



TOWN OF GREENWICH

Town Hall ~ 101 Field Point Road ~ Greenwich, CT 06830

Conservation Commission
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Patricia M.P. Sesto
Director of Environmental Affairs

Regular Meeting

MINUTES

November 4, 2021

Members present: William Rutherford, Eric Brower, Nancy Dickinson, Lisette Henrey, Gary Silberberg, Laura di Bonaventura, Karen DeWahl, Theodore Walworth III, and Leslie Petrick

Staff present: Patricia Sesto, Director of Environmental Affairs and Sarah Coccaro, Conservation Resource Manager

1) **Call to Order**

Rutherford called the meeting to order at 7:10 pm.

2) **Seating of Alternates:** Laura di Bonaventura was seated for Sue Baker.

3) **Review and approve minutes:** October 7, 2021

A motion was made by Silberberg and seconded by di Bonaventura to approve the minutes as corrected. The motion carried 8-0-0.

4) **Review of Correspondence:** no correspondence

5) **Chairman's Report:**

Rutherford welcomed Leslie Petrick as a new alternative member. Commission members introduced themselves to Petrick.

6) **Conference / Program Reminders:**

- a. Saturday, November 6th – CACIWC Annual Conference
- b. Tuesday, November 9th 6-9pm – Kiss the Ground screening and panel discussion.
- c. Wednesday, November 10th 10-11am - zoom – “Merry, Bright and Waste Free Holidays” webinar hosted by Greenwich Botanical Center. Co-presented by Sarah Coccaro and Julie DesChamps

8) **Fisheries/Wildlife:** a written staff report was provided to the members on the following topic

a. RBV and V-STeM community science programs – Coccaro

Coccaro reported the Environmental Affairs Department (Conservation and Inland Wetlands and Watercourse) are teaming up to host a one-day opportunity for interested volunteers. Riffle Bioassessment for Volunteers (RBV) is a statewide volunteer water quality monitoring program. Coccaro thanked Commission members who have signed up.

9) **Ongoing projects:** a written staff report was provided to the members on the following topics:

a. Pollinator Pathway - Moch

Sesto reported that the mural is nearly completed and that the artist will return in December to finish. Myra Klockenbrink and Moch have procured the plants to do the nearby garden and will be installing within the following week.

di Bonaventura inquired about a map of pollinator gardens across town. Sesto said she would follow up with Moch to make sure that resource is available.

Walworth inquired to see if there was a town resource available (i.e. staff) for residents or businesses to call in to, to get help with developing their own pollinator-friendly gardens. More so, is there a list of landscape architects that can be shared with the public? DeWahl stated there is help available to those interested in implementing their own gardens. Sesto will follow up with Moch.

13) **New Business: Leaf Blowers**

Commissioner DeWahl asked to take the agenda item on Leaf Blowers under New Businesses out of order. Rutherford agreed.

DeWahl updated the committee on ongoing efforts to do research into what other towns in Connecticut and Westchester Counties are doing in terms of leaf blower bans. Westchester County has been forward thinking about electric lawn equipment. This is a collaborative effort between the Greenwich Sustainability Committee Legislative and Advocacy sector, Conservation Commission, and Pollinator Pathways groups. DeWahl stated a noise ordinance already exists, but it isn't enough for what this group considers. DeWahl will update the Commission at the next meeting.

Brower explained there is false hope that removing gas equipment will eliminate all the issues with blowers for the environment. Electric blowers will be less noisy and will eliminate the exhaust stench however the loss of soil, decomposing grass and vegetation, destruction of beneficial insects and creation of airborne particles and allergens will continue to be problematic.

This group is still in its infancy and there will be issues that resonate with different people, such as health and environmental concerns.

Lisette Henrey joined the meeting at 7:40 pm.

Karen DeWahl left the meeting at 7:40 pm.

10) **Education/Outreach**

a) Bruce Museum/Conservation Commission citizen science project, "Greenwich Flood Watchers." A written staff report was provided to the members.

b) Sesto explained that The Environmental Affairs department is seeking a college intern.

11) **Committee and Liaison Reports**

a) Transportation and Air Quality subcommittee: a written staff report was provided to the members.

b) GRAB: Dickinson had nothing to report for GRAB but did mention the food scrap recycling drop-off at the Farmer's Market on Wednesdays has been very successful and will continue indefinitely. There is also a pumpkin drop-off available at Holly Hill in the food scrap recycling bins.

Silberberg questioned textile recycling, which led to a discussion on recycled glass uses.

c) Parks and Rec Board: No report.

d) Harbor Management Commission: No report.

e) Open Space Committee: Sesto reported the Committee met last week and writing of the report is ongoing. Walworth inquired about an email he had sent about the Town being both the grantor and grantee of a parcel. Sesto explained there are certain protections in place depending on how the parcel was gifted to the Town, but if the Town is both the grantor and grantee of a conservation easement, there is effectively no protection.

f) Coastal Resiliency Report: Sesto reported that she will be meeting with the consultants to finalize the last draft. She hopes to get the Commissioners a final draft by the December commission meeting. Sesto indicated that she used recommendations in the plan to support projects in the capitol budget, such as restoring and expanding the tidal marshes at Greenwich Point and to do an engineering study to raise Tod's Driftway. Further, money was also included in the capitol budget for the E-W bike study.

12) **Old Business**

a) CTDOT Corridor Study grant: Sesto reported, the results should be posted in November.

13) **New Business**

Taken out of order. See above.

14) **Adjourn:**

A motion was made by Silberberg and seconded by di Bonaventura to adjourn at 8:20 pm.
Motion carried 8-0-0. Next meeting is December 2, 2021.