

**Conservation Commission Meeting
Innis Arden Cottage
at Greenwich Point Park
July 12, 2018**

Minutes

Attendance:

Members present: William Rutherford, Lisette Henrey, Eric Brower, Sue Baker, Urling Searle, Nancy Dickinson, and Gary Silberberg.

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

Audience Present: n/a

Meeting called to order at 6:41 p.m. by Rutherford

1) Seating of Alternates: n/a

2) Review and approval of draft minutes for June 7, 2018 special meeting: A motion was made by Baker and seconded by Silberberg to approve minutes as corrected.

3) Review of Correspondence: A new issue of *The Habitat* was handed to the Commission members.

Sesto discussed staff's engagement in review of P&Z applications. She felt it was important to start sharing those comments with Commission to keep them informed about current development projects and their potential for environmental impacts. These comments will be restricted to read only, while large projects designated for the Commission's review will be discussed during the regular meetings. Sesto met with P&Z Commission with presence of Rutherford and Brower to discuss the level of the existing review and seeking directions for the future and exploring room for further improvements. Conservation Commission members supported the change in procedure.

4) Chairman's Report: Rutherford referred to *Invasive Plant Control Workshop – From Theory to Practice*, held on June 12th, when expressing his concern about potential herbicide applications by the CT DOT along the highways and utility lines in Greenwich. He recognized Coccaro for her thorough report which included detailed notes from the workshop.

5) Staff Reports

- a) Consolidation progress: Sesto reported on the high degree of shared workload between wetlands and conservation staff, especially with the ongoing horseshoe crab monitoring program.

Savageau has continued working on the Hazard Mitigation Grant program. The current contract for the work will be extended allowing her time to complete the project.

Savageau the Emergency Operation Center mock emergency to walk them through all the responsibilities which are handled by the Conservation Commission staff.

- b) BYO: Sesto reported over 3,000 businesses were notified about the program via a direct mailing. There has been no negative response. A meeting with *Stop & Shop* was scheduled for the next week. The message is: there will be still bags available in stores, but BRING YOUR OWN.

Silberberg suggested to arrange a meeting with Bimbo Bakeries. They use a lot of plastic bags for their bread packing, and perhaps there is an opportunity to find a better solution.

- c) Water supply: Sesto reported the Town hit the first drought marker on July 12th. She will participate in a phone conference with Aquarion Water Company on July 13th to learn more details.
- d) Fisheries/Wildlife: the report for this topic was prepared by Coccaro and forwarded to the Conservation Commission members via email.
- Horseshoe crab monitoring: The Commission members were pleased with Coccaro's detailed report. Coccaro commented on the internationally distributed *World Fish Migration Day* report which featured a photograph of her and fish ladder visitors in Greenwich during the Open House event. Greenwich Time had an article about the event as well.

Henrey was concerned about the growing population of raccoons at Greenwich Point and their preying on horseshoe crabs. Coccaro responded that Parks and Recreation has a trapping program. However, it started late into the horseshoe crab mating season this year. She will work with Parks and Rec to adjust the timing for next year.

Baker was concerned about spotting of several horseshoe crab worms which feed on their soft tissue. She found infected horseshoe crabs in fish tank and along the beach.

Coccaro stated she received the first black bear sighting in Greenwich for this year.

Dickinson was very excited to report Calf Island Conservancy received permission from the US Fish and Wildlife to monitor horseshoe crabs at the island next year.

- e) Sustainable Greenwich: Coccaro reported several meetings and workshops were held with the program staff. The deadline for submission is August 24, meanwhile, the actions remain dynamic and subject to last minute changes. So far, fifty-two (52) municipalities have joined the program. Once a certification is issued, it is valid for three years.
- d) Education/ Outreach: the report for this topic was prepared by Moch and forwarded to the Conservation Commission members via email.
 - Pollinator Pathway: Henrey referred to a letter to the neighbors drafted by Moch. She felt that reaching out the neighbors and providing them with an educational program is essential for moving forward. Dickinson supported the idea of mapping the existing pollinator friendly gardens in town to help determine where the connections are needed. The group will work on a brochure and use the existing logo designed by the group in Wilton.
 - Partners for Plants – cooperation between Town of Greenwich, Greenwich Land Trust and Greenwich Audubon: Moch stated the Conservation Commission staff is responsible for leading invasive species removal day at Greenwich Point. The removal will include mugwort and be done by a group of volunteers on October 20, 2018. Rutherford had a conversation with Spaman who believed the job will be done if considered little by little.

6) Committee and Liaison Report

- a) Cemetery Committee: Brower reported the dispute is getting close to reaching a settlement, which will address the stone walls, landscaping, and site restoration.
- b) Energy Committee:
 - Strategic Energy Plan: Urling was very pleased with Sesto's approach to invite town officials involved in every-day operations of buildings. Among several other speakers were All Monelli, Superintendent of DPW and Daniel Watson, Director of School Facilities. Monelli explained the challenges of the annual budgeting and bidding processes.
 - Community Energy Planning: was not discussed
- c) Parks and Recreation Board: Baker reported the meeting was held at the newly opened Byram Pool Complex. The facility was over crowded during the first weekend of operation; therefore, there was a line of people waiting to enter. The area of the complex is divided into several independent water recycling systems. Seating on the pool deck is limited to fixed benches.

Parks and Recreation is moving forward with artificial turf proposal for the Eastern Middle School.

- d) Greenwich Recycling Advisory Board (GRAB): Dickinson stated new rules for recycling were discussed. The new list does not include plastic bags and film. These are now currently collected by local supermarkets. The transfer station has a special container for shredded paper, which is no longer recyclable. There is no market for Styrofoam, which was also retired from the list.
- e) Harbor Management Commission: Baker stated the discussion was dominated by the possibility of dredging of Greenwich Harbor. The challenges included the cost and disposal of dredged material. It was considered to use the dredge spoils to expand the area of Grass Island.

7) Old Business

- a) Waste Ordinance – September 17, 2018 RTM meeting: was not discussed
- b) Mylar balloon – status: Silberberg made Bill Barnum of Aquarion Water Company aware of his efforts to ban mylar balloons.

8) New Business: Baker expressed her concern about excessive tree clearing at 500 Lake Avenue. She also stated concern about the line of trees which was recently cleared between the railroad track and I-95. Sesto stated CT DOT wanted the area clear and is not inclined to permit the town to replant. It was suggested that this area be restored with flowering meadow as a part of the Pollinator Pathway program.

Sesto reminded the members about the upcoming POCD meeting on July 19th. This meeting will not be directed, instead attendees may raise any issues.

Dickinson suggested scenic roads should be covered in the POCD. Brower expressed the need to properly map them. Sesto explained some pros- and cons- of living along a scenic road. Brower stated tree clearing and new curb cuts may be problematic along scenic roads within the right of way.

Moch requested the commission members' review of the newly created map of historic places and tourism destinations in Greenwich. She noted the map displays scenic roads.

Brower stated the bridge on Route 1 along the Port Chester boundary will be replaced. Sesto conveyed replacing it as the best return for the Federal money invested in solving flooding issues in this area.

Baker reminded members about Founders Day Event at the Feake-Ferris House on July 18 at 10:00 am.

9) Adjournment: Motion was made by Baker and seconded by Silberberg to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Submitted by,

Aleksandra Moch
Environmental Analyst