



**Town of
Greenwich
Conservation Commission**

**Town Hall – 101 Field Point Road - Greenwich, CT 06830
Phone 203-622-6461 Fax 203-622-3795**

*Sarah Coccaro
Assistant Director of
Environmental Affairs*

**DRAFT MINUTES
January 5, 2023**

In attendance: William Rutherford (joined at 7:15pm), Eric Brower, Gary Silberberg, Sue Baker, Nancy Dickinson, Ted Walworth, Leslie Petrick, and Karen DeWahl (left at 8:05pm).

Also, in attendance: Sarah Coccaro, Assistant Director of Environmental Affairs; Aleksandra Moch, Environmental Analyst; Rebecca Poirier, Environmental Analyst; Alex Popp; Lauren Taylor; Myra Klockenbrink, Sustainability Committee; Janet Stone McGuigan, Co-Chair of Sustainability Committee, Selectwoman.

- 1) Call to Order
Vice-Chairman Brower called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm
- 2) Seating of Alternates
Karen DeWahl was seated for Lisette Henrey.
- 3) Review and approve minutes: December 1, 2022
Nancy Dickinson made a motion to approve the minutes subject to correction of typographic errors, seconded by Gary Silberberg and carried 7-0-0.
- 4) Review of Correspondence
No correspondence
- 5) Conference/ Program Reminders
None
- 6) Fisheries/Wildlife a written staff report on the topic below was provided to the CC members by Coccaro.
 - a) Mianus River Fish Ladder
 - b) Purple Martins
 - c) Horseshoe crabs

**Conservation Commission Meeting Agenda
January 5, 2023**

Coccaro stated Dr. Jennifer Mattei had unexpectedly passed away. She started Project Limulus at Sacred Heart University. Greenwich has been using in response to the declining horseshoe crab population in Long Island Sound. Her memorial service is planned for the end of January in Greenwich.

Brower reported, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission had approved a plan allowing an annual harvest of about 150,000 female crabs for bait in Delaware starting in 2023. The crabs are harvested for fishery and medical uses.

Petrick asked about the number of crabs recorded over the last two years in Greenwich.

Coccaro responded the peak number was recorded three years ago, the last two years were similar and slightly lower.

d) Bat Monitoring

Bill Rutherford joined the meeting 7:15pm.

7) Chairman's Report: Rutherford reported on two meetings which took place at Greenwich Point with members of the Friends of Greenwich Point and Shellfish Commission and CC staff. The topics included new planting and beach restoration. The dune was stable and expanding. The installed fencing and beach grass worked well in capturing and detaining sand. The beach was negatively affected by erosion. The sand drifted towards the north.

a) Staff updates: Rutherford introduced Rebecca Poirier, the new Environmental Analyst. She filled in Coccaro's position. Her work will focus on wildlife. Coccaro stated Poirier was the most qualified candidate. She grew up and lives in Wilton. Her strong background in local fauna and flora made her stand out from other candidates. She will take over the egg oiling program and other wildlife monitoring. Walworth asked whether the egg oiling program includes the Water Company land. He had noticed a large number of geese using the reservoir. Coccaro responded, there has not been a direct working relationship, but she will be looking into it.

Patrick was concern about geese shooting and whether it is legal. Coccaro responded, it is legal until the end of January with the use of still bullets.

8) Ongoing projects

a) Pollinator Pathway: a written report was provided to the Commission members by Moch

9) Education/Outreach

a) Merry, Bright, & Waste Free Holidays – Coccaro stated the recording of this program is posted at the Waste Free Greenwich website.

b) Conservation Caboodle recap, including "Sustainability and Climate Resiliency" plan – Rutherford reported the gathering went well. Five members of the CC attended.

10) Committee and Liaison Reports

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**Conservation Commission Meeting Agenda
January 5, 2023**

- a) Sustainability Committee: Rutherford reported, the CC will be working on the Climate Action Plan. A new committee consisting of Brower, Rutherford, Henrey, Stone McGuigan and Evans will be formed to work on the plan.

Stone McGuigan stated she is looking forward to collaborating with the new committee and the new director of Environmental Affairs.

The next meeting is scheduled for January 13th and it will cover the current state legislation. Stone McGuigan invited Rutherford and Evans to attend.

- (1) Transportation and Air Quality subcommittee: a written report was provided to the Commission members by Moch

- b) Leaf Blower Committee: DeWahl reported on Tuesday night, Westport passed their ordinance. No leaf blowers are allowed next year to be used in summer. The ordinance is not supported by enforcement.

Quiet Yard Greenwich will put their draft of the ordinance on the agenda for the February 27th meeting of the Board of Health. The ordinance has strong support from the First Selectman and if approved it will be enforced by Greenwich Police.

GRAB: Dickinson stated reduction of food waste is a single solution to Climate Change. Per statistics 40% of food in US is lost between the farm and the fork. This is an equivalent of 50-80-thousand-dollar loss per household. Dickinson encourage the CC members to register for the upcoming webinar on, K-12 Climate Action in CT. The program will be presented by Wilton Go Green and Waste Free Greenwich on Wednesday, February 1st at 7pm. Another program she brought CC members attention was the Fred Elser First Sunday Science on Sunday, January 8th from 2-3 at Innis Arden cottage. "Towards a Waste Free Greenwich in 2023" will be presented by Julie DesChamps.

At the last Caboodle meeting, Dickinson have heard only 6% of the town takes advantage of the food scrap program.

Patrick referred to the article in New York Time talking about Central Ohio new regulations taking the food leftovers away from the waste stream.

Rutherford added food waste should not be limited to the residential collection but schools and other business establishments.

- c) Parks and Rec Board: Baker reported the next meeting is January 25th. There was no meeting in December.

- d) Harbor Management Commission

Baker stated low attendance generated no quorum, so no votes or decisions were made. She reported there was a barge pushed into the shellfish bed parked there for 10 days causing erosion and damage to the coastal resource. The barge was pulled out during the high tide. The state was contacted to investigate the incident.

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**Conservation Commission Meeting Agenda
January 5, 2023**

11) Old Business

a) Open Space Plan

Rutherford stated the plan was adopted. It is important to keep it active and working towards addressing the challenges facing the deficit of the open space and lack of proper tools to protect more natural areas.

Walworth stated he agreed the town needs to figure out funding of open space.

b) Flood markers

Baker emailed Whitcomb at the Parks and Recreation but received no response.

c) Porcelain berries – Silberberg

Gary Silberberg reported exploring the existing town regulations regarding landscaping maintenance.

Byram Cemetery site walk: Brower reported meeting with Dickinson, Baker, Walworth, Cocco, Henrey, and Popp at the cemetery. At the meeting the group discussed the number of encroachments, cleaning of the stones and overall site maintenance. A protocol to address these issues will be drafted. Until such protocol is prepared the following activities are prohibited: the use of weedwhackers, hand mowers, and ride-on tractors for the land maintenance. Only organic fertilizers and pesticides are allowed. No new trees should be planted before establishing the extend of the burial area. Leaning stones should not be touched until proper procedures are established. No ornamental decorations or lights are allowed until further notice. Stone cleaning and maintenance will be allowed only by authorized contractor(s). The safety and health of the existing trees should be evaluated by an arborist. Brower will be working with Cocco on the draft of the maintenance guide.

Dickinson recommended inviting Dr. Nicholas F. Bellantoni, the emeritus state archaeologist to one of the CC meetings to talk via Zoom about the graveyard maintenance.

12) New Business

- a) Update cemetery inventory: Rutherford recommended forming a committee to discuss the other cemeteries. Dickinson stated, the list passed around is not complete and requires corrections.

13) Public comments

Bill Rutherford called for public comments.

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Taylor asked for the process of drafting minutes. She felt there were some discrepancy between the meeting recording, the transcript and the last meeting minutes. Rutherford explained minutes are less detailed and offer a broader approach documenting actions taken by the commission and important statements. The text is not as detailed as the transcript. Taylor did not recall the state archeologist and ground penetrating radar being mentioned by Dickinson at the last meeting.

Klockenbrink reported the Sustainability committee is working on a newsletter which will connection with the public and become a helpful tool when drafting the Climate Action Plan. This monthly news will also be used to call for action. In addition to the newsletter the Sustainability Committee is working on a series of forums open to public discussion and sharing of opinions and ideas.

Popp thanked Brower for his plan to address the cemetery maintenance.

14) Adjourn – next meeting is February 2, 2023

At 8:51pm Silberberg made a motion, seconded by Dickinson and carried 7-0-0.