

**Conservation Commission Meeting
Cone Room
January 3, 2019**

Minutes

Attendance:

Members present: William Rutherford, Eric Brower, Nancy Dickinson, Gary Silberberg, and Theodore H. Walworth III.

Staff present: Patricia Sesto, Sarah Coccaro, and Aleksandra Moch

Audience Present: n/a

Meeting called to order at 7:02 p.m. by Rutherford

- 1) **Seating of Alternates:** Walworth was seated for Baker
- 2) **Review and approval of draft minutes for December 6, 2018 meeting:** A motion to approve the minutes as presented was made by Silberberg, seconded by Rutherford, and approved 5-0-0.
- 3) **Review of Correspondence:** Sesto distributed the 2018 attendance record.

Coccaro had received a letter from Daniel Wurst about the need for more fishing line recycling bins at the fishing sites in Greenwich. She previously met with Parks and Recreation to request more receptacles at Grass Island, and likewise reached out to the yacht clubs and fish shops. All were receptive. Silberberg proposed several other popular fishing locations for receptacles.

- 4) **Chairman's Report:** Rutherford was pleased to summarize the last six months under the new Director of Environmental Affairs, Patricia Sesto. He appreciated the efforts of all of the staff and the results. He has been meeting with Sesto regularly and he was reported at least 75% of her time has been devoted to conservation work. He noticed the upgrade of the part-time position to full-time for Sarah Coccaro shifted some of the burden from other staff members and has been productive. He applauded Sesto's efficient way of delegating work and establishing more awareness of the Conservation Commission's efforts in Town. Rutherford supports the ongoing cross-training between the wetland and conservation staff. He also stated the Conservation Commission meetings are more efficient, having staff reports are prepared in advance. Dickinson gave full support to Rutherford's comments.

- 5) **Staff Reports**

- a) Conference/Program reminders: listed for informational purpose
- Coyote lecture – February 3rd at Seaside Center
 - CT DEEP Water Quality Conference - April 5th
 - “Straws” film screening – January 27th at Greenwich Library
- b) Fisheries/Wildlife: no report
- c) Education/ Outreach: a detailed report for this topics was prepared by Moch/Coccaro and forwarded to the Conservation Commission members. The report included:
- Pollinator Pathway initiatives
 - Green School Committee
 - Skip the Straw
 - “Confronting Climate Change: What to Expect in Our Region” workshop on 12/12/2018 recap
 - UConn/Greenwich Partnership update: Brower referenced an article published in Greenwich Time on December 27, 2018, “Shellfish Studied for Clues about Plastics.”. He was concerned about the cumulative effect of micro-plastics not only on shellfish, but also their consumers. Coccaro added UConn and the Shellfish Commission announced a new study to further explore the problem. Silberberg was concerned that lack of proper filters in laundry machines fail to capture synthetic fibers, which are being discharged to Long Island Sound. Sesto stated plastic contamination of oceans resonates even with the part of public who are not environmentally savvy. Rutherford has been following this issues and he was very pleased with the new research initiatives in Greenwich. It was decided to form a committee with Baker and Brower to follow up the study.

Sesto summarized the plastic bag program. She has been receiving some complaints about lack of compliance from the public. One of the most challenging retail establishments are fish stores. *Bon Ton* and *Lobster Bin* have been struggling with bagging. They use ice for some purchases, some product is wet, and during peak season, and for Bon Ton, orders are stored in plastic on ice in bins. *Fjord* on the other hand, was able to reach full compliance. The difference between them may, in part, be the available storage space and capacity.

Sesto was pleased to announce New York banned Styrofoam.

- d) New initiatives: Details were provided in the staff report.
- Waste Reduction Program
 - *Phragmites* removal at Bruce Park – Parks and Recreation: Rutherford asked whether or not there could be more done in terms of invasive species management in Town. Sesto responded, not every battle is easy to win. It is important to pick the ones which are doable.

6) Committee and Liaison Report

- a) Cemetery Committee: Brower stated Ann Young, Greenwich Historical Society helped find an ancestor grave for one of the interested citizens. The grave was located at the Potter's Field next to the Putnam Cottage.

Brower had requested to table the committee until further notice.

- b) Energy Committee: Sesto reminded the commissioners Tony Malkin and Bruce Becker will be speakers at the energy committee winter event on February 22nd. The event will be held at the Boys and Girls Club of Greenwich and is targeted for the large commercial energy users. The program will include a tour of the Boys and Girls Club's facility to point out the new energy saving improvements. A representative from *Eversource* and GreenBank will talk about funding and other programs.
- c) Parks and Recreation Board: Baker was not present to report.
- a) Greenwich Recycling Advisory Board (GRAB): no meeting
- b) Harbor Management Commission: Baker was not present to report.

7) Old Business

- a) High Water Marker at the Holly Grove, Greenwich Point: Brower requested the Commission vote on the proposed language for the marker as prepared by Coccaro. A motion was made by Silberberg and seconded by Walworth to accept the language as presented.

Brower stated they are ready to fix the signs. Aubrey Mead will survey the areas to make sure that the new elevations are correct. Brower recognized Mead for his volunteering on a few coastal projects. Once the plaques are done, a high school student will prepare and install the new markers.

- b) Mylar balloon – status: Silberberg thanked Coccaro for the emailed article regarding the ban of Mylar balloons in Block Island. He will contact the author to get contact information for the researchers. His goal is to pass an ordinance in town, and not focus on the state. Moch suggested getting in touch with the Sustainable Fairfield group, which works on local ordinances.

8) New Business:

- a) Coastal Resiliency Assessment and Plan: Sesto drafted a RFP. She had received comments from Joe Siciliano, Parks and Recreation and Katie DeLuca, P&Z. The RFP will consist of two phases: phase one will include assessment of publicly owned structures and phase two will focus on tidal ponds. As written, the RFP

would allow the bidders to submit a proposal for either a single phase or both phases. Rutherford and Brower requested a copy of the RFP.

- b) 2019 Project Priorities: Sesto requested the staff and commission members make a list of current and future projects and prioritize them for the upcoming year. Rutherford asked to list all the last year projects and evaluate their success.

9) Adjournment: Motion was made by Silberberg and seconded by Dickinson to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 8:33 p.m.

Submitted by,

Aleksandra Moch
Environmental Analyst