

**Conservation Commission Meeting
Town Hall Meeting Room
September 6, 2018**

Minutes

Attendance:

Members present: William Rutherford, Lisette Henrey, Eric Brower, Sue Baker, Nancy Dickinson, Gary Silberberg, Skip Parker, and Theodore Walworth III.

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

Audience Present: Bruce Cohen; John Casey, Robinson and Cole; Marti Marache; Mark Marache.

Commission Discussion Session – 7:00 p.m.

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

- 1) **Seating of Alternates:** Parker was seated for Searle.
- 2) **Review and approval of draft minutes for July 12, 2018 special meeting:** A motion was made by Silberberg and seconded by Dickinson to approve minutes as amended.
- 3) **Review of Correspondence:** no correspondence
- 4) **Chairman's Report:** Rutherford referred to an article published in *Greenwich Time* on September 3rd when voicing his concern of overuse of pesticides along I-95. *Environmentalists Question Safety of Weed-Killing Program* was the article. The article took on the new scientific data pointing out the toxicity of *Roundup*, which has been widely used by CT DOT. Rutherford requested the notification record be checked in the office of First Selectman to ensure that each spraying in Greenwich was properly posted by CT DOT.

5) Staff Reports

- a) **BYO:** Sesto reported, September 12th is the end of the fair warning period given to retailers in Greenwich regarding the ban on plastic bags. Six requests for an extension to this period have been received. One of them may be denied due to the nature of the business which uses plastic bags at several farmer's markets in the area; therefore, it would be able to exhaust the supply in areas outside of Greenwich. No exemption was given to any of the establishments. The Conservation Commission website has a wealth of information about these new regulations.

- b) Greenwich Point – TNC proposal: Sesto stated The Nature Conservancy would like to prepare a proposal for shoreline protection along the causeway entrance to Greenwich Point. The work would prepare the town for the future grant opportunities to construct. TNC is working to involve stakeholders in the initial information gathering of the proposal.
- c) Fisheries/Wildlife: A detailed report for this topic was prepared by Coccaro and forwarded to the Conservation Commission members via email.
- Fishway: CT DEEP is coming to repair the flash boards and eel nets.
 - Osprey/purple martin: More nests were included in the monitoring program this year. This time of the year only the chicks are present as the adults are gone.
The purple martin housing condo will be cleaned next week. An educational sign about purple martin colony is under way and it will be installed for the next season.
 - V-STeM: Volunteer Stream Temperature Management Program: The temperature logs are still in streams. CT DEEP will come to download the data.
- d) Sustainable Greenwich: Coccaro explained the process of the review and rating of the municipal reports. Greenwich report was submitted on August 24th. She was thankful to all the organizations and departments which helped in data collection. A total of 520 points were submitted, which gives a comfortable margin to secure 400 points for the highest level of recognition, silver.

Greenwich rating should be announced by the beginning of October. On October 22 a meeting will be held to discuss the program and receive comments/recommendations. Award ceremony is planned for October 30, 2018 at Foxwood Resort Casino.

In Coccaro's absence, Sesto will attend the October 22 meeting to ask questions and find out about the benefits and advantages of this program for the Town.

Sesto offered accolades to Coccaro and Moch for the amount of work they put into this project.

- e) "Skip the Straw": Moch reported the newly formed group follows the Ocean Conservancy program to educate consumers on making the right choices. A pilot program will take place in Old Greenwich and will encourage the local restaurants to limit the straws used and serve them only per request. This program will be enhanced with several events including:
- September 29: At Perrot Library, the documentary "STRAWS" will be shown, followed by a panel discussion.
 - September 30: Kick-off and proclamation with Peter Tesei and Student Ambassadors
 - October 6: "STRAWS" documentary will be shown with Friends of Greenwich Point at Innis Arden Cottage and will include a town beach cleanup.

- e) Education/ Outreach: a detailed report for this topic was prepared by Moch and forwarded to the Conservation Commission members.
 - Soil Health/Composting Program: The last two composters will be installed at North Street and North Mianus schools.
 - Pollinator Pathway initiatives: “Pollinator Friendly Gardening 101,” an educational program for property owners will be offered at Greenwich Botanical Center on September 20th. This program is organized by the Conservation Commission and other supporting organizations.
 - Partners for Plants – “Done in a Day”: Invasive species removal efforts combined with an educational program are scheduled for October 20th at five different locations in Greenwich.
- f) International Coastal Clean-up Day – September 15 @ Great Captain’s Island: The efforts are being coordinated with the Ocean Conservancy. Parks and Recreation, Marine Division will provide the boat and the crew.
- g) UConn Mile-a-Minute inspection: Commission staff is meeting on September 15th with Carole Cheah, PhD., Research Entomologist at Valley Laboratory, CT Agricultural Experiment Station to perform the annual inspection of the old weevil release sites. The goal is to document the effect of this bio-control on invasive mil-a-minute weed.
- h) Aquarion Rain Garden Project: Moch stated, both rain gardens were successfully installed on August 21-23 at Riverside and North Mianus schools. Most of the work was done by the Aquarion Water Company volunteers with help from Parks and Recreation, neighbors, students, and PTA members. It was a joint effort which led to successfully excavated and planted storm water collection basins. In addition to the installation crew, it is important to recognize the design group which included: Rocco V. D’Andrea, Inc. (engineering design), Troy’s Nursery (supplied plants), Parks and Recreation (compost and tools), Conservation Commission (project coordination and planting plan), and Aquarion Water Company (paid for plant material and mulch).

6) Committee and Liaison Report

- a) Cemetery Committee: no report
- b) Energy Committee:
 - Strategic Energy Plan: Parker briefly summarized previous few meetings with town representatives such as Daniel Watson and Al Monelli, as well as the recent presentation on electric car charging stations. He pointed out, the number of electric cars charged at night soon may change the profile of energy consumption in Town.
 - Community Energy Planning: was not discussed
- c) Parks and Recreation Board: Baker reported the last meeting she attended was devoted to the new Byram Park pool. The popularity of this recreational space is high causing lines at the entrance, especially over the weekend.

- d) Greenwich Recycling Advisory Board (GRAB): Dickinson stated, there was no meeting in summer, the next one is scheduled for September 20, 2018.
- e) Harbor Management Commission: Baker stated the main issue discussed was the dredging and dredge spoils disposal. In addition, problems with boat mooring and navigation difficulties with harbors getting shallower were raised. Silberberg reported sending a letter to the editor to *Greenwich Free Press* and *Greenwich Time* commenting on the proposed dredging.

7) Old Business

- a) Waste Ordinance – September 17, 2018 RTM meeting: Sesto stated, the proposed ordinance is coming back to RTM for consideration. She reinstated and submitted the comments previously provided by the Conservation Commission.
- b) Mylar balloon – Silberberg is working with Fred Camillo on potential ban. He continues to reach out to the yacht clubs and other state representatives, as well as Aquarion Water Company.

8) New Business:

- a) Perkley Lane: Sesto presented the project to construct a dock entirely below mean high tide. This is necessary due to zoning requirements which prohibit accessory structures in the absence of a primary structure. The plan is to place the dock in the narrowest section of the lower tidal marsh. She stated even though the choice is to go with the shortest access, this option may not be the best for the high marsh due to the unavoidable foot traffic to access the dock. Conservation Commission members were concerned about the soil compaction, habitat fragmentation, and other human disturbance related to frequent walking through a high quality salt marsh area. At high tide the upper marsh will be inundated and make the dock inaccessible.

There were concerns about the access to the installation site and stability of the boat lift during the coastal storms. The shallow waters of the tidal flats would limit the use of the boat to high tides and the boat may disturb the bottom sediment when boat moves.

Sesto felt that there is a better alternative access which will provide less disturbance to the tidal marsh. Specifically, shift the dock southwest where the high marsh is at its narrowest to limit damage.

The Conservation Commission reached consensus to:

- Encourage exploration of an alternative access that limit/avoid damage to the high marsh
- Express concern over potential damage to the tidal flats
- Question the prudence of this dock considering the limitations of use.

Baker requested that the above comments be submitted to the Harbor Management Commission.

- b) Stillman Lane Subdivision: Sesto described the details of the proposed subdivision. Five lots will be created, with one of them permanently protected as an open space.

Brower expressed the need for maintaining the existing wildlife corridors as well as the greenway and street-scape, referencing one of them along Glenville Road. A conservation easement is desirable along the road which will preserve one of the corridors. He pointed out that the proposed open space will reinforce the deed restricted natural areas located on the adjacent property to the west.

The Conservation Commission members reached consensus to support the proposed subdivision layout and request a 30' wide conservation easement along Glenville Road to preserve the existing wildlife corridor.

- c) NY-NJ Harbor and Tributaries Coastal Storm Risk Management Feasibility Study: Sesto stated Army Corps of Engineers did preliminary study that concluded with recommendation of several alternatives for new bulkheads and armoring of the shoreline to protect NYC. The study area is narrow and did not consider the broader picture of the rest of Long Island Sound. This potential project may have irreversible impact on the existing water circulation, migration and movement of aquatic organisms, and flood patterns. Sesto drafted an official letter stating these concerns. Henrey requested, a copy of the drafted letter be shared with the Conservation Commission members. Save the Sound prepared a slide presentation online explaining the details of this proposal.

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

The meeting adjourned at 9:11 p.m.

Submitted by,

Aleksandra Moch
Environmental Analyst