

**Conservation Commission Meeting
Town Hall Meeting Room
October 6, 2016**

Minutes

Attendance:

Members present: William Rutherford, Lisette Henrey, Sue Baker, Eric Brower, Gary Silberberg, Nancy Dickinson, Urling Searle, Theodore Walworth III 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 7:06 p.m. by Rutherford.

- 1) Seating of Alternates: n/a
- 2) **Review and approval of minutes** for September 1, 2016 regular meeting: A motion was made by Dickinson and seconded by Silberberg to approve the minutes as amended: Add Baker to attendance list and Swan Grant to audience present.
- 3) **Review of Correspondence:**
 - a) Connecticut Wildlife magazine was received by the Commission members.
- 4) **Chairman's Report:** n/a
- 5) **Staff Report**
 - a) **Administration**
 - i) **Staffing:** Savageau stated that Kazi Alauddin was selected to fill the position of Accounting Clerk II.
 - ii) **Budget and Planning:** Savageau distributed the Commission's meeting schedule for 2017. Savageau gave brief update on the budget process. Budget will be presented at the next meeting. She stated that there will be well as another push will be made for updating the part time position of the Conservation Resource Manager to full time.
 - b) **Water supply/resources**
 - i) **Drought conditions:** Savageau summarized the current Phase 2 of Water Use Restrictions. She stated that the water deficiency has been noticed for the last 22 months. Due to the limited rain, small size of our reservoirs and ever-growing demand; the water level in reservoirs has dropped to below 30%. During July and August voluntary restrictions were placed which did result in any decrease in

- demand. Water shortage is not limited to Greenwich system which includes Rye, Rye Brook and Portchester. The State issued a declaration of water restrictions for Greenwich, Stamford, Darien and New Canaan as well and also has issued an advisory statewide.
- ii) **Water quality:** Savageau discussed recent concerns about water quality in our near shore ponds, including Binney Pond and recent fish kill incidents. She shared an article posted in Greenwich Free Press Leslie Yager which provides a good overview of the reason for the fish kills. There was a recent small oil spill on I-95 that leads to Binney but this is unrelated. However, lack of rainfall and fresh water flows into near shore waters has exacerbated the low oxygen situation caused by the menhaden. She also discussed the planned dredging of Binney Pond which is scheduled to take place once next year. She explained that sea-level rise is impacting the pond and that she has proposed a study for Binney, Mill, and Bruce Park ponds to determine how the town should prepare for a transition from fresh to salt water in these ponds. This will be looking at future needs and will not impact the planned dredge. Brower stated that such a transition, if undertaken by other than natural sea rise, is a major policy issue including significant historical, environmental and cultural considerations which need to be fully vetted publicly so that all stake holders have an opportunity to comment.
- c) **MI Byram Cemetery Acquisition:** Savageau reported that the Board of Selectmen held a Public Hearing on September 22nd. There were several individuals who spoke against the acquisition. The information is being assembled and will be provided to the Law Department. The matter may be directed to the Probate Court. Brower will be working with Savageau on information for the Law Department.
- d) **Long Island Sound**
 - i) **Citizen Advisory Committee:** Savageau stated that she attended a meeting in September. Save the Sound will be issuing the new report card. The current card was revised to differentiate between the open water samples and embayments. The new format will show more accurate representation of the water quality in Long Island Sound.
 - ii) **MS4 Stormwater Permit:** Savageau reported that the Town is working with Dr. Sarah Crosby, Harbor Watch on storm water quality. The group will do water sampling along the coast focusing around the major storm water discharge points. She also explained that there is a new permit. DPW is taking the lead working with the land use departments on the permit.
- e) **Community Resiliency**
 - i) **Living Shoreline:** Savageau stated that there is a grant opportunity offered by CT DEEP with a deadline on November 1st.
 - ii) **Community Rating System (CRS) with West Connecticut Council of Governments (WestCOG):** Savageau stated WestCOG is leading this effort for the Towns. The system is intended to help lower flood insurance rates for the property owners in Greenwich. Conservation and P&Z representing Greenwich as this moves forward.

6) Committee/Liaison Reports

- a) **Parks and Recreation Board:** Baker reported that the main discussion focused on dredging, site maintenance, dead fish and the new master plan at Binney Park.
- b) **GRAB** (Greenwich Recycling Advisory Board): no meeting
- c) **Education/Outreach**
 - i) **Leaf Recycling Program/Safe Lawns:** Moch stated that 9 educational workshops were held. Five of them were offered to the property owners and four to landscape professionals. One workshop was given in Spanish. The attendance varied and was on the low side for the landscape professionals. More workshops may be offered to landscape professionals outside of their busy season. This month would be filled in with individual and group coaching. During the hands on field presentation, a free compost bin will be provided to each household. Interested individuals can sign-up for the program through the website or by calling the office.

Savageau stated that Moch prepared a window display at the main hall explaining the three pillars of the program: mulching mowing leaves and grass clippings; mulching around planted beds and composting.

- d) **Harbor Management Commission:**
 - i) **Harbor Management Plan:** Baker stated that they working on a revised plan that significantly reduces the size of the plan. She indicated that John Gaucher, CT DEEP has confirmed the need for the inclusion of dock regulations in the plan as Conservation had recommended.
- e) **Cemetery Committee** – see staff report
- f) **Energy Committee**
 - i) **Eversource/Energy Efficiency Planning:** Savageau reported that the Urling, Henrey and she attended a State meeting on September 10th focused on the Energize CT program. All agreed it was a very informative program. Using microgrids that included alternative energy, commercial generators and energy storage were discussed as important aids during the high peak energy demands and emergencies.
 - ii) **Home Energy Solutions Kickoff Event – October 25, 2016:** Savageau stated that the event will offer free switching of the old light bulbs to the new energy efficient LED bulbs. A letter will be going out to all homeowners. Due to the water supply emergency, this is a bit behind but she is pushing to get out so that we won't have to reschedule.

7) Old Business:

- a) **IBA report** – Savageau distributed a copy of the final report for the Commission to review at a future meeting.

8) New Business - none

9) Announcements

- a) Baker announced that Peter Tesei will serve as this year's honoree at the American Cancer Society Local Philanthropist Roast on Thursday, October 13th.

9) Adjournment

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:58 p.m.

Submitted by,

Aleksandra Moch