Conservation Commission Meeting
Town Hall Meeting Room
September 1, 2016

Minutes

Attendance:

Members present: William Rutherford, Eric Brower, Gary Silberberg, Nancy Dickinson, Urling Searle and Skip Parker.

Staff present: Denise Savageau and Aleksandra Moch

Audience Present: Natalia Sudyka, Eversource; Louisa Stone; Robert Brady, BET

Commission Discussion Session – 7:00 p.m.

Meeting called to order at 7:04 p.m. by Rutherford.

1) Seating of Alternates: Searle was seated for Baker and Parker was seated for Henrey.

2) Review and approval of minutes for the July 7, 2016 regular meeting: A motion was made by Silberberg and seconded by Dickinson to approve the minutes with the following correction: change polls to poles under Chairman’s report. Motion carried unanimously.

3) Review of Correspondence:
   a) The Habitat was distributed to the Commission members. Savageau pointed out the annual CACIWC meeting which is scheduled for November 16, 2016. In addition, she referred to an article about blue-green algae which blooms have been causing problems in lakes and ponds.
   b) Connecticut Wildlife magazine was received and a couple of interesting articles about birds noticed.

4) Chairman’s Report: Rutherford announced that Christopher Franco had offered his resignation because of other obligations. He thanked him for his service. Urling Searle will move up from alternate to serve the remainder of Chris’s term. He then welcomed Skip Parker as a new alternate Commission member filling in for Searle’s unexpired term.

Committee and Liaison Reports – consent by Commission to change order of agenda to take up Energy Committee with staff from Eversource.

a) Energy Committee – Eversource /Energy Efficiency Planning:
   i) Savageau announced that Uring Searle has agreed to serve as a chairman of the newly formed Committee. Henrey, Silberberg and Skip Parker indicated they would also be willing to serve. Savageau gave brief history of the Energy Committee and its formation in response to the need of better energy management in Town. The issue
was highlighted during the review process for the new sub-station which was proposed by Eversource. The Town is now looking to demonstrate that the claimed higher demand for energy could be addressed with creating more sources of renewable energy, implementing conservation measures and increasing efficiency. A statewide workshop for municipal energy task forces is being held on Sept 10 and Savageau, Searle and Henrey are planning to attend.

Savageau presented a first draft of Greenwich Energy Conservation Action Plan: August 2016. Natalia Sudyka, with the Energize CT folks at Eversource will be working with the Energy Committee on an energy efficiency residential outreach campaign focusing on the Home Energy Solutions (HES) program. Sudyka summarized the program and steps that will be taken to implement energy conservation measures. A kickoff meeting is being planned for some time in October.

Within the HES program, homeowners would have the opportunity to choose from a group of contractors approved by Eversource. The selected professional would perform a residential energy audit and depict water savings opportunities. A co-pay of $129 will be required for the service. Eversource selected three vendors to cover Greenwich. For every service performed, the company will donate $25 back to a selected non-profit in the community.

Savagau recommended that the Greenwich Tree Conservancy receive this funding because of the impact on trees by Eversource and also because all trees are planted on Town land as a public/private partnership. Silberberg made a motion, seconded by Baker, that the Tree Conservancy be the beneficiary of this program with the understanding that they will be contacted to confirm their acceptance of this designation.

5) Staff Report

a) Administration

i) Staffing: Savageau stated that Jenny Colucci, Account Clerk II, retired. For the moment, she covers the position temporarily and on part-time basis. Several applicants were interviewed so the replacement will be selected in the near future.

ii) Budget and Planning: Savageau reported that BET does not usually provide guidance until October which gives very little time for the Commission to review as there will only be the November meeting between budget guidelines and the due date of Dec 1. She expressed concern over reductions each year and the impact on small departments like Conservation Commission which is not be able to easily absorb the guidelines which call for no increase in non-salaried accounts.

b) MI – Byram Cemetery Acquisition - Savageau stated that a legal notice was posted in the local newspaper and will run for 3 weeks as required for acquisition of abandoned cemeteries. As part of the state requirements, a public hearing has been scheduled for September 22, 2016, during the Board of Selectmen meeting to hear objections to the
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acquisition. Depending on the outcome of the public hearing as determined by the law department, the acquisition will move on to the RTM for final consideration.

c) **Cooperative Agreement with UConn and Shellfish Commission** - Savageau reported that the agreement was accepted by all parties. A press release will be out shortly.

d) **Long Island Sound/Watershed Management**
   
i) **Citizen Advisory Committee**: Savageau stated that they will be meeting next week.
   
ii) **MS4 Stormwater Permit**: Savageau stated that the State has revised the current permitting process. A requirement for more intensive monitoring is one of the major changes. CT DEEP had audited the Conservation, IWWA and DPW departments. The overall rating for the review was good.

e) **Community Resiliency**
   
i) **Living Shoreline**: Savageau stated that she will attend the upcoming workshop on September 15th at UConn. There is a new grant available to apply for by November. Savageau presented her thought on what is the best way to protect shorelines and how the living shoreline approach fits into Greenwich Point which has several low lying points.
   
ii) **Community Rating System (CRS) with West CT Council of Governments (WestCOG)**: Savageau stated that she is part of the Town team working with them on flood protections and rating system which would provide a discount for the flood insurance payers.
   
iii) **Other resiliency.** – Savageau stated that UConn is offering an educational program and help with installation of markers which would show the height of flooding during the Superstorm Sandy. The markers would be placed in several locations along the coast.

f) **Water supply**
   
i) **Drought conditions**: Savageau stated that the drought continues but we have not yet reached the trigger level for mandatory restrictions. Voluntary restrictions have been in place over the summer. If the drought continues, mandatory restrictions may be needed.
   
ii) Water quality issues: discussed under New Business

g) **POCD**
   
i) **Open Space**: Savageau stated that a meeting was held and that the Commission will be moving forward with recommendations.
   
ii) **Tree ordinance**: was not discussed
   
iii) **Scenic road**: was not discussed

6) **Committee/Liaison Reports**

   a) **Parks and Recreation Board**: July meeting was cancelled.
b) **GRAB** (Greenwich Recycling Advisory Board): no meeting

c) **Education/Outreach**
   i) **Leaf Recycling**: Moch stated that a new compost bin is being built by a boy scout for Hamilton Avenue School. The preparations are being done for the upcoming workshops scheduled for September. She met with representatives of the major landscaping companies in Greenwich to discuss the new program and collect feedback. The program was received with support. Moch presented the program to the Commission together with the newly designed brochures and associated handouts.

d) **Harbor Management Commission**: Baker reported the HMC received comments from CT DEEP indicating that the plan needed to be shortened and made more readable as had been recommended by land use staff. They will now be working to consolidate the plan and is planning to hold a public hearing sometime in the fall.

e) **Cemetery Committee**: Brower reminded that the hearing is scheduled for September 22, 2016

7) **Old Business**: was not discussed

8) **New Business:**

   a) **Source Water Protection Initiative**: Savageau stated that most of the time the quantity of water is the major issue; however, recently water quality came into play due to the recurring algae bloom affecting our drinking water supply. The blooms may cause water to take on an earthy odor and taste. Algae are being treated at the Mianus Treatment plant, but they were also found in one of the reservoirs. Savageau reviewed technical aspects of the bloom indicating that this is a blue-green alga aka cyanobacteria. When this dies, it produces a chemical, geosmin that is responsible for the odor. Uncontrolled blooms have the potential to become Harmful Algal Blooms (HAB) that release a cyanotoxin. In order to be pro-active to prevent blooms in the future, Savageau indicated that she would be developing a Source Water Protection Plan to reduce nutrients in entering our public water supply as this is a major reason for the algal blooms. By a consensus, the Commission agreed that Source Water Protection should be a major initiative of the Commission. Savageau indicated that she is work with Greening Our Children and will be one of the main speakers at their October 13th event on Safe Water.

9) **Adjournment**

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

   The meeting adjourned at 9:25 p.m.

   Submitted by,
   Aleksandra Moch