



**Town of  
Greenwich  
Conservation Commission**

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

*Patricia Sesto  
Director of  
Environmental Affairs*

**MINUTES  
February 2, 2023**

In attendance: William Rutherford, Karen DeWahl, Leslie Petrick, Gary Silberberg, Sue Baker (joined at 7:06pm), Lisette Henrey, Nancy Dickinson.

Also, in attendance: Beth Evans, Director of Environmental Affairs; Aleksandra Moch, Environmental Analyst; Sarah Coccaro, Assistant Director of Environmental Affairs; Rebecca Poirier, Environmental Analyst; Alex Popp; Jane Kuesel; Janet Stone McGuigan; Lauren Taylor; and Myra Klockenbrink.

1) Call to Order

Chairman Rutherford called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm

2) Seating of Alternates

Leslie Petrick was seated for Eric Brower and Karen DeWahl was seated for Sue Baker.

3) Review and approve minutes: January 6, 2023

Gary Silberberg made a motion to approve the minutes as corrected, seconded by Sue Baker and carried 6-0-0.

4) Review of Correspondence

No correspondence

5) Chairman's Report

a) Greenwich Point restoration efforts

Rutherford reported meeting with Friends of Greenwich Point to discuss plantings needed to stabilize several areas along the revetment. Due to the sandy soil a small area will be planted with beach grass to see if the site will support such growth. Other plants used to stabilize the slopes will include Rosa virginiana, High tide bush, etc.

6) Conference/ Program Reminders:

- February 8, 2023 - 7pm - Why and How we Need to Protect our Streams at Perot Library.  
Michael

**Conservation Commission Meeting Agenda  
February 2, 2023**

Jastremski of the Housatonic Valley Association sponsored by Perrot Library and Garden Club of Old Greenwich via Zoom.

- February 17, 2023 - 1pm Eastern Great Backyard Bird Count at Grass Island Park by Greenwich Audubon Center, part of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's annual Great Backyard Bird Count.
- February 18, 2023 - 1pm Eastern Great Backyard Bird Count at Greenwich Audubon Center

- 7) Fisheries/Wildlife: a written report was provided to the Commission members by staff
- a) Mianus River Fish Ladder
- 8) Ongoing projects: a written report was provided to the Commission members by staff
- a) Pollinator Pathway: Moch reported the roots of *Phragmites* were excavated from the tidal pond areas. Rutherford asked about \$8,000 available for planting. Moch responded the money will be used for the shrub planting and pond edge restoration. Moch stated, in addition to the new plantings a pilot program calling for no-mow zones along the pond is being negotiated with Parks and Recreation. The new buffers will naturally restore the watercourse edges and benefit the wildlife. Rutherford had asked about geese management. Coccoaro stated the buffer restoration effort will help to control the birds by removing their preferred environment, which is a manicured lawn up to the water edge. Current methods are working, but the birds are smart, and they easily adjust to hazing. More integrated approach is needed to achieve better results. Egg oiling had been prevented over hundred checks from being born annually. Rutherford noted a visible improvement at Binney Park. Coccoaro stated, feeding attracts geese to the local parks. Moch stated, educational signs are part of the proposed pond restoration program.
- 9) Education/Outreach: a written report was provided to the Commission members by staff on the topics below:
- a) Earth Month: Coccoaro reported Poirier will assemble a calendar of events for the Earth Month. Stone McGuigan stated "Chasing Water" program will be given by a photographer working for the National Geographic on April 20<sup>th</sup>. This event could be used for the Earth Day proclamation. Baker recommended considering Live Like Look, beach cleanup at Greenwich Point for proclamation. Moch stated a tree funded by surplus funds from Pat Sesto's farewell event will be used to plant a white oak at Converse Brook Preserved at the Arbor Day.
  - b) Greenwich Point winter salt marsh poster: Coccoaro appreciated poster designed by Poirier.

*The Town complies with all applicable federal and state laws regarding non-discrimination, equal opportunity, affirmative action, and providing reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities. If you require an accommodation to participate, please contact the Commissioner of Human Services at 203-622-3800 or [demetria.nelson@greenwichct.org](mailto:demetria.nelson@greenwichct.org) as soon as possible in advance of the event.*

**Conservation Commission Meeting Agenda  
February 2, 2023**

9) Committee and Liaison Reports

a) Sustainability Committee

Coccaro recognized Myra Klockenbrink and Snehal Mhatre for their hard work on the first issue of the Newsletter. At the last committee meeting the discussion focused on the Earth Day events, community engagement, and sectors' report.

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

b) GRAB

Dickinson reported January was a zero-waste month. The most recent issue of the newsletter discussed the myth of compostable food ware. These items advertised as biodegradable are not accepted by the single stream recycling and the municipal food scrap program. Dickinson recommended inviting Julie DesChamps to one of our meeting to talk bout waste management in Greenwich. Rutherford agreed her presentation would provide a valuable update on the Waste Free Greenwich effort.

c) Parks and Rec Board

The last meeting was held on January 11<sup>th</sup>. Baker reported the demand for the field use is up. There were complaints regarding the customer service. The department responded by streamlining the process with the use of all-in-one pass. Pickleball courts will be installed at the Eastern Civic Center. The aging ferry boats will be repowered in preparation for the new season. ADA accessibility measures were installed at Byram marina. The Eastern Civic Center has the new footing installed.

d) Harbor Management Commission

The last meeting was held on January 18<sup>th</sup>. Baker reported, sediment testing at the Grass Island dredging site was estimated to cost \$500k. The funds will have to be approved by BET. The dredged spoil will be placed in confined off-shore disposal site. CT DEEP will meet on February 14<sup>th</sup> to discuss the project.

The HMC approved the policy covering commissioners and advisors. This policy is an addition to the Town's Code of Ethics. The new policy removed the need for disclosure requirement for persons beyond HMC commissioners and requiring members to report on other members.

A barge working on 619 Steamboat Road dock was pushed into the tidal flat area by tugboat at low tide. The barge was overloaded with equipment and created a mound of mud and shellfish pushed by the front. It sat there for days with tides coming and going resulting in a hole in the sediment. Baker stated, the contractor was asked to cover the cost of replacing the lost shellfish and the associated labor. Coccaro stated this area had several docks approved by CT DEEP with no access to the water during the low tides.

*The Town complies with all applicable federal and state laws regarding non-discrimination, equal opportunity, affirmative action, and providing reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities. If you require an accommodation to participate, please contact the Commissioner of Human Services at 203-622-3800 or [demetria.nelson@greenwichct.org](mailto:demetria.nelson@greenwichct.org) as soon as possible in advance of the event.*

**Conservation Commission Meeting Agenda  
February 2, 2023**

The HMC is waiting for the results of lawsuit Cohen vs DEEP. The Mayor of New London submitted a placeholder bill to clarify the responsibility of Harbor Management. Other towns are now agreeing to support the new legislation.

e) Leaf Blower Committee

DeWahl reported, Quiet Yards Greenwich is moving forward with the proposed ordinance. They are trying to get on the February 27<sup>th</sup> agenda. No confirmation had been received yet. A meeting was scheduled for February 17<sup>th</sup> to discuss the proposal among the BOH members, QYG, First Selectman and Town Administrator.

10) Old Business

a) Open Space Plan

Rutherford stated the plan was adopted. The CC members should keep it handy whenever there is a need to discuss and open space proposals.

b) Flood markers

Craig Whitcomb, Operation Manager for Marine Division had retired so the estimate for the markers would be done by his replacement.

c) Porcelain Berry Management

Silberberg reported he handed the file containing the regulations regarding the plant removal to Henrey and Rutherford for their review.

d) Byram Cemetery maintenance plan

Coccaro reported, Brower forwarded the draft of the maintenance protocol via email requesting the commission's review and vote. Rutherford recommended to read the draft and postpone the decision to allow an ample time for comments.

e) Sustainability and Climate Resiliency

Rutherford reported at the last meeting the committee decided to review other Climate Action Plans to help them to set the right direction. He recognized Coccaro for selecting several helpful examples. Coccaro will reach out to di Bonaventura to discuss the process of drafting a plan for one of the towns in California.

11) New Business: Coccaro introduced Beth Evans, the new Director of Environmental Affairs.

12) Public Comment

Popp expressed his appreciation for all the work done on the cemetery by Brower, Coccaro. He noticed some of the items proposed in the cemetery maintenance protocol are not practical. He will email his comments to Brower.

*The Town complies with all applicable federal and state laws regarding non-discrimination, equal opportunity, affirmative action, and providing reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities. If you require an accommodation to participate, please contact the Commissioner of Human Services at 203-622-3800 or [demetria.nelson@greenwichct.org](mailto:demetria.nelson@greenwichct.org) as soon as possible in advance of the event.*

**Conservation Commission Meeting Agenda  
February 2, 2023**

Taylor discussed her predecessors buried at the cemetery. She also brought the letter drafted by Josephine Conboy directed to Bill Rutherford and noticed the old Byram Cemetery Committee had replaced some of the members. She asked what the intention of the current committee was. Dickinson responded the intention is to preserve the cemetery in a proper and respectful way.

Klockenbrink stated the Pollinator Pathway had use the stream buffer restoration method at Cos Cob Library which could be a great example of success for the proposed pilot program at Bruce Park. She stated Mill Pond should also have the buffer restored.

Klockenbrink pointed out several methods needed to be considered for open space acquisition. Among them are: bonding mechanism, use of tax payer's money, and small fees added to the permits for new development.

Rutherford responded, most of these ideas is included in the new Open Space Plan.

Klockenbrink stated there is several environmental bills being discussed in the current legislation session. She encouraged the commission to provide a written support to each of them.

Baker was concerned about overuse of salt for winter street condition. Coccaro will reach out to the DPW to ask about the guidance they follow when using the salt.

13) Adjourn – next meeting is March 2, 2023

At 9:00 pm Silberberg made a motion, seconded by Baker and carried 6-0-0.

*The Town complies with all applicable federal and state laws regarding non-discrimination, equal opportunity, affirmative action, and providing reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities. If you require an accommodation to participate, please contact the Commissioner of Human Services at 203-622-3800 or [demetria.nelson@greenwichct.org](mailto:demetria.nelson@greenwichct.org) as soon as possible in advance of the event.*