Conservation Commission Meeting
Town Hall Meeting Room
July 6, 2017

Minutes

Attendance:

Members present: Sue Baker, Lisette Henrey, Gary Silberberg (left at 7:35 pm), and Theodore Walworth III

Staff present: Denise Savageau and Aleksandra Moch

Audience Present: Marija Mikolajczak and Eduardo J. Lopez-Reyes.

Commission Discussion Session – 7:00 p.m.

Meeting called to order at 7:24 p.m. by Baker

1) Seating of Alternates: Walworth was seated for Brower

2) Review and approval of minutes for June 8th 2017 regular meeting: A motion was made by Silberberg and seconded by Walworth to approve the minutes as presented.

3) Review of Correspondence: Savageau distributed the Spring issue of *The Habitat* pointing out two articles on water conservation.

4) Chairman’s Report: no report

   A motion was made by Silberberg and seconded by Henrey to hear Item 8, New Business, out of order. Motion carried unanimously.

8) New Business
   a) Mylar Balloons: Silberberg proposed a new ordinance in Town banning sale and outdoor display of Mylar balloons. He stated that the waste they produce are detrimental to the natural environment. He has been fishing them out from the water and other places in landscape including wires and trees. Very often, they are released into the air where it can travel thousands of miles and pollute the most remote and pristine places. In addition, balloons return to the land and sea where they can be mistaken for food and eaten by animals. Motion was made by Silberberg and seconded by Henrey to support a ban on the sale and outdoor display of mylar balloons. Further discussion ensued. Savageau stated that there is a state law which prohibits release of large numbers of balloons. She recommended that the impact of balloons on the environment be evaluated and that a look at other ordinances be conducted. Silberberg withdrew the motion in concurrence with Henrey. It was decided to form a committee which would perform a thorough research of the subject and report the findings to the Commission for a further discussion.
5) **Staff Report**

a) **Water supply**
   i) Update on water restrictions: Savageau reported that has heard some misinformation concerning water supply that suggested the reason for the current water restrictions were solely for Aquarion to avoid expansion of the existing water supply infrastructure. This is not the case, actually, Aquarion is looking to improve supply infrastructure to help with the supply side of providing potable water. The current need for water conservation is caused by the limited capacity of the reservoir and growing demand for water. A meeting that she attended earlier in the day with Aquarian and other legislators had sent a clear message that the rain fall has been below the average and the current condition is still concerning.
   ii) Water conservation outreach/education: Savageau stated that educational opportunities would be provided in upcoming fall.

b) **Long Island Sound/Watershed Management**
   i) UConn/Greenwich initiative – Bio-blitz - Sept 15/16: Savageau stated that Nahabedian is taking the lead on many of the preparations for these event. The event will be enhanced with educational booths set up for 24 hours starting at 3pm. Over 100 scientists from UConn and CT will be actively involved in inventorying every fauna and flora found at Greenwich Point and surrounding waters.
   ii) Long Island Sound: Savageau announced that originally slated for no funding by the president, LIS had received $8,000,000 from congress.

c) **Wildlife**
   i) Fishway: Savageau stated that the final count of fish passed through the fishway this year is about 24,000.
   ii) Geese Management: Savageau reported that a new contract for hazing was granted.
   iii) Horseshoe Crab Survey: Savageau stated that Nahabedian continues monitoring the population arriving to the shore of Greenwich Point. The numbers show a decrease this year which may be due to many of them found dead at the beach. It appears that they are being attacked at night by raccoons which feed on their gills.
   iv) Great Captain’s Island: was not discussed

d) **Paris Climate Agreement – Indivisible Greenwich**: Savageau reported that the State of Connecticut has joined a group of states agreeing to adhere to the terms of the Paris climate agreement despite President Donald Trump's move to withdraw the U.S. from the deal. Indivisible Greenwich met with the First Selectman, Peter Tesei to ask him to join Climate Mayors group because most of the issues at stake (sea level rise, droughts, flooding, etc.) are real and have to be addressed at the municipal level. Savageau has provided information to the First Selectman on the impacts of climate change on Greenwich and on sustainability issues. The First Selectman re-affirmed his commitment to all of our sustainability programs in Greenwich.

6) **Committee and Liaison Reports**

a) **Parks and Recreation Board**: Baker reported on the following: presentation by Jennifer Mattei, Ph.D., Sacred Heart, Professor of Biology on living shorelines, the Master Plan for Greenwich Point and who will be involved, assessment of Eastern Greenwich Civic Center, and the Dorothy Hamill Rink project. She also mentioned public comments regarding the upkeep of the dog park on Grass Island. Savageau indicated that she will be working with Parks and Rec on several of the issues.
b) **GRAB** (Greenwich Recycling Advisory Board): no report

c) **Education/Outreach**
   i) **Experience the Sound - June 25th**: Baker reported that there were over 40 displays which included Conservation Commission table, Bring Your Own Bag Initiatives (BYOBag), Greenwich Conservation Advocates and many others.

d) **Harbor Management Commission**: Baker reported that a draft of the plan will be available on June 7, 2017. There would be a special meeting on June 12th to discuss the plan.

e) **Cemetery Committee**: there was no meeting

f) **Energy Committee**
   i) **Substation update**: Savageau reported that a new application was submitted. The Town filed for the intervener status. A public hearing was scheduled for July 13th at Greenwich Library. The new plan has been revised, but there are still a lot of issues which need to be addressed.
   ii) **Community Energy Planning**: Savageau reported that two letters were sent out to the property owners promoting the Home Energy Solutions program. Low income households will be able to receive free audits.

7) **Old Business**

   a) **Waste Ordinance** – status: Savageau reported that the proposed ordinance by Greenwich Conservation Advocates was directed to an RTM committee for further discussion.
   b) **Plastic Bag Ban** – status: Savageau reported that Bring Your Own Bag Initiative group met with the First Selectman to discuss the idea. No draft of a proposed ordinance was presented. The group is still in exploratory phase.
   c) **500 Lake Avenue** – update: Savageau reported that the project was approved by P&Z with a single access from Lake Avenue. This design will preserve the naturally wooded slope along Round Hill Road, which was originally proposed to be used as a second access.

9) **Adjournment**

   A motion was made by Henrey and seconded by Walworth to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried.

   The meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

   Submitted by,

   Aleksandra Moch
   Environmental Analyst