



STATE OF CONNECTICUT – COUNTY OF TOLLAND
INCORPORATED 1786

TOWN OF ELLINGTON

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CONSERVATION COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES TUESDAY, JULY 14, 2026, 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, Sean Dwyer (arrived at 7:03 PM), Kathy Caton, Alternates Ann Harford and Matthew Shea

ABSENT: Chairman Rebecca Quarno, Regular Member Kalagena Sullivan

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

OTHERS

PRESENT: Robert Mannarino, owner of Mannarino Builders Inc.

I. CALL TO ORDER: Vice Chairman Robert Zielfelder Jr. called the Conservation Commission meeting to order at 6:59 PM.

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

III. ACTIVE BUSINESS:

1. Determination of Open Space for a proposed 14-lot subdivision of 28.79 acres at 53 Wapping Wood Road in a Residential (R) zone for Mannarino Builders Inc., owner/applicant.

Robert Mannarino, owner of Mannarino Builders Inc., presented a proposed 14-lot subdivision of 28.79 acres at 53 Wapping Wood Road with a dedication of 9.89 acres of open space land. Mr. Mannarino commented on the geographical features of the lot including proximity to the South Windsor/ Ellington line and the site work expected to be smooth with limited disturbance. The proposed dedicated open space land would include buildable and non-buildable land located at the end of the proposed cul-de-sac. The open space lot would also include a gravel access road, a stormwater basin, and wetlands. Furthermore, the land is currently an agricultural field with slight slopes from north to south and abuts Burke Ridge Farms, a preserved farm, surrounded by residential homes. John Colonese, Assistant Town Planner, noted the stormwater basin is required to be town owned or the town must have an easement to maintain it. Vice Chairman Zielfelder Jr. proposed if the commission wished to forego on open space dedication, a partial dedication could be applicable due to the ownership of the

stormwater basin. Rob Mannarino commented if the open space dedication is not approved, the proposed 9.89 acres would be absorbed into the building lots and would not develop into additional buildable lots. Overall, commissioners favored preserving land that abuts Burke Ridge Farms, which the Town will need access to regardless.

MOVED (SHEA), SECONDED (CATON) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO RECOMMEND THE DEDICATION OF 9.89 ACRES OF OPEN SPACE LAND AS SHOWN ON MAP ENTITLED, "SUBDIVISION MAP GRADING & SITE DEVELOPMENT PLAN WAPPING WOOD ESTATES DATED 05-14-2026 REVISION 06/16/2026 SHEET NO. 5 OF 11" BY GARDNER & PETERSON ASSOCIATES LLC – for a proposed 14-lot subdivision of 28.79 acres at 53 Wapping Wood Road in a Residential (R) zone for Mannarino Builders Inc., owner/applicant.

2. Plan of Conservation & Development, Chapter 4 - Conservation Strategies, Natural Resource Preservation: Historic Preservation – Review Historic Resources Inventory.

The commission discussed the draft copy of the historic resources inventory previously sent to commissioners. Commissioner Caton had a copy edit correction. John Colonese will compile all edits and send them to E2PM LLC soon. The State Historic Preservation Office will review the inventory as well. Overall, commissioners were pleased with the product and commented on the thoroughness and intriguing nature of the information.

3. Report - Farmland Preservation Program.
 - a. Sadds Mill Road, Assessor Parcel 100-008-0000 – DeCarli Revocable Trust.

John Colonese announced the farm on Sadds Mill Road, currently owned by the DeCarli Revocable Trust, Assessor Parcel 100-008-0000, is interested in applying to the Department of Agriculture Farmland Preservation Program. John is assisting the owners and started a draft application with the owners. Commissioners were provided with a copy of the Ellington Farmland Preservation Criteria previously established by the commission. The commission utilized the worksheet, which is divided into three sections, Land Evaluation, Site Assessment, and Descriptive Assessment, with the potential for 100 points to be awarded in total. As a commission, parcel 100-008-0000 was awarded 20.2 points for Land Evaluation and 42.5 points for Site Assessment, pending State input, totaling 62.7 points. Commissioners were pleased that efforts to preserve farmland continue. Next steps include signatures from the owners and the application for be formally submitted.

John Colonese reviewed the draft application and additional features of the farm, the 68 acres include proximity to the new tobacco barns, lack of building or structures on the property, wetlands and areas within a flood zone. The land is currently leased by the abutting equestrian center, owned by the DeCarli family, for horse paddocks and is hayed for the horses as well. John also noted the property is subject to Public Act 490, which allows for a reduced property assessment on open space, farmland, and forestry. The assessor has reported 218 acres of converted Public Act 490 land in the municipality over the previous 5 years, indicating the benefits in preserving farmland.

4. Report - Open Space Preservation Program.
 - a. Appraisal of a 20-acre parcel east of Somers Road, APN 191-001-0000.

Galvin Appraisal Services, LLC offered the lowest bid for the appraisal of the 20-acre parcel east of Somers Road, APN 191-001-0000. Appraisal work cannot begin until August.

MOVED (GAGE), SECONDED (CATON) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO ENTER INTO CONTRACT FOR \$3,250 WITH GALVIN APPRAISAL SERVICES, LLC FOR THE APPRAISAL OF ASSESSOR PARCEL NO. 191-001-0000 A 20-ACRE PARCEL EAST OF SOMERS ROAD.

II. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS:

1. FY 25-26 Budget & Expenditure Update:

John noted a negative balance of \$195 under Dues & Subscriptions, which is being looked at by the Planning Department.

2. Approval of June 9, 2026, Regular Meeting Minutes.

MOVED (HARFORD), SECONDED (CATON) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE THE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF JUNE 9, 2026, AS WRITTEN.

3. Correspondence/Discussion:

- a. Ad Hoc Ellington Trails Committee – Update.

Commissioner Harford, Ad Hoc Ellington Trails Committee Representative, shared the Committee did not recently meet but work continues. Harford noted a railing was installed on the bridge along the Windermere trail due to icy conditions on the Trex material. Additionally, poison ivy is being sprayed and certain areas being mowed. Furthermore, knotweed is not returning at the usual rapid rate, a welcomed relief for the Committee. Lastly, improvements continue at the Batz Property and at the Crystal Ridge Trail, a scout has been working on a trail project including putting up a rope-type system to assist people in difficult sections of the trail. Commissioner Caton noted talk in the community about recent wildlife sightings on trails.

- b. Community Voice Channel – Commission Participation in Discussion on Open Space.

The Vice-Chairman Zielfelder Jr. thought the November may work but wanted to check with the Chairman first so the item will remain on the agenda for future consideration.

- c. Greenskies Clean Energy, LLC petition for a declaratory ruling with the CT Siting Council for the construction, maintenance and operation of a 4.99-megawatt AC solar photovoltaic electric generating facility on School House Road, APN 146-007-0000. (Petition No. 1711)

A draft response letter was presented to commissioners based on their comments last month. The commission reviewed and approved of the response letter, highlighting goals of the Plan of Conservation.

BY CONSENSUS, THE COMMISSION DECIDED TO SUBMIT A RESPONSE LETTER TO GREENSKIES CLEAN ENERGY LLC PETITION FOR A DECLARATORY RULING WITH THE CT SITING COUNCIL FOR THE CONSTRUCTION, MAINTENANCE AND OPERATION OF A 4.99-MEGAWATT AC SOLAR PHOTOVOLTAIC ELECTRIC GENERATING FACILITY ON SCHOOL HOUSE ROAD, APN 146-007-0000. (PETITION NO. 1711)

- d. Public Act 26-127 An Act Concerning Renewable Power Generation, Section 16.

The commission reviewed Public Act 26-127, noting the moratorium conditions for solar facilities in what looks like two towns, exceptions, and future steps of a working group formed to address the equitable distribution of large solar facilities statewide. The legislation does not appear to place a moratorium on Ellington specifically.

IV. ADJOURNMENT:

MOVED (DWYER) SECONDED (CATON) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADJOURN THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEETING AT 7:56 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Ashley DuBois, Recording Clerk