

**Conservation Commission Meeting  
Town Hall Meeting Room  
March 7, 2019**

**Minutes**

**Attendance:**

**Members present:** William Rutherford (arrived at 7:40pm), Lisette Henrey, Urling Searle, Sue Baker (arrived at 7:55pm), Eric Brower (left at 8:12pm), Nancy Dickinson, Gary Silberberg, Skip Parker (left at 9:12pm), and Laura Di Bonaventura.

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

**Audience Present:** Tony D'Andrea, Rocco V. D'Andrea, Inc.

**Commission Discussion Session – 7:00 p.m.**

**Meeting called to order** at 7:02 pm by Vice Chairman Brower

- 1) Seating of Alternates:** Parker was seated for Rutherford and then for Brower during the site plan review session for 42 Dublin Hill Road.
- 2) Review and approval of draft minutes of February 7, 2019 regular meeting:** A motion was made by Silberberg and seconded by Searle to approve the minutes as presented.
- 3) Review of Correspondence:** Sesto shared her written comments to Planning & Zoning regarding the causeway replacement at Greenwich Point. She noted the project does not accommodate projected sea level rise. The road will have a sidewalk on one side and a new marsh planted on the Eagle Pond side of the crossing. Discussion ensued.  
  
Di Bonaventura recommended the data provided by the National Climate Assessment in their 2014 report be assessed. Henrey suggested to look into the old study done by St. John's University for Eagle Pond in 1980s.
- 4) Chairman's Report:** Sesto reported on the meeting with Rutherford, First Selectman Tesei, and herself. The priorities of the commission were discussed, with an emphasis on having Tesei's help to establish an energy commission.

Sea level rise was also discussed and the eventuality that reports generated on behalf of the town may impact the market of our coastal properties. Sesto expects the reports will articulate the impacts to coastal septic systems, sewer lines, and roads. Di

Bonaventura reported the Saugatuck area of Westport has approached the issue with a plan for “Managed Retreat”. Staten Island properties damaged by Superstorm Sandy were gradually bought out by the city.

**5) 2019 Priorities:** Sesto distributed the list developed at the previous meeting. There was no discussion.

## **6) Staff Reports**

A detailed report for the topics below was prepared by Moch/Coccaro and forwarded to the Conservation Commission members. The report included:

### a) Conference/Program reminders:

- CAWS (Connecticut Association of Wetland Scientists) Annual Meeting, Thursday, March 14<sup>th</sup>, Red Lion Hotel, 100 Berlin Road, Cromwell.
- Advanced Pollinator Friendly Gardening, March 26<sup>th</sup>, 7:00pm at Greenwich Botanical Center, 130 Bible Street.
- Conservation Caboodle, March 29<sup>th</sup>, noon at the Audubon
- Sea Level Rise in Coastal Communities, April 4<sup>th</sup>, 6:30pm at the Darien library
- CT DEEP Water Quality Conference April 5<sup>th</sup>
- First Sunday Science Series at Tod’s Point, “Bee a Pollinator Hero – Make a Mason Bee House”, Sunday, April 7<sup>th</sup>, 1:30 pm.

About 200 volunteers attended the beach cleanup at Tod’s Point on Sunday March 3<sup>rd</sup>, and collected 1,500 lb of trash from the marshes and beaches. Coccaro was stationed at the Eagle Pond area, which was one of several collection points established throughout the Point.

Sesto recognized Coccaro for her efforts in timely posting of all the activities at the Town’s website.

Sesto, Coccaro, and Moch attended a regional *Pollinator Pathway* gathering at Grace Farms in New Canaan on March 5<sup>th</sup>. Sesto stated many people at the event praised the work of Moch and had were generally complimentary about work done by the group in Greenwich.

### b) Fisheries/Wildlife

### c) Education/ Outreach:

- Pollinator Pathway initiatives
- Green School Committee
- Skip the Straw
- UConn/Greenwich Partnership
- Waste Reduction Program
- *Phragmites* removal at Bruce Park – Parks and Recreation

## 7) New initiatives:

- a) Conservation Caboodle: Sesto has invited all Greenwich environmental groups for a meeting to introduce herself and catch up with the environmental programs in town.
- b) SLR RFP – update: The RFP has been issued and the period of submitting clarifying questions has closed.

7:40pm Bill Rutherford arrived.

## 8) Committee and Liaison Reports

- a) Energy Committee: Sesto was pleased with the attendance at the winter energy event. About 70 individuals, out of the 100 who signed up, attended. The listeners were impressed with Tony Malkin. The program was recorded and a YouTube video is available at the town's website. The event was inspirational and included the tools and sources for project funding. Many attendees joined for the tour of the building.

At the March 28<sup>th</sup> Energy Committee meeting, the members will review the Town Hall audit report. The committee's draft is meant to be released at the end of April.

- b) Parks and Recreation Board: Baker was not present at the time to report.
- a) Greenwich Recycling Advisory Board (GRAB): Dickinson reported a paper shredding event is scheduled for April 27<sup>th</sup> and the hazardous waste day is planned for May 11<sup>th</sup>. On April 8<sup>th</sup>, Community Gardens will host "The Food Asset Potential – A Resource with Value." This is a discussion on food waste to be held at Greenwich Library, Cole Auditorium. Green and Clean will have their annual cleanup day on May 4<sup>th</sup>.

Dickinson reported that only 1% of the Town's recycled plastic is sent to China, and 40% is processed domestically. The Town's recycling is relatively clean and unlike Stamford; it is revenue neutral. City Carting invested \$500,000 in glass cleaning system. Glass and ceramics are mixed with concrete and used for construction. Brower brought up the recent article in the *New York Times* which he felt had sent a wrong message about the need and opportunities for recycled material.

Dickinson stated oil and water-based paint will be accepted at the hazardous waste day. Plastic bags are collected at the transfer station. *Trex*, the decking company picks them up. Food waste and composting was discussed at the meeting. Moch summarized the progress of composting in public schools. The Board of Education will run a pilot program at North Mianus, Cos Cob, and

Eastern Middle School, which will separate the wastes in cafeterias into four categories: liquid, compost, recycling, and garbage.

Di Bonaventura described the “zero waste lunches” approach at Greenwich Country Day School, where food is served from the plates rather than in individual, prepackaged portions. This allows students to eat as much as they need, eliminates trash, minimizes food wastes, and saves money. In addition, food is served on reusable plates, with reusable utensils.

BYO is going statewide. Jeanine Behr Getz is now the regional representative.

Di Bonaventura complimented Coccaro on her talk at the Fairchester Sustainable School Alliance. Coccaro spoke about the commission’s sustainability initiatives at public schools and showed how we all can do better in town, while embracing the program.

7:50pm Sue Baker arrived.

## **7) Old Business**

- a) High Water Marker at the Holly Grove, Greenwich Point: Brower stated Rocco V. D’Andrea, inc. has donated their services to survey and ensure the elevations shown on the markers are correct. There are four markers in Greenwich (Byram beach at the ferry boat landing, the holly grove at Tod’s Point, and Cos Cob Marina River Park). Di Bonaventura had asked whether the markers will display the 100-year flood elevation based on the past or the future. FEMA sets the storm elevations based on past data, so the markers will reflect this information. Tony D’Andrea suggested adding more markers at inland in places, such as Binney Park or Perot Library. There was support for this idea.

Sesto stated a program on coastal flooding is planned at the Darien Library on April 4<sup>th</sup> and conflicts with the commission’s monthly meeting. Rutherford is recommending the April meeting be cancelled or rescheduled, if warranted, to allow members and staff to attend the Darien program. The Doodle poll indicates April 3<sup>rd</sup> would have the best attendance, should a special meeting be needed. Members were asked to hold that date.

- b) Planning and Zoning Referrals – 42 Dublin Hill Road (8:12 pm)

Vice Chairman Brower recused himself and left the meeting.

Sesto presented her staff report. She met with D’Andrea and subsequently received his written response to her comments. Her main concern was the extensive site grading, especially in the area of cul-de-sac. The extent of grading also drives the need to remove more trees. As discussed at the last meeting, an

area to be restricted for conservation was delineated and will include at least one leaching area.

Tony D'Andrea, P.E., of Rocco V. D'Andrea, inc., pointed out several plan improvements. The width of the road was reduced from 24' to 18'. Most of the curbing along the road was removed to make it softer in appearance, allow for better drainage, and wildlife passage. The conservation area has doubled in size as a result of the 3.3 acres of conservation easement. Twenty-four additional trees will be preserved.

Rutherford requested a proper demarcation for the open space. He felt a more significant reduction in impervious areas of patios, etc. is needed. The reduction should be clearly defined for the future site development guide.

The planting plan should be updated to reflect the one approved by the IWWA.

D'Andrea responded to the comments about excessive grading in the area of cul-de-sac, stating its elevation is driven by the need to pipe overflow from the rain garden under the road to the open space. This will maintain the pre-construction watershed areas. Further, he wanted to avoid cutting the grade adjacent to the open space. Rutherford again challenged D'Andrea's assertions, stating his assessment indicates the road could have a steeper grade and ultimately limit ancillary land disturbance.

Henrey requested the easement on lot five be lengthened to connect the whole of the eased area to the deeded open space to form a corridor for wildlife migration. Discussion followed regarding this need given the area in question will have a rain garden in it. D'Andrea consented to the request.

Baker asked D'Andrea to locate on the plan a stone wall which was seen at the sidewalk, and requested its preservation.

Rutherford recommended more trees along the edges of disturbance to suppress the invasive species growth, which could penetrate into the open space.

9:12pm Skip Parker left the meeting.

A motion was made by Baker and seconded by Silberberg to direct staff to write the comments stated this evening. Motion carried unanimously (7-0-0).

c) Mylar balloon – no update

## **9) Committee and Liaison Reports - continued**

a) Harbor Management Commission: Baker reported the meeting was canceled because of snow.

b) Parks and Recreation Board: Baker reported a public hearing was held regarding the tree removal at Binney Park. There was another public hearing on the Eastern Greenwich Civic Center and its planned reconstruction.

Rutherford, who sits on the Binney Park Committee, explained the hearing was triggered by the public interest when Tree Warden Bruce Spaman posted signs on the trees scheduled for removal. Five years ago a master plan for the park was drafted, reflecting the current re-landscaping of the area. Baker added Parks & Recreation will stage the tree removal to minimize the impact.

Baker reported, the columns donated by the property on Lia Fail Way were installed at the Pinetum with additional landscaping.

**10) Adjournment:** Motion was made by Dickinson, and seconded by Baker, to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 9:39 p.m.

Submitted by,

Aleksandra Moch  
Environmental Analyst