

**Conservation Commission Meeting
Cone Room
March 5, 2020**

Minutes

Attendance:

Members present: Urling Searle (arrived 7:35pm), Sue Baker (arrived 7:35pm), Nancy Dickinson, Gary Silberberg, Laura di Bonaventura, and Theodore Walworth

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

Audience Present: n/a

Commission Discussion Session – 7:00 p.m.

1) Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 7:18 pm

2) Seating of Alternates: Walworth was seated for Henrey and di Bonaventura was seated for Brower

3) Review and approve minutes of February 6, 2020 meeting: Motion was made by di Bonaventura and seconded by Walworth to approve the minutes as corrected.

4) Review of Correspondence: no correspondence

5) Chairman's Report: no report

6) 2020 Priorities

Sesto reported meeting with Coccaro and di Bonaventura to organize the tasks into four categories (2 x 2 matrix). di Bonaventura explained the reasoning behind the reconfiguration was to pull forward the topics staff will spend their time on. This focus was not apparent the list format previously presented. Sesto described how tasks were categorized with time frame assigned to each of them. Sesto pointed out these matrixes represent the work for staff. She encouraged members to do the same for the priorities they will championed. The final scheme will be ready and presented at the next meeting.

7) Staff Reports

a) Conference/Program reminders

- Sustainable CT webinars and events - ongoing <https://sustainablect.org/resources-news-events/upcoming-events/>

- Spring Environmental Lecture Series every Wednesday night in March:
<https://www.greenwichct.gov/DocumentCenter/View/14218/Lecture-Schedule>
- Fish Ladder volunteer training – March 11, 2020 6:30pm in the Hayton Room
- Conservation Caboodle – March 20, 2020 12-2pm at Greenwich Audubon
- Northeast Natural History Conference – April 17-19, Stamford, CT
https://www.eaglehill.us/NENHC_2020/NENHC2020.shtml
- Earth Day, April 22, 2020 – 50th Anniversary of Earth Day
- May 3, 2020 – Conservation Commission hosting lecture at First Sunday Science Series on World Fish Migration Day and Mianus River fish ladder.
- May 16, 2020 – World Fish Migration Day and Mianus River fish ladder
Coccaro stated the Earth Day Month calendar will be finalized before the Caboodle meeting. She noted, upcoming spring event provide volunteering opportunities for CC members.

8) Ongoing projects

A written report was provided by staff and forwarded to the CC members on the topics below:

- a) DPW/CC pollinator project
- b) Phragmites removal at Bruce Park
- c) Food Scrap Recycling Pilot program – fundraising with “ioby”
- d) Earth Week in schools

9) Education/Outreach

A written report was provided by staff and forwarded to the Conservation Commission members on the topics below:

- a) Spring Environmental Lecture Series
- b) Conservation Caboodle meeting scheduled for March 20th noon – 2pm at Audubon
- c) Waste Reduction Program
- d) Green Schools

10) New initiatives

A written report was provided by staff and forwarded to the Conservation Commission members on the topics below:

- a) Greenscape Committee
Coccaro stated the committee was formed to address one of the POCD tasks to focus on Post Road in Cos Cob area. The committee consist of representatives from Parks & Recreation, Tree Conservancy, P&Z, and CC. The goal is to provide recommendations which, if accepted by the Town and permitted by the state’s DOT, could be considered for the future road improvements.

Baker expressed concern about the frontage along this road describing it as very complex and consisting of commercial and residential properties. She felt the signs for each village should be more visible and prominent. Dickinson stated Riverside Association would like to be involved in this project. Coccaro stated the focus is on sidewalk connectivity and potential bike lines. Silberberg stated bus shelters are needed.

- b) Artificial Turf: Commission Position
- c) Sustainable Committee
- d) Pay-As-You-Throw

Sesto provided a PowerPoint presentation to the CC members. She stated the recent decision by the first selectman to take the program out of budget and using temporary tipping fees as a bridge is detrimental to adopting the PAYT program and has confused people. She believed this new proposal will create a route of no return. She emphasized the need to convince RTM and BET to approve PAYT now because the community wants it. Searle and di Bonaventura were selected to help Sesto with preparing the message and reaching out to the BET and RTM members.

- e) Pollinator Garden on North Street

11) Committee and Liaison Reports

- a) Parks and Rec Board: the meeting was canceled
- b) GRAB: Dickinson pointed out a new display at the Town Hall on food scraps collection program. The program will be launched at the end of April, but the food scrap collection kits will be available for purchase in March at the upcoming events and directly from Greenwich Green and Clean by appointment.

Paper shredding event is scheduled for April 25th from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm. \$2 per box will be charged and no plastic bags accepted. The event may be combined with textile collection.

Hazardous Waste collection is planned for May 2nd.

Dickinson reported a great deal of energy has been focused on PAYT and volunteer food scrap collection programs by GRAB.

- c) Harbor Management Commission: Baker reported, last meeting took place on February 19th and was consumed by the harbor dredging project. The Town is looking to fill the Harbor Master position.

12) Old Business

- a) Sea Level Rise Study: Sesto reported a phone conversation scheduled next week.
- b) Mylar Balloon – status: Silberberg stated Denise Savageau will help with this project. He noticed the new HB5339 an Act Prohibiting the Release of Helium Balloons into the Atmosphere being discussed in Hartford. He felt the language was not strong enough and did not cover the entire issue.
- c) Energy Commission – update: Sesto presented last night at one of the district committee meetings.

13) New Business

- a) Aquarion property at Lake Avenue: Sesto reported, PURA (Public Utility Regulatory Authority) is holding public hearing on March 24 regarding the issue. The closing is planned for August. The Budget Committee of BET has recommended this capital expense be approved.

14) Adjournment: Motion was made by Baker and seconded by di Bonaventura to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 9:25 p.m.

Submitted by,

Aleksandra Moch
Environmental Analyst