielfelder mentioned the state preservation program that is being considered for another property. John said he spoke with the State, and the owner could follow the state preservation program process.

Linda Anderson, Ellington Trails Committee Chairman, entered the conversation and noted property specific trails are unlikely, however, with the proximity to Nye Holman State Forest the Trails Committee would be interested, if the State allowed an extension

trail through their property. Linda referenced Melrose trail in Enfield, that is a state property but is maintained by the Town of Enfield. Vice Chairman Zielfelder responded the issue is that there are no trails in that forest near the given property but confirmed an extension would prove useful. Commissioner Dwyer asked about the road frontage and if parking would be possible. Vice Chairman Zielfelder confirmed and noted there is passable road access near the state road. John noted this property was included on the open space rankings the commission completed in 2021.

Moving forward, the commission supported gathering more information, including pricing and willingness to preserve the property. Vice Chairman Zielfelder added to connect with the land trust for potentially acquiring the land and Dwyer added the talking point in favor of the town still under the percentage threshold of open space preservation for the community. Chairman Quarno asked what the development potential of the land is if sold privately and John noted there are site variables that would need to be assessed for residential development potential. In conclusion, additional information will be collected, and state contact information will be shared with Linda Anderson regarding the question about the Town maintaining trails on state land.

Next, John noted the State is interested in the Somers Road property and a letter will be sent out to the owner, however the process won't begin soon as the State is working on acquiring other properties first.

Lastly, John reached out to the Willis estate regarding the property on Crystal Lake Road that is for sale and explained the preservation program to current representative of the estate but was told it is under contract.

2. Plan of Conservation & Development, Chapter 4-Conservation Strategies, Natural Resource Preservation: Historic Preservation.
 - a. Review and Evaluate Proposals for a Town-wide Historic Resources Inventory

In review, the Conservation Commission received three qualified proposals to complete a Town-wide Historic Resources Inventory. The three companies include Kleinfelder Northeast, Inc. of Portland, ME, Easton Architects, LLP of New York, NY, and E2 Project Management LLC of Rockaway, NJ. The factors for formal evaluation included Executive Summary, Firm Qualifications, Team Member Credentials/Resumes, Methodology, Scope of Services & Project Approach, Relevant Experience, Product Delivered, and References. The commissioners were asked to evaluate individually over the past month for a discussion and decision this meeting.

Chairman Quarno opened the discussion floor and asked how the commission wished to come to a consensus. The commissioners combined rankings and other relevant points in their comparisons and opinions. Commissioner Burstein noted the longest timeline was from Easton Architects at 9 months, compared to Kleinfelder Northeast Inc. at 7 months and E2 Project Management at 5 months. Chairman Quarno added that Easton's project descriptions appeared favorable to more modern and industrial towns and Commissioner Burstein confirmed there was little evidence of towns like Ellington from Easton's experience.

In terms of deliverables, Chairman Quarno stated E2's proposal offered the most for the price, compared to limited deliverables from both Easton and Kleinfelder. Regular member Burstein supported this impression. On another note, regular member Burstein felt that Kleinfelder's proposal was more personal and felt it was evident they did research into the town already, Chairman Quarno confirmed this impression.

At this time, regular member Boucher guided the discussion to focus on the top two companies. The commission, both individually and mutually, rated Kleinfelder and E2 as the top two candidates. In favor of E2, Chairman Quarno noted this company, although based in New Jersey, has a project manager that is Connecticut based. John added that E2 would need to acquire certification to complete work in CT, but Commissioner Harford found in the proposal that they are prepared to. Comparatively, Kleinfelder, although they are based in Maine, have an office in Rocky Hill, CT and have completed a state historic resources inventory in New London, CT. John made the commission aware of a limitation noted in Kleinfelder's proposal, that "one round of comment from the Town of Ellington and that the town will review and comment on all projects deliverables within ten business days of receipt", which John followed up on with the company that they are flexible. John also added he completed some reference reviews on the companies, and all three companies had glowing reviews. John noted great reviews from the contact at New London, CT by Kleinfelder and the mayor of Lambertville, NJ would highly recommend Easton. Although highly recommended, E2 references in New Jersey seemed to have different scopes of work compared to the historic resources inventory. Regular member Burstein noted all three companies had close to the same years of experience as well.

Chairman Quarno circled back and focused the commission to decide on the top two candidates. Easton Architects were voted as the third-place candidates at this time, leaving Kleinfelder and E2 as the top two companies.

Moving forward, the commission focused on the evaluation categories. Starting with the Executive summary, the commission felt E2 had a more robust summary. Additionally, the commission discussed how both proposals focused on and used key terms and language the town is looking for from a historical perspective, including minorities, indigenous, etc. Regular member Boucher, who recently joined the commission, asked what the original key factor, whether high priority triggers or the quality of the deliverables, etc. were the commission looking for in this project. Chairman Quarno answered the commission was ideally looking for a company who would identify up to 100 properties in town. Chairman Quarno added to this point, Kleinfelder's proposal clarified that although 100 buildings would be identified, this may come at less than 100 applications, if say a single application could have multiple buildings on it. Whereas E2's proposal stated they would do 100 forms, understanding the reality that a property could have multiple buildings on it. All in all, each company had comparative experience, cost, and goal of 100 sites.

The next category to compare is deliverables, the product of the project. The commission took time to review the deliverables section from both companies. It appeared the deliverables for Kleinfelder would be a report and the completed forms for the SHPO, which John confirmed is what the SHPO would be looking for. However, the format for deliverables was unclear. From E2's proposal, the deliverables were clearly stated, including a bound hard copy and one digital PDF of the final inventory, a complete set of finalized HRI forms (hard copy and digital), GIS data and digital photography, and a summary presentation, if requested. The commission appreciated the deliverables presented by E2.

During this time, John noted the selection would need to be made by October 1st to send the recommendation to the Board of Selectman.

MOVED (BURSTEIN), SECONDED (HARFORD) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO RECOMMEND TO THE BOARD OF SELECTMAN TO AWARD THE REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR THE TOWN-WIDE HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY TO E2 PROJECT MANAGEMENT LLC OF ROCKAWAY, NJ IN THE AMOUNT OF \$20,000.

3. Report - Farmland Preservation Program

The commission's community outreach at the Farmer's Market on August 30th went well, with individuals interested in the Open Space and Farmland maps. Questions from community members focused on farmland in town with a notable conversation about the farmland being developed on Route 83 across from Meadowview Plaza.

John noted the owner of Burke Ridge Farm at 95 Wapping Wood Road would like to add living space above the existing farmstand as their main residence in South Windsor burnt down. The property is under farmland preservation, and they will need to apply to the State.

II. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS:

1. FY 25-26 Budget & Expenditure Update

Nothing new to update. John will follow up on clarification of a few items.

2. Approval of August 12, 2025, Regular Meeting Minutes

Edit requested: remove Sean Dwyer from present attendance list.

MOVED (ZIELFELDER JR.) SECONDED (HARFORD) TO APPROVE THE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF AUGUST 12, 2025, AS AMENDED.

3. Correspondence/Discussion:

a. Ad Hoc Ellington Trails Committee – Update

Alternate Harford noted the Ad Hoc Ellington Trails Committee finished the bridge repair located near the radio station. The committee is still battling poison ivy and knotweed. Regarding the test of ridding knotweed, the progress will be checked soon. Additionally, the committee approached the Town Dept. of Public Works to rototill the knotweed areas and plant grass, while potentially adding another bench.

IV. ADJOURNMENT:

MOVED (DWYER) SECONDED (ZIELFELDER JR.) TO ADJOURN THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEETING AT 8:13 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Ashley DuBois, Recording Clerk