

**Conservation Commission Meeting
Town Hall Meeting Room
March 2, 2017**

Minutes

Attendance:

Members present: William Rutherford, Sue Baker, Nancy Dickinson, Gary Silberberg, Eric Brower.

Staff present: Denise Savageau and Aleksandra Moch

Audience Present: Jennifer Turiano, Greenwich Time; William Nickerson; Jay Loudon, Marija Mikolajczak; Jane Kochersperger; Laura diBonaventura; James Hoffman, Sound View Partners; Richard Regan, Rocco V. D'Andrea, Inc.

Commission Discussion Session – 7:00 p.m.

Meeting called to order at 7:08 p.m. by Rutherford.

- 1) **Seating of Alternates:** n/a.
- 2) **Review and approval of minutes** for February 2, 2017 regular meeting: A motion was made by Silberberg and seconded by Dickinson to approve minutes with the resolution corrected by read: “Motion was made by Silberberg and seconded by Dickinson to notify IWWA that the Commission finds the Conservation Zone plan submitted on 1/19/2017 to be a prudent and feasible alternative to the existing proposed plan and its potential impacts to wetlands and watercourses associated with Horseneck Brook”. Motion carried unanimously.
- 3) **Review of Correspondence:** no correspondence
- 4) **Chairman’s Report:** Rutherford announced that he decided to serve another term to accommodate the ongoing programs which need his involvement and support.
- 5) **Staff Report**
 - a) **Administration**
 - i) **Staffing/Office reconfiguration:** Savageau reported that the Land Use office would be slightly reconfigured to accommodate growing staff and better serve the public. Savageau completed interviews for the Conservation Resource Manager I position. The pool of candidates was extremely well qualified. She expects to make an offer soon and it hopes to have a new employee in the office by the end of March.
 - ii) **Budget and Planning:** no update
 - b) **Water supply**
 - i) **Update on drought conditions:** Savageau reported that even though the situation have been improving, the reservoirs in Greenwich are only at 73% capacity which is less than expected average of 89% this time of the year. The water restrictions are still in place to preserve as much water as possible before entering the growing season. The upcoming meeting on March 9th of the Board of Selectmen are expected to change from complete outdoor water ban to a ban on irrigation in keeping with the new State Emergency Water Supply order. The State

had issued a second order maintaining the emergency situation, but allowing outdoor water uses except for sprinkler irrigation. Several members of the public expressed concerns about lack of education on water conservation from Aquarion and support for the Conservation Director's call to institutionalize the practice of water conservation. It was recommended that a manual on water conservation be created and distributed by Aquarion to educate all water users. Savageau discussed some of the education that is planned by the Town. This includes the coordination with Aquarion.

7) **New Business** – 8pm

a) **106 Conyers Farm Road Proposal:**

The Conservation Commission reviewed the proposed re-subdivision for the above referenced parcel at its March 2, 2017 meeting. The applicant is proposing to re-work the conservation easement line because of encroachments from the previous owner. As presented, the proposal will remove .3376 acres from existing easement area. This area forms a lineal boundary along a portion of the easement area. It will add .6167 acres of mostly forested land to the easement area for a net gain of .2791 acres. After a brief presentation by Regan for the applicant, the Commission expressed its concern about the number of encroachments overall at Conyers Farm and the need to reinforce that such encroachments are not acceptable. This is not the first application where encroachments took place. It is not good practice to have violations that constantly needed to be “fixed” through the re-subdivision process. After discussion, the following motion was made by Baker and seconded by Silberberg:

The Conservation Commission recommends that the Final Subdivision/Re-subdivision for 105 Conyers Farm Drive be approved with the following conditions:

- i) *The easement area should be permanently demarcated by a line of boulders or other prominent feature.*
- ii) *A 5 ft. no-build buffer area should be established along the easement line to ensure that no further encroach into the easement area occurs. This area should be maintained as naturally vegetated buffer. No construction should take place directly at the easement line.*
- iii) *During construction, E&S controls should be located 5 ft. from the easement line. Silt fencing should also be used as a limit of construction line.*
- iv) *Conservation staff will review the final planting plan for native species and coordinate with IWWA.*
- v) *Coordinate a field review of the conservation easement area with Conservation staff to ensure that no additional encroachments into the easement area have occurred. This includes a review of the wood road and fencing visible via aerial photos. No hard surfaces should be maintained in the easement area.*
- vi) *Any construction that is required for maintenance or repair of areas within the easement area should be reviewed and approved by Conservation staff. This includes stabilization of the eroded channel.*

The motion was carried unanimously.

5) **Staff Report** – continued

a) **Water Supply (continued)**

- i) **Water Conservation Task Force:** Savageau state that the group working on how to roll out the 2-day restrictions and also on long term water conservation programming. She has

proposed establishing a surcharge on water bills similar to what we see on our electric bills. The funds would be used by the utility for water conservation.

ii) **CT State Water Plan:** no report

b) Long Island Sound/Watershed Management

i) **MS4 Stormwater Permit:** no report

ii) **UConn/Greenwich initiative:** Savageau stated that a BioBlitz would be conducted at Greenwich Point on September 15th and 16th. This biological survey would be led by UConn with engagement of schools and environmental groups in town.

iii) **Sustainable CT Program:** Savageau attended the first meeting and will keep the Commission updated.

6) Committee/Liaison Reports

a) **Parks and Recreation Board:** Baker reported that Spaman provided an update on the hazardous tree program. The Tree at Risk Program has decreased the number of dangerous trees in town. The tree replacement efforts are shared between Greenwich Tree Conservancy and the Parks and Recreation. In addition, the Nuisance Ordinance has been updated to reflect hazardous trees on private properties. The Board sent a letter to BET members in support of the Binney Park dredging project. Several complaints were received regarding the behavior of some ill-mannered dogs off leash and dog feces at Greenwich Point. Brower raised concerns about P&R staff at Greenwich Point and their handling of park visitors observing Saw-whet owls. Savageau indicated she would share this concern with the Director.

b) **GRAB (Greenwich Recycling Advisory Board):** The next meeting was scheduled for March 9th.

c) Education/Outreach

i) **Leaf Recycling Program:** Moch stated the program continues focusing on education at schools.

ii) **Earth Day Month:** Savageau stated that the proclamation would take place on April 2nd during the First Sunday Science hosted by the Bruce Museum. All other events in April and early May would be discussed during the Round Table gathering on March 14th where the representatives of environmental groups in town would share their way of celebrating the month.

iii) **Water Supply Protection Education:** Savageau stated that water education would be incorporated into the organic waste management and organic lawn maintenance programs. Lawns are the major areas which not only demand high quantities of water, but also cause degradation of water quality.

iv) **Experience the Sound:** Savageau stated that this year the event would be hosted on June 25th.

d) **Harbor Management Commission:** Baker reported that the Harbor Management Plan is being reviewed by CT DEEP and the USACE. Additional feedback had been received from John Gaucher. It is expected that a meeting with CT DEEP would be needed to address all their concerns. The most controversial sections of the plan include the special acts and the dock regulations. It was reported that the Mianus River Dredging Project was completed. About 49,900 cubic yards of material were removed which is very close to what was originally estimated. Mooring renewal letters were sent out. The online registration had not gone "live" so the process would continue via mail.

e) **Cemetery Committee:** Dickinson reported that a new cemetery was found off Bible Street, at the end of Patricia Lane. This area was used as a burial ground for Morrel Family, ancestors of Lauden who researched this site before bringing it to the Commission's attention.

f) **Energy Committee**

- i) **Town Facilities** – Benchmarking and audits: Eversource presented the final benchmarking to the Committee and some key departments. This resulted in an audit being conducted at Town Hall on Feb 22. We are awaiting final results of the audit.
- ii) **Community Energy Planning** – Light bulb swap and Home Energy Solution (HES): Savageau reported that the Committee works with Eversource on the new bulb swap and energy solution event. So far 122 home energy assessments were performed in town. The assessments produced over \$2000 in 2016 fund which would be presented to the Tree Conservancy during the upcoming event.

8) **Old Business:**

- a) **POCD** – Open Space Planning: nothing new
- b) **500 and 0 Lake Avenue** – status update: Savageau reported that the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Agency approved the project with conditions. These conditions required that all construction access take place from Lake Ave and that the drive off of Round Hill Road not be installed until the houses are complete. Discussion ensued. Commission is still concerned about Round Hill Road access and does not think that the IWWA conditions will protect the area. Savageau was directed to continue to provide guidance to P&Z on Conservation Commissions position against access off of Round Hill Road.

9) **Adjournment**

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

The meeting adjourned at 9:59 p.m.

Submitted by,

Aleksandra Moch
Environmental Analyst