



STATE OF CONNECTICUT – COUNTY OF TOLLAND
INCORPORATED 1786

TOWN OF ELLINGTON

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CONSERVATION COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES TUESDAY, JANUARY 13, 2026, 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 (via Zoom), Sean Dwyer, Kathy Caton, Kalagena Sullivan, and Alternate Matthew Shea

ABSENT: Regular Member Jamison Boucher and Alternate Ann Harford

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

OTHERS

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

I. CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Rebecca Quarno called the Conservation Commission meeting to order at 7:01 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.

a. Townwide Historic Resources Inventory.

John Colonese, Assistant Town Planner, announced the townwide historic resources inventory project has officially commenced after finalizing the contract and a collaboration meeting last month between E2 Project Management, the State Historic Preservation Office, and himself. John provided the consultant with a list from Assessor's office that included all the residential, commercial, and other buildings in town organized by year built up to the year 1900. Commissioners were provided with the list generated by E2 showing the initial 100 buildings they plan to research. John clarified that this project excludes the center of town as it was previously inventoried in 1990 and added in its entirety to the National Register. John also noted that the inventory and supporting paperwork will be completed per the requirements of the State Historic Preservation Office.

Next steps include E2 Project Management conducting site visits. John drafted a letter to the owners of the homes and buildings included in the target list and asked for feedback from the commissioners. In response, Chairman Quarno noted to include clarification that the fieldwork will be photos of on the exterior of the home only and will not require interior access. Commissioner Dwyer confirmed that field researchers will have proper identification for

residents. Chairman Quarno added to include the purpose of this project; to educate residents on the purpose of the inventory research and that the project will not create any additional regulations or requirements nor identify actions on the homeowners' part. Round table discussion ensued. E2 Project Management hopes to begin soon, weather pending. Vice Chairman Zielfelder Jr. suggested posting the notice more publicly in case other individuals notice the company at work in town. Additional notice will be posted online if the need arises.

2. Report - Farmland Preservation Program.

The list of priority parcels for farmland preservation was given to the Commissioners. John Colonese stated as a follow-up to last month's meeting that open space funds cannot be used for farmland preservation as it relates to purchasing development rights. Historically, when the requests arose, the Commission and Planning Department approached the Board of Selectman and then the request went to Town meeting to authorize bonding. Additionally, the Town works alongside the State for farmland preservation.

3. Report - Open Space Preservation Program.

The list of priority parcels for open space preservation was given to the Commissioners. John Colonese reported that the Open Space fund is approximately \$600,000. Commissioner Shea commented on an open space parcel which has been identified "almost entirely within A Natural Diversity Database", which John responded the State has identified protected species in specific areas, thus giving an added level importance potential to the land. Round table discussion ensued about outstanding contacts and parcels.

4. Plan of Conservation – Conservation Focus Areas.

Based off the above-mentioned priority lists for farmland and open space preservation, the Commission decided, in the coming meetings, to go through the evaluation process for ranking new open space parcels and farmland properties in town. This will provide the opportunity for new members to understand the process using the existing criteria, while also adding parcels not included on the established lists.

II. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS:

1. FY 25-26 Budget & Expenditure Update:

a. Dues & Subscriptions:

Connecticut Association of Conservation and Inland Wetlands Commission, Inc. (CACIWC)

MOVED (DWYER) SECONDED (CATON) PASSED UNANIOUSMLY TO PAY \$60.00 MEMBERSHIP TO THE CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION AND INLAND WETLANDS COMMISSION, INC. (CACIWC).

By consensus, the Commission tabled contributions to the Connecticut Farm Bureau Association, the Connecticut Land Conservation Council and the Connecticut Farmland Trust for future re-evaluation.

2. Approval of December 9, 2025, Regular Meeting Minutes.

MOVED (ZIELFELDER JR.) SECONDED (CATON) AND PASSED UNANIOUSMLY TO APPROVE THE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF DECEMBER 9, 2025, AS WRITTEN.

3. Correspondence/Discussion:

a. Ad Hoc Ellington Trails Committee – Update.

Valerie Amsel shared the Committee is busy hosting a mini golf event at the library at the end of the month, preparing for Earth Day and Trails Day events in the coming spring, as well as identifying opportunities to increase trails interest. There is also a list of projects not completed last year that will be attempted this year, including but not limited to, bridge repair at the Hockanum River and garden timber replacement in the sensory garden at the Batz property.

4. Election of Officers

a. Chairman Position

MOVED (DWYER) SECONDED (ZIELFELDER JR.) TO NOMINATE COMMISSIONER QUARNO FOR CHAIRMAN OF THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION FOR THE YEAR OF 2026.

**COMMISSIONER QUARNO ACCEPTED THE NOMINATION.
HEARING NO FURTHER NOMINATIONS, THE NOMINATIONS CLOSED.**

MOVED (DWYER) SECONDED (CATON) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO ELECT COMMISSIONER QUARNO FOR CHAIRMAN OF THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION FOR THE YEAR OF 2026.

b. Vice-Chairman Position

MOVED (DWYER) SECONDED (QUARNO) TO NOMINATE COMMISSIONER ZIELFELDER JR. FOR VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION FOR THE YEAR OF 2026.

**COMMISSIONER ZIELFELDER JR. ACCEPTED THE NOMINATION.
HEARING NO FURTHER NOMINATIONS, THE NOMINATIONS CLOSED.**

MOVED (DWYER) SECONDED (CATON) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO ELECT COMMISSIONER ZIELFELDER JR. FOR VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION FOR THE YEAR OF 2026.

IV. ADJOURNMENT:

MOVED (CATON) SECONDED (ZIELFELDER JR.) TO ADJOURN THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEETING AT 7:55 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Ashley DuBois, Recording Clerk