



STATE OF CONNECTICUT – COUNTY OF TOLLAND
INCORPORATED 1786

TOWN OF ELLINGTON

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CONSERVATION COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 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), Kathy Caton, Lois Timms-Ferrara, Alternates Ann Harford and Alternate Matthew Shea (arrived at 7:03 PM)

ABSENT: Regular Member Sean Dwyer

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

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 – Historic Resources Inventory Update.

John Colonese, Assistant Town Planner, reported E2 Project Management integrated and completed all requested edits. The project consultant is currently in the process of sending the finalized product to the State Historic Preservation Office for approval. Next steps include receiving the final product, then final payment and State reimbursement.

2. Farmland Preservation Program – Report.

- a. Sadds Mill Road, Assessor Parcel 100-008-0000 – DeCarli Revocable Trust.

John Colonese noted a Farmland Preservation Program application was submitted to the CT Department of Agriculture and received by the State. Following this, an on-site meeting was conducted between the Department of Agriculture and the owner on August 26th, 2026. The application is still under review. The Commission reviewed aspects of the Farmland Preservation Program and how it can benefit farmers in Ellington.

3. Open Space Preservation Program – Report.

- a. Appraisal of a 20-acre parcel east of Somers Road, APN 191-001-0000.

Galvin Appraisal Services is currently conducting the appraisal on the Somers Road property, and the appraisal is expected to be finished prior to next month's meeting.

- b. 53 Wapping Wood Road Subdivision Open Space Dedication.

The Planning and Zoning Commission approved the proposed open space dedication of a 9.89-acre parcel for the 14-lot residential subdivision as recommended by the Conservation Commission. The parcel borders the Burke Ridge Farm, a preserved farmland property. Formal acceptance of this parcel is scheduled for the Board of Selectmen's September meeting agenda.

- c. 79 Crane Road, 12 Broad Brook Road, and Abbott Road (APN 087-009-0001) Subdivision Open Space Dedication.

The Board of Selectman at their August meeting accepted the proposed open space dedication of an 11-acre parcel associated with the residential subdivision.

- d. 16 Penfield Avenue.

Nothing new to report on the radio station property.

II. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS:

1. FY 26-27 Budget & Expenditure Update:

- a. Connecticut Farm Bureau – Thank you Letter, July 20, 2026.

2. Approval of July 14, 2026, Regular Meeting Minutes.

MOVED (HARFORD), SECONDED (CATON) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE THE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF JULY 14, 2026, AS WRITTEN.

3. Correspondence/Discussion:

- a. Ad Hoc Ellington Trails Committee – Update.

Commissioner Harford, Ad Hoc Ellington Trails Committee Representative, reported on the Windermere Trail, the Committee rebuilt a wooden walkway and installed a new walkway further down the trail, which improves and extends access to the river. A culvert on the same trail system was reported unsafe and insufficient. In response, Public Works completed repairs and groundwork to ensure future safety and use. The committee secured access to a portion of the West Road trail from Sullivan Tire, protecting private landowners from liability when allowing public access on the property. Lastly, at the Batz Property, maintenance work continues including upkeep of the pollinator garden and elimination of invasive poison ivy.

- b. Connecticut Farm Bureau – From the Farm, July 2026.
- c. CT Siting Council Letter – Revised Figure 7, July 17, 2026.

The Connecticut Siting Council received the Conservation Commission's July letter regarding the applicant's failure to identify soils of statewide importance at the Greenskies Clean Energy LLC solar project on parcel 146-007-0000 on School House Road. Revised Figure 7 confirmed the presence of 67 acres of farmland of statewide importance on the property and no prime farmland soils. The Siting Council is scheduled to issue its decision in November.

- d. Hartford Courant Article, August 11, 2026.

The Hartford Courant article mentioned the Conservation Commission's July letter to the Connecticut Siting Council. The Commission discussed existing and proposed large-scale solar facilities in town. John Colonese noted that pursuant to Public Act 26-127, CT DEEP in consultation with other entities must produce a report on the equitable distribution of solar siting by February 1, 2027. A draft report is due for review and comment by November 30, 2026. A copy of the DEEP notice for the report was provided to the commission. Commissioners noted concerns with the increase of large-scale solar projects townwide and would like to review the report when it's available. A round table discussion ensued.

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

The Commission asked for possible dates in early 2027 to allow time for the commission to prepare for the discussion.

- f. 2026 Ellington Wall of Honor Inductee – Jim Gage.

Chairman Quarno noted Commissioner Jim Gage's induction ceremony is scheduled for this Saturday, September 12, at 4:00 PM in Arbor Park. Chairman Quarno thanked Jim for his years of service to the Conservation Commission and congratulated him on the honor.

IV. ADJOURNMENT:

**MOVED (HARFORD) SECONDED (CATON) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO
ADJOURN THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEETING AT 8:03 PM.**

Respectfully submitted,

Ashley DuBois, Recording Clerk