

**Conservation Commission Meeting
Town Hall Meeting Room
November 1, 2018**

Minutes

Attendance:

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

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

Audience Present: n/a

Commission Discussion Session – 7:00 p.m.

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

- 1) **Seating of Alternates:** Walworth was seated for Rutherford.
- 2) **Review and approval of draft minutes for October 4, 2018 meeting:** A motion was made by Silberberg and seconded by Baker to approve the minutes.
- 3) **Review of Correspondence:** *The Habitat* obtained via mail was distributed to the Conservation Commission members.
- 4) **Chairman's Report:** Brower thanked the staff for organizing the wedding celebration party for Sarah.

5) Staff Reports

- a) **BYO:** Sesto encouraged the commission members to keep their eye on people carrying plastic bags and report any potential violations at retail stores. She stated there are a few stores in town which are not in compliance with the ordinance. Baker priced reusable bags as superior to the currently used paper bags. Silberberg announced the First Bank of Greenwich will hand out free reusable bags at the upcoming blood drive. Dickinson stated free reusable bags will also be offered at the paper shredding event. Sesto reported two new bag ordinances were recently adopted in Weston and Stamford.
- b) **Greenwich Point – TNC proposal:** was not discussed
- c) **Fisheries/Wildlife:** a detailed report for this topic was prepared by Cocco and forwarded to the Conservation Commission members via email.

- Coyote lecture – February 3rd at Seaside Center: Coccaro stated this educational program will offer a free coyote hazing kit, which will be put together by each attendee.
- d) Sustainable Greenwich: Sesto reported the bronze and silver certifications were handed out on Oct. 30 at the annual Connecticut Conference of Municipalities convention at Foxwoods Resort Casino. Greenwich was among 5 towns awarded with silver. There is no gold level certification at this time. Overall, twenty-two towns were certified. Greenwich was represented by the Conservation Commission staff and Blaize Levitan from the First Selectman's office.
- e) Education/ Outreach: a detailed report for this topic was prepared by Moch and forwarded to the Conservation Commission members. The report included:
- Pollinator Pathway initiatives
 - Pollinator Potluck – Weed Wrangle: Silberberg was concerned about the aggressive and town wide spreading of porcelain berries.
 - Green School Committee – Composting
 - *Zero Waste Challenge – Trash & Bash* 11/15/2018 7:00 pm at Byram Library
 - *Skip the Straw*: written report was provided by Coccaro

6) Committee and Liaison Report

- a) Cemetery Committee: no report
- b) Energy Committee:
- Strategic Energy Plan: Sesto stated *Celtic Energy* presented to the committee. Celtic offers consulting services to help their clients navigate implementation of energy audits, similar to the on for town hall.
 - Tony Malkin will be the keynote speaker at a February event addressing energy upgrades in the commercial sector. Mr. Malkin will highlight improvements done to the Empire State Building, resulting in substantial energy savings.
 - Community Energy Planning: was not discussed
- c) Parks and Recreation Board: Baker reported meetings of the RTM subcommittee working on playing fields have been postponed indefinitely. The board felt there was some confusion and lack of communication. There is a need for more efficient and reliable playing fields, but at the same time there is a strong opposition from parents concerned about the potential health issues caused by the artificial turf.

Both concession stands at Greenwich Point are up for contract renewal. This provides a unique opportunity to revise the contracts and include clauses eliminating or limiting the use of plastic utensils, straws, cup lids, Styrofoam take out containers, and plates. This effort will reduce the generation of trash and protect the coast from windblown objects polluting the environment and threatening aquatic wildlife.

Sesto and Moch will meet with Siciliano to discuss the needed revisions. Motion was made by Baker and seconded by Silberberg to support the effort. Motion was carried unanimously.

- a) Greenwich Recycling Advisory Board (GRAB): no meeting was conducted. Dickinson announced with sadness, Sally Davis's husband passed away. The Commission reached a consensus to mail their condolences individually.

Baker and Brower brought up the importance of historic buildings in Greenwich. The main focus of their concern was the Eastern Civic Center (mid century architecture) and over hundred-year-old greenhouse located at Greenwich Botanical Center. Both structures have rich history intertwined in Greenwich's old estates and commercial life. The greenhouse used to grow plants, which were used by Parks and Recreation for Town beautification projects. Recently the glass cover was removed and the structure covered with tarp. Brower feared the structure may be demolished so he requested an investigation of the budget approvals to find out what is planned. If demolition is the case the Architectural Review Board should review the project. He also recommended to work with Katie DeLuca as a liaison providing information on what historic structures may be affected by the Town's budget in the future. Dickinson believed the Historic Preservation Network should be involved. The entire list of Town owned buildings should be reviewed and prioritized in terms of the need for their preservation.

- b) Harbor Management Commission: Silberberg expressed his concern about the dredging project. He felt the Conservation Commission should review the proposal and provide comments.

7) Old Business

- a) High Water Marker at the Holly Grove, Greenwich Point: Baker stated the markers need to be corrected using the new elevation conversion. This task could be easily achieved with the existing post by changing the semipermeable material and by pulling the marks slightly up.
- b) Mylar balloon – status: Silberberg stated the initiative is gaining more support.

8) New Business:

- a) CACIWIC Meeting – Saturday, November 17, 2018: Sesto encouraged the members to attend, pointing out the educational values of the program.
- b) Shell Island grant application by GLT: Sesto reported the Land Trust will submit an application for a grant to fund the removal of invasive species. They asked the Town to partner with them.

- c) FY 19-20 Budget: Sesto acknowledged \$75,000 this year and \$100,000 next year in the budget for resiliency project. No other budget recommendations were made.

Baker asked about the status of geese control program. She questioned the need for the border collie used for geese hazing. She believed that egg oiling could provide more robust outcome. Coccaro suggested a more holistic approach. She was in favor of keeping the dog and providing more training to volunteers and other non-for-profit organizations to cover more areas in Greenwich with egg oiling efforts.

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Submitted by,

Aleksandra Moch
Environmental Analyst