Conservation Commission Meeting  
Mazza Room  
July 1, 2015

Minutes

Attendance:

Members present: William C. Rutherford (arrived at 7:15 p.m.), Eric Brower, Sue Baker, Lisette Henrey, Nancy Dickinson, Gary Silberberg, Urling Searle (7:15 p.m.) and Theodore Walworth III

Staff present: Denise Savageau and Aleksandra Moch

Audience Present: William Haslun, Johnson, Haslun & Hogeman; LLP, William Kenny, William Kenny & Associate, LLC; Carolyn C. Antonik; Linda Mazurak and Debra Piper.

Commission Discussion Session – 7:00 p.m.

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

1. Seating of Alternates: Walworth was seated for Franco.

2. Review and approval of minutes for the May 30, 2015 special meeting and June 4, 2015 regular meeting: a motion was made by Dickinson and seconded by Silberberg to approve May 30, 2015 meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously. Motion was made by Silberberg and seconded by Walworth to approve June 4, 2015 meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

3. Review of Correspondence:
   a. Request for comments from Parks and Rec Board on dog season at Greenwich Point

      Savageau recommended that this and another item be added to the agenda. Consensus to add the following to the agenda under new business: 1) Proposed Extension of Dog Season at Greenwich Point; and 2) Resolution on Leave Composting on Residential Properties

4. Chairman’s Report: was not given

5. Staff Report
   a. Administrative
      i. Staffing: Savageau stated that she selected a new Conservation Resource Manager. The offer will be made as soon as Human Resources approve the candidate. It is expected that this part-time position will be filled by July 20th.
b. **Emergency Operations/Climate Change Adoptions**
   i. **Hazard Mitigation Grant Program**: Savageau stated that most of the funded projects are moving forward. Some participants are experiencing cash flow because this is a reimbursable program. She is looking to see if there are any options for a bridge loan.
   ii. **Community Resiliency – Coastal Storm Awareness Program (CSAP)**: Savageau stated that Yale University had published a study regarding coastal storm awareness. The research was funded by Connecticut Sea Grant, New Jersey Sea Grant, and New York Sea Grant.

c. **Wildlife/Fisheries Habitat**
   i. **Fishway**: Savageau reported that only 18,000 +/- fish had passed through the fish ladder this season. The numbers are low across the state. So far, there is no single reason which may explain this decline. At the same time, recently performed fish sampling in Mianus Pond showed high numbers of juveniles.
   ii. **Egg Oiling**: Savageau stated that the oiling has been completed for this season.
   iii. **Horseshoe Crab Count**: Savageau reported that due to the staff shortage, the monitoring was not undertaken this year.

d. **Coastal Resources**
   i. **Important Bird Areas (Greenwich Point and Great Captain’s Island)**: Savageau reported that this season was great for nesting at the island.
   ii. **Long Island Sound - Regional Conservation Partnership Program**: Savageau stated work is now moving forward to implement the $10 million grant awarded to the CT Council on Soil and Water Conservation. This is just a first step in getting funding for Long Island Sound. She felt that compared to other water resources such as Chesapeake Bay, Long Island Sound is underfunded by the federal government.
   iii. **Shellfish Commission with University of Connecticut (UCONN) and National Oceanic Atmospheric Association (NOAA)**: Savageau reported that she will meet with UCONN and Shellfish Commission on July 2, 2015 to further discuss the potential partnership in helping UCONN to facilitate their research at Innis Arden Cottage. Savageau felt that there is a need for more local studies on nutrient overload in Long Island Sound.

e. **Status Reports**
   i. **Byram Cemetery**: Savageau stated that all matters relating to the Byram Cemetery and other abandoned cemeteries will be referred to the newly established committee which is still in formation. Rutherford stated that all comments concerning cemeteries should come to the Commission via the Director. A group of interested neighbors attended the meeting and asked to be included in any updates and information regarding the project. Savageau indicated that she had established an email list for interested parties.
Savageau indicated that an A-2 survey of the boundaries is being conducted and that she expects to have the mapping in the next several weeks.

ii. **POCD – Open Space Plan**: Savageau discussed comments from the RTM relating to the language on page 40 of this plan. One of the sentences recommends that a third party such as Greenwich Land Trust or Town of Greenwich will hold the deed restrictions to the future open space areas. She will seek advice from the Law Department regarding this section. Consensus by the Commission to remove this language if needed as a change to the plan. Changes to the plan, however, would most likely require going back to P&Z. Rutherford and Savageau will continue to review questions raised and determine how to proceed.

6. **New Business**

a. **269 Palmer Hill Road Subdivision – 7:45 p.m.**

Kenny presented the project. This 9.8-acre site was proposed to be divided into 5-lots and an Open Space parcel. The Open Space was located in the middle of the area and contained wetland/watercourse corridor. Storm water management at the site was accommodated by a large bio-detention basin and several in-ground infiltration units. Savageau pointed out that this area drains to the Cedar Hill Creek, which has history of flooding. Brower was concerned about the huge amount of fill that will be used for grading the parcels and around the detention basin. Savageau presented her staff report recommending that the area proposed to be vegetated should be restricted under a conservation easement to ensure that the cover will not change which could trigger and increase in storm water runoffs. To minimize site disturbance, detailed construction phasing was requested. Rutherford called for preservation of trees along the street and two large trees located within the proposed construction envelops. Discussion ensured.

A motion was made by Silberberg and seconded by Henrey to support the project with the following recommendations:

*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 (15%) that is, however, comprised mostly of wetlands, which is already protected by regulation; and*

*Whereas the plan supports low impact development by designing a storm water management system that includes maintaining existing forest vegetation but does not include any permanent protection to ensure that the area is maintained as forestland; and*

*Whereas no archaeological report has been received by the Commission;*
Therefore the Commission does not recommend approval of the plan as presented and recommends that the following comments be considered prior to any plan being approved:

i. A permanent easement should be placed on the area shown in as non-disturbed on the Overall Site Plan. This will serve to maintain the integrity of the storm water management plan and also to protect some upland areas as open space since most of the dedicated open space proposed is inland wetlands. Easements will also serve to protect some of the steep slope areas. Retaining walls should not be shown as the edge of disturbance since the area will need to be disturbed to construct the walls. A minimum of 5 ft. should is needed from the toe of walls and/or buildings for non-disturbed areas. Conservation easement lines should reflect this.

ii. An archaeological report should be submitted and reviewed before any final subdivision is approved.

iii. 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.

iv. The trees along Hillcrest Lane should be maintained and/or enhanced and plans should be refined to protect this forested streetscape.

v. The large Japanese maple (28”) and Norway spruce (32”) on Lot 6 should be maintained. This includes slightly shifting the bio-retention basin to protect the Japanese maple.

vi. The number of trees planted around the detention basin in the northwest corner on lots 5 & 6 should be increased to improve canopy.

vii. A maintenance access road is needed to the detention basin. Extending the drive on Lot 6 is something to consider.

viii. As presented, the E&S control plan does not adequately address storm water on site during construction. A plan that includes construction phases should be developed that shows 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.

ix. A wetland restoration is planned for the open space area and includes daylighting a stream. Because of the significant grades in this area, the design should reflect how this will be constructed and maintained to avoid head cutting of the stream.

The motion was carried unanimously.

b. Resolution on Leaf Composting: Savageau presented the resolution to bring to the Board of Selectmen. This resolution if to encourage voluntary leaf and grass recycling on residential properties in Greenwich. Moch reviewed the planned program with the Commission, which will build strong bases at schools. In addition, shredding and compost education workshops will be offered for property owners and landscape professionals. A motion was made by Dickinson and seconded by Searle
to endorse the resolution and present it to the Board of Selectmen. Motion was carried unanimously.

c. Proposed extension of the dog season at Greenwich beaches: Savageau stated that dogs are allowed to use the parks on leash from December 1st to March 31st. Parks and Recreation considers extending this period to two weeks before and after the current term. Savageau reached out to CT DEEP Wildlife Division for their comments. Scientific facts demonstrate that extending the period past March 31 may cause disruption to the nesting season and that is the period of most concern from a Conservation perspective. A motion was made by Dickinson and seconded by Silberberg recommended that the two week period in the spring not be extended but that fall extension was not a concern for Conservation. Motion carried unanimously.

7. Committee/Liaison Reports
   a. Parks and Recreation Board: Baker stated that it was decided that New Lebanon School will not be built over the existing playing fields. The Board considered extending the period when dogs are allowed at Greenwich beaches. The proposal requested an additional month to review.
   b. GRAB (Greenwich Recycling Advisory Board): no meeting
   c. Education/Outreach: was not discussed
   d. Harbor Management Commission: Baker reported that six chapters of the draft of the Harbor Management Plan were posted online. Harbor Master together with CT DEEP will be overseeing dredging operation in Town. The dredge spoils will be disposed within the western section of Long Island Sound.

8. Old Business: was not discussed

9. Executive Session
   a. Land Acquisition: none held

10. Other/ Announcements

    Silberberg stated that the next blood drive is scheduled for July 6, 2015.

11. Adjournment

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

    The meeting adjourned at 9:50 p.m.

Submitted by,

Aleksandra Moch