

**Conservation Commission Meeting
Greenwich Point Park, Old Greenwich, CT
October 5, 2017**

Minutes

Attendance:

Members present: William Rutherford, Lisette Henrey, Sue Baker, Gary Silberberg, Eric Brower, and Skip Parker.

Staff present: Denise Savageau and Aleksandra Moch

Audience Present: n/a

Commission Discussion Session – 7:00 p.m.

Meeting called to order at 7:05 p.m. by Rutherford

1. **Seating of Alternates:** Parker was seated for Dickinson
2. **Review and approval of minutes** for July 6, 2017 regular meeting: A motion was made by Silberberg and seconded by Baker to approve the minutes with the following correction: Item 8 a Mylar Balloons 4th sentence should be stricken and replaced as follows: *Very often, they are released into the air where it can travel many miles and pollute.* Motion carried unanimously.
3. **Review of Correspondence:** Savageau distributed the new issues of CT Wildlife and The Habitat to the members
4. **Chairman's Report:** no report
5. **Staff Report**
 - a. **Water supply**
 - i. **Update on water conservation restrictions:** Rutherford and Savageau had attended several meetings between Aquarion and irrigation companies. Savageau is concerned about the abnormally dry condition this time of the year. Intense precipitation observed on the beginning of the summer, slowed down in July to almost nothing putting the area in rain fall deficit for the third year in a row. Greenwich system is only 53% full. The new water conservation measures, which reduced the lawn irrigation schedule to twice a week helped to bring the water use down over the summer months. Savageau has bi-weekly conference calls with Aquarion to discuss the updates on water situation.

Savageau stated that the State Water Plan was drafted by the Water Planning Advisory Board and has a section on water conservation. The Western CT

Council of Governments (WestCOG) will host an information session on the plan. A public hearing on the plan will be held in Hartford at the CT DEEP offices. Written comments will be accepted through November 20, 2017. The Water Planning Council is expected to present the final State Water Plan to the State for January 1, 2018. Savageau shared some of the maps from the plan with commission members. The maps place Greenwich within the stressed watershed areas. Savageau indicated that the Commission is now a member of the Alliance for Water Efficiency, a national group focused on water conservation. She is looking forward to working with them on these efforts as we move forward.

ii. **Water conservation outreach/education**

1. **Healthy Yards Workshop – October 18th** – this will be held at the Garden Education Center. Savageau stated that the upcoming workshop will promote water conservation by building healthy soil and also focus on less chemicals.

b. Long Island Sound/Watershed Management

i. **UConn/Greenwich initiative**

1. **Bio-blitz – 2017:** Savageau stated that the event was done in coordination the Shellfish Commission and UConn. Over 100 scientists were on hand to conduct a biological survey of Greenwich Point. More than 1200 species of fauna and flora were identified, including 3 state threatened species of plants. Sarah Nahabedian coordinated much of the event for the Commission including all of the education displays.

- ii. **Long Island Study – Citizens Advisory Committee:** Savageau stated that the CAC, met in September. She reported on the new report card and discussion on its limited focus on environmental health of the sound caused by nutrients. The report card has not yet addressed water quality in embayments and does not address other pollutants such as bacteria and plastics as an emerging pollutant.

c. Sustainable Greenwich

- i. **Sustainable CT – CMM Lunch Nov. 28:** Savageau stated that the state will launch the Sustainable CT program in November at the CCM (CT Conference of Municipalities) Annual Meeting. Once released, the Town will be able to look at this criteria and see how best to become a Sustainable Community in Connecticut.
- ii. **Roundtable meeting:** Savageau hosted a roundtable meeting on October 4 to discuss Sustainable Greenwich movement. She reported that the goal of this meeting was to engage with the leaders of conservation groups in town to

discuss the most important topics such as water shortage and how the groups can work together to provide valuable resources to the Town. There is a need for support in the newly emerging issues such as energy, transportation, climate adaptation, etc. which are not tackled by any of the existing groups. Next meeting will be scheduled in January, after the state plan is released.

d. Education/Outreach

- i. **Composting program:** Moch reported that schools are back in session along with the compost program. Old Greenwich school was re-trained. Cos Cob school received an outdoor composter and the training program is in works. Central Middle School and Eastern Middle School will provide their own internal training for the students. North Mianus School and International School of Dundee will be the last schools joining the program this year. There will be a new Compost Club at Greenwich High School led by the Conservation Commission staff, which would help with wastes sorting in cafeteria and compost maintenance at local schools. Vermicomposting opportunities were offered by the staff at the First Sunday Science sponsored by Bruce Museum in September. In addition, a newly formed compost club of 2-5 years old members at Temple Shalom was provided with a workshop which help them to build their own worm farm.
 - ii. **School programs:** Savageau stated that the staff provided an educational program on coastal geomorphology to Central Middle School students. Initiated by a half an hour lecture, the learning continued with hand-on experience activities at Greenwich Point. The Long Island Sound in a Jar lessons will be given at Riverside and North Mianus schools to the fourth grade students.
- e. **Eversource Substation Update:** Savageau stated that the final briefing was concluded and now the Town is waiting for the final decision from the Siting Council.
 - f. **POCD – Open Space Plan:** Savageau stated that P&Z went for RFP for the new POCD. She is working with the Town Planner to see how best to incorporate the Open Space Plan into the POCD.
 - g. **Other:** Savageau and Rutherford met with representatives of Stantech regarding the proposed Master Plan for Greenwich Point. Savageau brought up the need for better vegetation management, site adaptation to the sea level raising and coordination between groups which have jurisdiction over the site maintenance.

6. Committee and Liaison Reports

- a. **Parks and Recreation Board:** Baker reported the following on the September 27th P&R Board meeting. The Board approved the relocation of monoliths from the outdoor theater disassembled at Lia Fail to Montgomery Pinetum Park. The Board reviewed the Harbor Management Plan. After a thorough discussion, the Board issued a conceptual approval for the proposed Plan. Siciliano reported that Binney pond project is moving forward despite some initial challenges. The pumps will be pulled out and the stone work around the edges will begin soon. There were complaints about dogs off leash at Greenwich Point. A user group will be handing out flyers making people aware of the rules. In addition to the issues at Greenwich Point, the dog park and the ban for commercial dog walkers were discussed.
- b. **GRAB (Greenwich Recycling Advisory Board):** Moch reported that the Greenwich Green and Clean town-wide cleanup day is scheduled for October 14th, American Recycling Day is on November 15th, and paper shredding is planned for April 21, 2018. Mary Shaw Marks updated the Board on the bag initiatives. Julie Des Champs reported on the recycling efforts at Boys and Girls Club, which lead the way to the discussion on composting and recycling at schools.
- c. **Harbor Management Commission:** Baker stated that the draft of the Harbor Management Plan became available to the public on September 20th. The plan was approved by the CT DEEP and the Board of Selectmen. After receiving a conceptual approval from the Board of Parks and Recreation it is now heading to RTM for the final approval.
- d. **Cemetery Committee:** there was no meeting
- e. **Energy Committee**
 - i. **Strategic Energy Plan for Town:** Parker reported that several meetings were conducted. The Eversource and CT DEEP contractor has offered a study of the energy uses in the Town Hall building. Savageau stated that this will be a more advanced assessment which would be partially covered by the contractor. If the building improvements are implemented, the contractor will cover the entire cost of the assessment. The strategic plan will allow to save money and cover more buildings over time.
 - ii. **Community Energy Planning**
 1. **Home Energy Solution Program**
 - a. **Light bulb swap:** Savageau stated that another light bulb swap is planned for November. Nahabedian will be coordinating this with Eversource.
 - b. **Outreach on HES** – Savageau indicated that she is reaching out to the neighborhood associations to put the HES on their agenda for their annual meetings.

2. **Business Advantage Program:** Savageau reported the we will be launching this new program for small business with Eversource. It is similar to the HES program. A donation will be made to United Way for each commercial audit conducted under this program.
3. **Large Commercial Users** – Savageau reported the Committee is also looking at ways to outreach to the large users in Town. Searle is working on this effort.

7. **Old Business:**

- a. **Waste Ordinance –status:** Savageau reported that the Ordinance Prohibiting Waste Associated with Natural Gas and Oil Extraction is scheduled to be heard by RTM in December
- b. : Savageau stated that the initiatives are scheduled for the vote at **Plastic Bag Ban – status** December RTM’s meeting.
- c. **Mylar balloon – status:** Silberberg stated that he contacted State Representative, Fred Camillo gaining his support and attention. There is a discussion about a ban at the state level, which may better address the problem.

8. **New Business:** was not discussed

9. **Adjournment**

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Submitted by,

Aleksandra Moch
Environmental Analyst