



APPROVED MINUTES
Ridgefield Conservation Commission
Town Hall annex, 66 Prospect Street
Ridgefield, CT 06877
(203) 431-2713 • conservation@ridgefieldct.org

May 17, 2021 at 7 P.M.
Via ZOOM

Present: Jim Coyle Allan Welby Erik Keller
Jean Linville Jim Liptack Matt Sharp
Kitsey Snow Jack Kace Daniel Levine

Absent: Dave Cronin

Guests: Judd Zusel, Robert Madeira, Tom Wroblewski, Peggy Thomas, Roberta Barbieri

Mr. Coyle chaired the meeting. Ms. Campbell-Gibson took the minutes.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

UPON motion duly made (Kace), seconded (Keller), and carried, it was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of May 3, 2021 be approved and ordered filed in the Town Hall. Vote: YES – 9, NO - 0

2. Commission membership

Tree Committee – applicant Tom Wroblewski

As requested, Mr. Wroblewski gave a brief description of his education and professional experience and why he wished to be on the Tree Committee. Dr. Linville asked what project he would tackle on the committee. He would like to influence the choice of and number of trees planted in town. He would like to include the younger generations to increase their appreciation for the greenways in town. Dr. Kace asked Mr. Wroblewski to be aware of the clear-cutting done by developers before building projects and about the types of trees planted in town. Mr. Wroblewski said he would like to educate the public regarding the diseases affecting the town's trees and how to deal with these. Ms. Snow mentioned the need for trees planted in town to be native to the region. Mr. Wroblewski agreed.

UPON motion duly made (Kace), seconded (Sharp), and carried, it was **RESOLVED** to recommend the appointment of Tom Wroblewski to the Tree committee on behalf of the Conservation Commission. Vote: Yes – 8, No – 0, Abstain – 1 (Snow)

Ms. Campbell-Gibson will inform the Tree Committee of this appointment.

Conservation Commission – Alternate member applicant Roberta Barbieri

As requested, Ms. Barbieri gave a brief description of her education and professional experience and why she wished to be on the commission. Mr. Keller asked what she thinks is the most difficult challenge the Conservation Commission faces. Ms. Barbieri answered that the budget is of concern. The commission's budget is too small to accomplish what is necessary to maintain the large expanses of open space under management. Dr. Linville asked what Ms. Barbieri would suggest to update the NRI. Ms. Barbieri said she feels that the impressive groundwork already done forms a good framework on to help fund an NRI update. Mr. Levine asked what challenges she had experienced while on the Stamford IWB. Ms. Barbieri found the ease at which permits and variances are granted to developers and the encroachment onto wetlands, of concern.

Conservation Commission – Alternate member applicant Robert Madiera

As requested, Mr. Madiera gave a brief description of his education and professional experience and why he wished to be on the commission. Mr. Keller asked what his top two contributions would be. Mr. Madiera said he would help anywhere help is needed. He has hands on and practical skills but he also has skills in planning for future years. Dr. Kace asked how he would strategically approach land acquisition. Mr. Madiera said that firstly he would look at the main objectives of the commission. If land acquisition was the main objective then sources and uses of money need to be correctly matched. He mentioned successful community fund raising done in Greenwich for land purchases by giving the public an opportunity to leave behind a legacy to encourage donations.

Mr. Coyle asked the commission to consider their vote. Mr. Welby expressed concern about voting in front of the candidates. A roll call vote was taken to determine which candidate to recommend the BOS appoint as the new alternate member of the conservation commission.

Vote: 8 YES votes (Keller, Kace, Liptack, Linville, Levine, Sharp, Snow, Coyle) for Roberta Barbieri to be recommended to the BOS to be appointed the new alternate member of the Conservation Commission. There were no votes to recommend the appointment of Robert Madiera at this time. Mr. Welby abstained from the vote. Mr. Madiera was thanked for his interest in the commission and hoped he would remain in close touch with us.

Mr. Coyle will inform the BOS of the decision to select Ms. Barbieri for the alternate member position. Ms. Barbieri will need to be approved by the BOS and then sworn in by the Town clerk.

3. FINANCIAL UPDATE

Mr. Coyle reported the commission paid the Town \$4,623.00 from the Open Space Fund to cover the cost of the Open Space Annual Appeal. This disbursement reverses these expenses from our Professional Services budget line item. This frees up more funds to be able to employ four summer workers this year.

4. ENFORCEMENT ACTION

The new Inland Wetland Agent/Conservation Enforcement Officer (CEO), Andy Haley, started work today. Mr. Coyle will meet with him to discuss the five open enforcement actions

- a. Tanglewood Court - 25 Tanglewood Ct and 3 Tanglewood Ct
- b. Marjoy Pond.
- c. Rustic Road
- d. Dawn Court.
- e. Norrans Ridge

As in the past, the Enforcement Subcommittee will deal with and/or resolve enforcement issues before going to the full board. The subcommittee will consist of Jim Coyle, Jack Kace, and Jim Liptack.

Mr. Zusel attended the meeting and asked what the next steps were in the process to resolve the issue at Tanglewood Court. Mr. Coyle said the new CEO would address the issue and the final decision by the commission will occur at an upcoming meeting. Mr. Zusel asked what the commission's stance was on mowing grass on open space to limit invasive species. Dr. Kace responded that the strategy for open space is to maintain it in its natural state or allow it to return to its natural state. This could be achieved by planting indigenous trees in the space previously mowed.

5. OPEN SPACE ACQUISITION

- a. Donation AT Turner Hill – The BOS will be meeting on Wednesday May 19, 2021. This item is on the agenda for discussion.

- b. OSWA Grant for Bear Mountain Property Purchase – A metes and bounds description has been prepared by the town attorney. The A-2 survey and property description will be submitted to DEEP to start the process of actually receiving the grant money.
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6. OPEN SPACE MAINTENANCE

- a. Summer workers –
Four summer workers will be employed this year. Their background check documents have been submitted to HR. Marguarite Amente of HR will complete the hiring process by no later than the end of May.
- b. McKeon Farm –Two weed whackers can be serviced, and are at Ridgefield Power Equipment. One weed whacker needs to be replaced. . Mr. Sharp and Mr. Cronin will take the ride on mower to the repair shop tomorrow morning. Mr. Sharp reports that both brush hogs are working and have been used to cut the trail at McKeon. Mr. Welby brought up the issue of mowing vs haying of the Lauzen field. This item will be discussed at the next meeting.
- c. Other Properties –
- i. West Mountain Green Boardwalk – The boardwalk maintenance will be a task for the summer workers.
 - ii. West Mountain McManus Section – Ms. Barbieri reports a large open man hole on the blue trail. The cover is missing and needs to be replaced. Mr. Sharp and Mr. Levine will attend to a temporary repair tomorrow and a more long-term solution will be done at a later date when Mr. Keller can assist.
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7. OPEN SPACE PLAN

Mr. Coyle is working on an open space preservation plan for Sustainable CT. The draft document will be completed in the next several weeks. The document will flesh out the submission to Sustainable CT in April, which was a table with links to the POCD.

8. CT TRAILS

Mr. Liptack gave a demonstration of the CT Trails website with an entry for Aldrich Park trail. He explained that this system is going to be a collection of trails in Connecticut, New Hampshire and Vermont, maintained by UCONN and the trail managers. The content is as dictated by the commission. Mr. Cronin has expressed concern about this website making the Walk Book obsolete. Mr. Coyle said that the Walk book is out of date. Mr. Keller expressed concern over the number of parking spaces available at trailheads. Mr. Coyle said that if parking becomes an issue, it might be an opportunity for the commission to add more parking to popular trails. Dr. Linville suggested soliciting donations from the site visitors for additional parking and suggested using the services page to solicit corporate donations.

9. COMMUNITY OUTREACH

- a. Boy Scouts – Mr. Sharp has a site walk this week to discuss potential projects with some scouts..
 - b. Volunteer requests – There are two young women from Wooster school who will be volunteering. They have received instruction and tools from Mr. Cronin to blaze trails in need of fresh blazing.
 - c. Newsletter - Mr. Levine will have a first draft of the next newsletter ready by Friday.
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10. MEETINGS FOR ATTENDANCE

No problems were reported.

Ms. Snow reported on the P&Z meeting – There was discussion about renewable energy zoning issues. this discussion will be continued in their next meeting.

Mr. Coyle reminded commissioners to forward any names of interested parties who would consider applying to serve on the IWB. There are possibly two positions opening up in the next few months on this board.

11. CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

Mr. Coyle reminded commissioners that the next meeting is in three weeks, not two as is usual.

Ms. Snow talked about the planned tree planting at the river site of the NRWA project. The area needed mowing before trees could be planted. This was done by Parks and Recreation. The bill for the mowing will come the commission office, but the NRWA are willing to pay this bill.

The next RCC meeting will be held on **Monday**, June 7, 2021 at 7:00 P.M.

ADJOURNMENT

UPON motion duly made (Keller), seconded (Kace), and unanimously carried, it was RESOLVED that the meeting adjourn at 9:09 P.M.