

**Conservation Commission Meeting
via a Zoom virtual meeting.
June 4, 2020**

Minutes

Attendance:

Members present: William C. Rutherford, Chairman, Nancy S. Dickinson, Lisette Henrey, Gary Silberberg, Sue Baker, Laura di Bonaventura, and Theodore H. Walworth III

Staff present: Patricia Sesto, Director, Sarah Coccaro, Conservation Resource Manager, and Aleksandra Moch, Environmental Analyst

Audience Present: Leslie Petrick

Commission Discussion Session – 7:00 p.m.

1) Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 7:03 pm by Sesto. She went over the rules of conducting a virtual meeting.

2) Seating of Alternates: Walworth was seated for Searle and di Bonavenura was seated for Brower.

3) Review and approve minutes of May 7, 2020 meeting: Motion was made by Dickinson and seconded by Silberberg to approve the minutes as presented.

4) Review of Correspondence: no correspondence

5) Chairman's Report: no report

6) Staff Reports

a) Conference/Program reminders:

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

7) Ongoing projects

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

a) Phragmites removal at Bruce Park

Rutherford pointed out several locations at Binney Park around the pond with a few *Phragmites* growing. He felt they should be removed before developing into a larger stand.

b) Pollinator Pathway – North Street project

Henrey was pleased with a recent meeting at Bible Street to evaluate two potential sites for a new pollinator garden. She reported, new plantings at North Street were doing well.

8) Fisheries/Wildlife

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

a) Fishway

b) Purple Martins

c) Horseshoe Crabs

Coccaro stated the Department of Parks and Recreation had approved the night surveys of horseshoe crabs. The selected days include high tide time on June 18th and 23rd at 10:30 pm. She encouraged the members to participate.

9) Education/Outreach

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

a) Waste Reduction Program – Moch

b) iNaturalist – Coccaro

10) New Initiatives

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

a) Electric School Busses

Moch stated Sustainable Fairfield County is working on bringing EV school busses to our school systems. There are at least two grants which will be available to support this program. She is working with STA, local school bus company, which will provide professional grant writers to help with applications.

di Bonavenura questioned the size of these busses. Due to COVIT 19, students may require more distance between their seating arrangements.

11) Committee and Liaison Reports

a) Sustainability and Enhancement Committee

Sesto reported the committee consists of high energy, forward thinking, and motivated group of individuals. She hopes their focus will go to the on-going projects that need endorsement rather than duplicate the existing efforts. The newly formed subcommittees allow members to branch out into different areas of sustainability. DesChamps and Sesto are working on waste management at the Town Hall. Moch leads the Transportation and Air Quality subcommittee.

b) Greenscapes Committee

Coccaro stated the group discussed establishment of guiding principles to assure consistency of design. These principles will apply to all new projects along this

transportation corridor. In addition, pedestrian safety and existing curb cuts were examined. Five locations were depicted for more detailed redesign plans.

c) Parks and Rec Board

Baker reported there was no meeting since January.

d) GRAB

Dickinson described a soft launch of food scrap collection program, beginning on June 1st at the transfer station. The official opening is planned for June 15th.

e) Harbor Management Commission

Baker reported a new kelp beds were brought to the commission's attention. The search for a new Harbor Master continues.

12) Old Business

a) Sea Level Rise Study – update

Sesto stated the final draft is close to completion and it will be available prior to public meetings scheduled for June 17th and 24th. Both meetings will focus on tidal ponds.

b) Mylar balloons: on hold

c) Aquarion Property @ Lake Ave

Sesto reported the closing was scheduled for September 30th. Both the easement and the contract are fully prepared. The Town of Greenwich is applying jointly with Greenwich Land Trust for a grant which, if awarded, will cover a portion of this land acquisition. Ms. Sesto's past experience with the grant program suggests the total grant amount is divided up across the qualifying submissions. She expressed optimism as the water company land has the priority among the other projects.

13) New Business

Baker questioned why the status of the flood markers are not yet complete. Coccaro had previously attributed part of the delay to the Department of Parks and Recreation, who are busy addressing the changes triggered by COVIT 19. In response, at the last meeting, Brower offered to do the work. Rutherford and Sesto will investigate the best way to expedite the process.

Dickinson brought to the commission's attention the application which was filed with P&Z to designate a section of Sound Beach Avenue as a scenic road. She stated the project had received support from all the abutters. She asked the commission if Renee Seblatning could to make a presentation to this commission. Sesto cautioned that while several town entities have granted authorization for this group to pursue the designation, this should not be construed as supporting the application. There is work needed on the road to protect it against flooding and other general maintenance needs. DPW, for one, is not in favor of this application. The proposed status may limit some improvements to this evacuation road needed to ensure safety and accessibility during the future flood events.

Baker expressed concern regarding artificial turf installations on several of private properties in town. She proposed to bring this issue to the P&Z attention to ensure

such practice is not acceptable. Discussion ensued bringing forward the fact that artificial turf on private property would count as impervious coverage and is therefore limited by virtue of zoning regulations, just the same as pavement and building coverage. Ms. Baker will report back on known properties which may not be in compliance with zoning regulations.

Henry pointed out the growing problem of the use of noisy leaf blowers and lawn mowers. She was concerned about their detrimental effect on the natural environment and human health. She believed their use should be regulated.

Silberberg stated electric equipment may be the solution, but he questioned its efficiency. Others responded with positive experiences with electric equipment.

Silberberg invited commission member to celebrate the World Ocean Day on July 8th with "Sustainable Seafood in the Modern American Diet: How seafood can play a role in a Sustainable Future" presented by Barton Seave, and offered by Eastport Yacht Club Environmental Committee.

14) Adjourn – next meeting is July 2, 2020

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Submitted by,

Aleksandra Moch
Environmental Analyst