



STATE OF CONNECTICUT – COUNTY OF TOLLAND
INCORPORATED 1786

TOWN OF ELLINGTON

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CONSERVATION COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES TUESDAY, OCTOBER 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), Lois Timms-Ferrara, and Donna Allen, Alternates Ann Harford and Matthew Shea

ABSENT: Regular Members Sean Dwyer and Kathy Caton

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

OTHERS

PRESENT: Mary Cardin, Board of Selectmen Liaison (via Zoom) and Jason Reynolds, Reynolds Engineering Services LLC

I. CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Rebecca Quarno called the Conservation Commission meeting to order at 7:03 PM.

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

III. ACTIVE BUSINESS:

1. Open space recommendation for a proposed 3-lot subdivision (1 existing) of 3.38 acres at 51 Cider Mill Road in a Rural Agricultural Residential (RAR) zone for Vance & Carolyn Burba, owner/applicant.

Jason Reynolds of Reynolds Engineering Services, LLC, 27 Main Street, Hebron, CT presented a proposed 3-lot subdivision of 3.38 acres at 51 Cider Mill Road in a Rural Agricultural Residential (RAR) zone. In accordance with regulations, they outlined a .525-acre conservation easement area proposed as dedicated open space land on behalf of Vance & Carolyn Burba, owner applicants. Jason Reynolds noted the entire lot currently has one existing home, and two additional lots would be developed, with the proposed conservation easement as part of the westernmost lot. John Colonese, Assistant Town Planner, commented that a conservation easement differs from town-owned open space in that it is not generally open to the public. Although a conservation easement will protect the land in perpetuity the easement will be over a portion of what is shown as Lot 3. Commissioners identified that the proposed conservation easement contains wetlands and does not abut any

other municipal open space land, state forest, or conserved corridors. Based on this information, the commission preferred recommending a fee-in-lieu-of open space.

MOVED (ZIELFELDER JR.), SECONDED (HARFORD) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO RECOMMEND A FEE-IN-LIEU-OF OPEN SPACE – for a proposed 3-lot subdivision (1 existing) of 3.38 acres at 51 Cider Mill Road in a Rural Agricultural Residential (RAR) zone for Vance & Carolyn Burba, owner/applicant.

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

John Colonese noted the Town received payment reimbursement from the state, and the final payment will be withheld pending receipt of the final product. Commissioner Harford added the Ellington Historical Society announced an upcoming project for the following year focused on the history of the nine historic one-room schoolhouses in town.

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

John Colonese announced a Configuration Agreement for Farmland to be Preserved has been proposed by CT Department of Agriculture for the Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) of the DeCarli Revocable Trust Sadds Mill Road farm. The agreement includes 68.32 acres, and the agreement establishes a 1.4-acre farmstead building envelope and four agricultural building envelopes. John noted an issue involving physical access to the parcel from a road, which the owners are looking to resolve.

Funding for the PDR is executed primarily through state funds, however, commissioners noted historically, Ellington has provided a 10% local funding support when requested by the state. Concern was raised that without a dedicated bond fund or reserved line item; the town did not have a dedicated funding mechanism in place if a critical farm preservation project emerged. John will report back about the fiscal process and provide the commission with an updated open space balance.

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

The appraisal was shared with the commissioners. Next steps include paying the appraiser and having the appraisal sent to CT DEEP contact. CT DEEP will work with the owner on the purchase agreement.

- b. 53 Wapping Wood Road Subdivision – Board of Selectmen Open Space Acceptance.

The Board of Selectman accepted the 53 Wapping Wood Road Subdivision open space parcel at its September meeting.

II. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS:

1. FY 26-27 Budget & Expenditure Update:
2. Approval of September 8, 2026, Regular Meeting Minutes.

MOVED (HARFORD), SECONDED (TIMMS-FERRARA) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE THE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 8, 2026, AS WRITTEN.

3. Correspondence/Discussion:
 - a. Ad Hoc Ellington Trails Committee – Update.

Donna Allen, Ad Hoc Ellington Trails Committee Representative, paid tribute to former trails committee member Valerie Amsel who recently passed, noting her immense contributions to the committee and Town of Ellington.

The Hockanum River crew established a new scenic viewing area around the pond on the Windermere Trail network and noted a potential Scout Project opportunity to construct and install a bench at the new viewing area. The committee is also working on addressing trail navigation issues behind the YMCA and installing directional signage directing hikers towards parking at the Pinney Street fields. Further rerouting progress is underway to cut a new trail segment to divert hikers away from exposed sewer infrastructure lines as well. Additionally, all municipal trail markers and blazes have been removed from the West Road Trail, aside from trail access behind the Sullivan Tire parcel. Recently, a successful joint event with Vernon Greenways Rails-to-Trails Day was this past weekend and upcoming events include a “Wildlife Out Your Window” event at the town library on October 14th and annual Trail of Treats on October 26th.

- b. CT Siting Council Declaratory Ruling for a 4.99-MW solar facility at APN 146-007-0000, Schoolhouse Road.

The Connecticut Siting Council issued final approval on September 17th for the 4.99-MW solar facility at APN 146-007-0000, Schoolhouse Road. The commission discussed the pending report by CT DEEP in consultation with other entities on the equitable distribution of solar siting. A draft report is due for review and comment by November 30, 2026, with the final report expected February 1, 2027. A round table discussion ensued.

- c. Connecticut Farmland Trust letter dated August 10, 2026.
 - d. Landmark – Northern CT Land Trust – September 2026 newsletter.

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

The dates of January 18th, February 15th, March 15th and April 20th were proposed. Commissioners will check their calendars and work towards participation in 2027, allowing for group discussion and preparation.

- f. Notice of petition to the CT Siting Council for a Declaratory Ruling for the Construction of a 4.975MW fuel cell facility at 784 Talcottville Road, Vernon.

IV. ADJOURNMENT:

**MOVED (ALLEN) SECONDED (ZIELFELDER JR.) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO
ADJOURN THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEETING AT 8:18 PM.**

Respectfully submitted,

Ashley DuBois, Recording Clerk