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By Michele Urch at 4:03 pm, Aug 25, 2026

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE SUFFIELD CONSERVATION COMMISSION AUGUST 18, 2026 7:00 P.M.

Town Hall
83 Mountain Road, Suffield, CT

Commissioners present: Chairman Art Christian, Vice-Chairman Glenn Neilson, Norm John Noble, Ray Wilcox, Gary Phelps and Kathy Bielonko – Alternate

Commissioners absent: Beth Fanous and Jessica McCue

Also present: Keith Morris, Conservation Consultant and Chad Kuzontkoski, Park Superintendent & Economic Development Specialist

CALL MEETING TO ORDER – 7:00 P.M.

Chairman Christian called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and assigned voting rights to Commissioner Bielonko in the absence of Commissioner McCue.

Chairman Christian asked Consultant Morris to read the agenda aloud.

INFORMAL DISCUSSION

1. Suffield Street Culvert

Vice-Chairman Neilson provided the commission with an update on the culvert failure on Suffield Street, which has resulted in the closure of the roadway. Due to concerns about access for school buses and the upcoming school year, a temporary bridge was being proposed to allow traffic to resume. The temporary structure would be installed within the wetland area and therefore falls under the Commission's jurisdiction. The proposed installation would use geotechnical blocks placed on stone and protective material to support the temporary bridge. The Commission discussed the soft, clay soils in the area, the stream bed, potential wetland impacts, and the need for a permanent solution. It was noted that the temporary bridge would provide an interim solution while the Town continues to evaluate options for permanently replacing the failed culvert.

Commissioner Noble MOTIONED and Commissioners Bielonko seconded to accept the temporary plan as discussed based on the need for an emergency decision with a permanent plan to follow. Motion passed unanimously.

PARKS SUPERINTNDENT RPORT

1. Economic Development Specialist – Dog Park at Stony Brooke Park

Chad Kuzontkoski came before the commission to discuss a proposal to establish a dog park at Stony Brook Park near the Route 75/South Street entrance. The proposed dog park would include a fenced area approximately 150 feet by 50 feet, divided into separate areas for smaller and larger dogs, along with a dog-waste station and trash receptacle. Future improvements could include picnic tables and a manual

water pump. The project would be funded primarily through existing donations, with potential funding available for ongoing maintenance. The Commission discussed the additional maintenance responsibilities associated with the facility, as well as environmental considerations due to the site's proximity to Stony Brook. The Commission also reviewed potential impacts to wildlife, including turtles and mussel species, and the need for appropriate environmental measures if the project moves forward. Members agreed that additional information was needed regarding deed restrictions, environmental requirements, maintenance responsibilities, and input from nearby residents before taking further action.

Vice-Chairman Neilson MOTIONED and Commissioner Wilcox seconded to take no action and continue the discussion at the next Conservation Meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

2. **General Park Updates**

Mr. Kuzontkoski provided updates on Stony Brook Park, reporting that moss had been removed from the park's rooftops and the gutters cleaned. He noted that **"No Unauthorized Fires"** signage has been installed at the park to remind visitors that fires are not permitted unless properly authorized. The Superintendent also met with the Department of Public Works to establish a more consistent maintenance schedule for the park. The Eagle Scouts will assist with improvements to the rail trail, while Suffield Academy students are scheduled to help with mulch, trail maintenance, and cleanup on September 17. An infestation of lanternflies was reported at the park, and additional traps were being considered to help address the problem.

Mr. Kuzontkoski also presented a quote of approximately $61,990 for an automated electronic entrance gate. The Commission discussed the benefits and drawbacks of the system, including resident access cards, payment by non-residents, operating costs, maintenance, reliability, and the potential time required for the system to recover its cost. The Commission agreed to place the matter on a future agenda for further discussion.

DECISION

1. **Permit #1747 – Guilmartin (applicant) – Single family home – Hale Street. This property is located on the north side of Hale Street, nearest intersection being Prospect Street. Assessor's Map 24, Block 26, Lot 96.**

The Commission then continued its discussion of the proposed residential development on Hill Street. The applicant presented documentation establishing the property's historical residential use, including a 1905 deed, historical aerial photographs, and the Town's 1940 Grand List. The applicant acknowledged that wetlands review was required and requested that the application be evaluated as a restoration of residential use on an established lot rather than as development of previously undeveloped property. The proposed three-bedroom residence and septic system were designed to maximize the separation from the wetlands, with the septic system located approximately 100 feet from the wetland boundary. The applicant also noted that the design had passed required soil and percolation testing through the North Central Health District.

Kevin Grindle, a landscape architect with Barton & Loguidice reviewed the application in relation to the approval criteria identified in Town Attorney Donnelly's opinion. He stated that the proposed activity would not adversely affect wetlands or watercourses if appropriate erosion and sedimentation controls were maintained. He also explained that the property currently contains significant invasive vegetation and that the proposal would remove many of those species and replace them with native trees and shrubs, improving the buffer along Stony Brook. Grindle further stated that the proposed development would

minimize wetland impacts, avoid direct disturbance to wetlands, and provide stormwater management through lawn areas, swales, and other measures. The property contains approximately 4.2 acres, approximately 500 linear feet of Stony Brook, and approximately 2.6 acres of wetlands and floodplain.

Commission members questioned the proposed septic location and whether the house and septic system could be relocated farther from the wetlands. Members expressed concern regarding the Commission's 150-foot policy and indicated that additional separation would be preferable. The applicant agreed to further review the plan and consider revisions, including obtaining additional review of the wetland boundaries and soil conditions. The Commission emphasized that any future approval would need to be based on the merits of the application and that the discussion s

Vice-Chairman Neilson MOTIONED and Commissioner Phelps seconded to continue the discussion on Permit #1747 – Guilmartin (applicant) – Single family home – Hale Street. This property is located on the north side of Hale Street, nearest intersection being Prospect Street. Assessor's Map 24, Block 26, Lot 96 until the September 8, 2026 meeting to allow the applicant additional time to review the plans and provide further information. Motion passed unanimously.

The Commission indicated that additional review by geotechnical and wetland professionals would be appropriate before the application returns for consideration and that the decision to continue the matter should not be interpreted as a commitment to approve a revised plan.

PLAN ACCEPTANCE

1. **Permit #1748 – Peak Mountain Development LLC (applicant) – 7 single family homes – South Grand Street. This property is located on the west side of South Grand Street. Assessor's Map 18, Block 21, Lots 15 & 15A.**

Vice-Chairman Neilson MOTIONED and Commissioner Bielonko seconded to accept Permit #1748 – Peak Mountain Development LLC (applicant) – 7 single family homes – South Grand Street. This property is located on the west side of South Grand Street. Assessor's Map 18, Block 21, Lots 15 & 15A and place it on the agenda for a Public Hearing on September 22, 2026. Motion passed unanimously.

2. **Permit #1749 – MI 22 LLC (owner) – Multi-Family Development – South Main Street. This property is located on the east side of South Main Street, nearest intersection being Barry Place. Assessor's Map 44H, Lot 47, Block 216A.**

Vice-Chairman Neilson MOTIONED and Commissioner Phelps seconded to accept Permit #1749 – MI 22 LLC (owner) – Multi-Family Development – South Main Street. This property is located on the east side of South Main Street, nearest intersection being Barry Place. Assessor's Map 44H, Lot 47, Block 216A and place it on the agenda for a Public Hearing on October 13, 2026. Motion passed unanimously.

3. **Permit #1750 – Raum (owner) – 1286 Mountain Road – Cottage Construction. This property is located on the north side of Mountain Road. Assessor's Map 17H, Lot 23, Block 70.**

Vice-Chairman Neilson MOTIONED and Commissioner Bielonko seconded to accept Permit #1750 – Raum (owner) – 1286 Mountain Road – Cottage Construction. This property is located on the north side of Mountain Road. Assessor's Map 17H, Lot 23, Block 70 and place it on the agenda for a Public Hearing on September 8, 2026. Motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

CONSULTANT'S REPORT

Keith Morris provided the commission with a brief update on mandatory DEEP Training to be completed by the commission members.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE JULY 21, 2026 MEETING

Commissioner Phelps MOTIONED and Vice-Chairman Neilson seconded to approve the minutes from the July 21, 2026 meeting as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Bielonko MOTIONED and Commissioner Noble seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:09 p.m. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by,

Kristen O. Lambert
Recording Secretary