

**Conservation Commission Special Meeting
Town Hall Meeting Room
February 11, 2016**

Minutes

Attendance:

Members present: William Rutherford, Nancy Dickinson, Gary Silberberg, Lisette Henrey and Theodore Walworth III

Staff present: Denise Savageau and Aleksandra Moch

Audience Present: Cathy Weisenburger, Board of Parks & Recreation; William Kenny, William Kenny Associates; Chip Haslun, Ivey, Barnum & O'Mara, LLC.

Commission Discussion Session – 7:00 p.m.

Meeting called to order at 7:10 p.m. by Rutherford.

- 1) **Seating of Alternates:** Walworth was seated for Baker.
- 2) **Review and approval of minutes** for the January 7, 2016 regular meeting: A motion was made by Silberberg and seconded by Walworth to approve the minutes as presented.
- 3) **Review of Correspondence:** no correspondence
- 4) **Chairman's Report:** Rutherford reminded Commission members whose terms are set to expire in March 2016 and who wish to continue serving to get in the application form to the Town.
- 5) **Staff Report**
 - a) **Administrative**
 - i) **Budget 2016-17:** Savageau reported that the request for the upgrade of the part-time position was not included in the First Selectman's Budget. The budget is now moving through the BET.
 - b) **Water Supply**
 - i) **Drought/dry weather update:** Savageau stated that the recent snow storms have slightly improved the situation; however, the water deficit remains a concern.
 - c) **Emergency Operations/Climate Change Adoptions**
 - i) **Hazard Mitigation Grant Program:** Savageau joined with FEMA and the State to visit 3 of the home elevations near completion. Another will need inspection soon.

Therefore, at this time four out of fourteen are closed to completion. There are still two applications pending with FEMA.

- ii) **Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan** – adoption schedule: Savageau and Warzoha presented the draft of 2016-2021 South Western Region Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan at the February 11, 2016 Board of Selectmen’s meeting and it was accepted as presented. The plan includes the entire region and its adoption by municipalities would allow access to future FEMA grants.

- iii) **Community Resiliency Planning**

- (1) **Coastal priorities:** was not discussed

- (2) **Grant opportunities:** Savageau reported that she continues working with UCONN on the new grant opportunities coming from the Connecticut Institute for Resilience and Climate Adaptation (CIRCA).

- d) **Coastal Resources**

- i) **Shellfish Commission with University of Connecticut (UConn) and National Oceanic Atmospheric Association (NOAA):** Savageau stated that a meeting is scheduled for the first week of March with UConn to discuss details of our collaborative efforts. She also discussed the water quality work being done with NOAA, which show promising results for Greenwich near shore waters. It is suspected that the wave action and shellfish beds which are very efficient in water filtration could be the reasons for better dissolved oxygen counts.

- ii) **Long Island Sound Watershed Planning:** was not discussed

- iii) **Greenwich Point IBA Report:** Savageau was informed by Connecticut Audubon that the final draft of the report would be released shortly.

- e) **Habitat Management**

- i) **Mianus River Fishway:** Savagau stated that the office is getting ready for the new season. Ryan will hold an annual training on February 18, 2016 at 7:00 p.m. for volunteers involved in monitoring of the fishway. The counter would be installed near the beginning of March. The fish run is expected to start in mid-March.

- ii) **Canada Geese Program:** Savagau stated that training will be offered in geese management before the season begins.

- f) **Status Reports**

- i) **Eversource – Siting Council application:** Savageau reported that the Town had filed for an intervener status. Savageau prepared comments on environmental concerns in Bruce Park including of coastal resources. The Town Planner, Katie DeLuca, has been the lead staff on this. The Siting Council hearing is in March.

- ii) **Open Space Plan:** Savageau reported that mapping is just about completed on the Plan and that a meeting will be called. She indicated that one item that needs immediate attention is conservation zone subdivision regulations that need to be reviewed and updated.

- iii) **Clean Energy:** Savageau stated that the Town is working with the Institute of Sustainable Energy to provide the benchmarking data. These efforts will help to manage and track both the energy and water uses in Town owned buildings.

iv) **POCD - Scenic Roads:** Savageau stated that this will be the next task to work on.

6) Committee/Liaison Reports

- a) **Parks and Recreation Board:** Weisenburger reported on the Parks and Rec board. Several old/diseased trees were taken down at Binney Park. There is a plan for replanting the area. The proposed Harbor Management Plan was discussed. The new beach fees were approved by the Board of Selectman. There will be police coverage at Greenwich Point on weekends and holidays. The Board is considering a new building which would replace the old Eastern Greenwich Civic Center. The proposed structure will be one story and based on the existing footprint.
- b) **GRAB (Greenwich Recycling Advisory Board):** no report
- c) **Education/Outreach**
 - i) **Leaf Recycling:** Moch reported that Eastern Middle School had received new compost bins. Students were trained in cafeteria on food sorting and recycling. Cafeteria was monitored by parent volunteers for three weeks to reinforce the new habits. On average 30 lb. of fruit and vegetable scraps were collected from the cafeteria. Parks and Recreation crew were very helpful in constructing the bins. They will be responsible for compost management at the site. Riverside School is continuing the compost program. One of the students was interviewed by WGCH regarding the efforts. There is a great demand for expanding the program over additional schools. Moch will meet with Central Middle, Cos Cob and Greenwich Country Day Schools. In early spring a workshop for the Parks & Recreation crew and landscape professionals will be offered.
 - ii) **Earth Day Celebration:** Savageau stated that April 3th will be the official kick-off for the celebration. Bruce Museum together with the Conservation Commission and other partners will provide educational activities for families. The proclamation will be given by the First Selectman.

7) Old Business

a) **269 Palmer Hill Subdivisions** – 8:06 pm

Haslun and Kenny introduced the project with emphasis on recent revisions. A new planting plan for wetland restoration was submitted. The Commission reviewed previous comments with plan revisions that addressed the concerns expressed previously. Following discussion, a motion was made by Silberberg and seconded by Henrey as follows:

Whereas the proposed 6-lot subdivision at 269 Palmer Hill Road presents a general layout acceptable to the Commission with oversized lots; and

Whereas it also includes 1.5 acres of dedicated open space and 1.3 acres in a conservation easement totaling 2.8 acres of protected open space (28.5%), with the former proposed as a wetland restoration area, and the latter proposed for a dry detention basin; and

Whereas an archaeological report has been received and is recommending no further investigation is necessary, and

Whereas the proposed plan includes a storm water drainage system that will involve Lots 3, 4, 5, and 6 and requires a substantial amount of grading across the lots;

Therefore the Commission recommends approval of the plan layout as generally presented with the understanding that the following concerns/recommendations will be addressed in the final plan:

- i) The Conservation Easement area should be reconfigured to extend across Lot 4 to the Open Space Parcel. This will provide for connectivity of the open space instead of having it in two separate parcels. The pedestrian easement across Lot 4 is very narrow and includes steep slopes. Expanding the conservation easement area across Lot 4 would eliminate the need for the pedestrian easement.*
- ii) Lots 4 & 5 have significant amounts of grading and it is recommended that this grading be reworked/refined to reduce the impact on the surrounding landscape. In particular, Lot 4 is an especially difficult lot and should be looked at in terms of shape, slope, and grading required.*
- iii) The trees along Hillcrest Lane should not be shown on the plans as “to be removed” to avoid clear cutting of the streetscape. It is recommended that as each lot is developed, a landscaping plan should be developed that will both preserve the streetscape and provide for safe road access.*
- iv) The large Japanese maple (28”) and Norway spruce (32”) on Lot 6 should be maintained. This is now included in the plan and should remain part of any proposed changes to the plan.*
- v) Conservation previously recommended that an access road be created on Lot 6 for the detention basin. A maintenance access easement has been added to the plans but it is not clear how this will serve for vehicle access given the steep slope to the basin. Access to the basin should be part of the O&M plan for the storm water management system. A planting plan has been prepared for the basin that includes more trees as per the Commission’s request which should be included in final design and reviewed by staff.*
- vi) The applicant has developed a Logistics and Phasing Plan and map entitled Phasing Exhibit. This plan begins to lay out sequencing for the site but needs more detail. It also should be reconciled with the E&S control plan sheets to ensure that they are in sync. Details are needed that show the sequencing of the installation of the storm water management system and the clearing/grading/construction on lots 3, 4, 5, and 6. Of special concern is the grading on lots 3, 4, and 5 and how storm water will move during the construction phase. A final E&S Plan with sequencing/phasing should be approved by staff.*

- vii) *A wetland restoration is planned for the open space area and includes day-lighting a stream. No engineering details have been provided on the design just a planting plan. Because of the significant grades in this area, plans are needed to show how this will be constructed and maintained to avoid head cutting of the stream. Detailed plans should be provided to Conservation and IWWA staff for review and approval prior to implementation.*

The motion was carried unanimously.

8) **Community and Liaison Reports** – continue 9:23 pm

- a) **Harbor Management Commission** – Draft Harbor Management Plan: Savageau stated that the final draft of the plan is expected at the next meeting. There is still a lot of work to be done so most likely it will take a little while before it reaches the Board of Selectmen.

- b) **Cemetery Committee**: was not discussed

9) **New Business**: was not discussed

10) **Executive Session** – Land Acquisition: there was no need for an executive session

11) **Other/ Announcements**:

Silberberg announced a blood drive which was set for March 7th. Silberberg encouraged commission members to check with ctenergyinfo.com for competitive pricing of 100% renewable energy providers.

12) **Adjournment**

A motion was made by Silberberg and seconded by Dickinson to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 9:35 p.m.

Submitted by,

Aleksandra Moch