Conservation Commission Meeting  
via a Zoom virtual meeting.  
November 5, 2020  

Minutes  

Attendance:  

Members present: Eric Brower, Nancy S. Dickinson, Ur ling Searle, Sue Baker, Laura di Bonaventura (arrived at 7:13pm), Gary Silberberg, Theodore H. Walworth III, and Lisette Henrey (arrived at 7:45pm)  

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

Audience Present: James Michel, DPW  

1) Call to Order  
Meeting called to order at 7:03 pm by Brower.  

2) Seating of Alternates: Walworth was seated for Rutherford.  

3) Review and approve minutes of October 1, 2020: Motion was made by Walworth and seconded by Dickinson to approve the minutes as presented. The motion carried.  

4) Review of Correspondence: Hard copies of CT Wildlife magazine are available in the office.  

4) Chairman’s Report: In the absence of Rutherford, no report was provided.  

5) Referred Application  
   a) Town of Greenwich – Department of Public Works – Sound Beach Avenue bridge replacement over the Cider Mill Brook.
Sesto provided a brief summary of the proposal including the location, current conditions, and the new bridge. She noted the proposed bridge will raise the structure above flood levels and address the structural deficiency of the existing crossing.

Michel described the new drainage improvements associated with the project and provided more technical details.

Brower was concerned about stability of the site after and during the construction activities. He also questioned the scenic character of the bridge and how it will impact the area. In response, Michel provided details of the stone facing and rails of the bridge and discussed plans for controlling the movement of sediment during and post construction.

Silberberg wanted to know the degree the existing rotary will be impacted by the project. Mr. Michel indicated the project area does not include the rotary.

Moch offered several questions regarding the project. Michel responded to them letting the commission know the planting plan was designed with help of Dr. Kramer, tree warden and superintendent of parks. More plants will be considered, consistent with the Binney Park Master Plan. The area of the flood plain used for staging will be restored. No increase in flooding will be caused by the new bridge. Invasive Japanese knotweed growing along the eastern edge of the Cider Mill Brook will be replaced with native riparian vegetation.

It was concluded Parks and Recreation staff will work with Conservation Commission staff on a revised landscape plan for the area.

Sesto provided information on the use of cofferdam and soil erosion protections during the construction phase. She also noted the accumulated sediment underneath the bridge will be removed to open up the channel.

Michel stated the project will take a year with the crossing closed to the traffic for at least two months. He believed the activates will not have any adverse effect on aquatic and terrestrial wildlife.

b) Stanwich Road reservoir crossing.

Michel described the recent collapse of a section of the Stanwich Road causeway, which triggered plans to repair it. The Town is collecting information and preparing a repair proposal. The concept is to reinforce the walls by building secondary walls. The estimated cost is $2.5M. The Town weighed options, including permanently closing the road over the causeway. Emergency responders detailed how it was crucial to their response time. The crossing is also important to maintain the access
to the dry hydrant and to protect water quality. During the repairs, the water level in reservoir may be lowered to allow dry access.

After a short discussion the Commission had endorsed the concept and will provide more detailed comments when detailed plans are submitted.

6) **Ongoing projects**

A written report was provided by staff and forwarded to the CC members on the topics below.
- a) Pollinator Pathway
- b) Sea Level Rise Study – update
- c) Flood elevation posts – update:
  Brower stated the current flood elevations exceed the length of the posts, so they have to be replaced. The choice is between cedar and pressure treated wood. The chosen poles will have to be weathered before painted. Walworth suggested to check composite wood which last longer.
- d) Transportation and Air Quality subcommittee
- e) Update Open Space Plan
- f) Sustainable CT application

7) **Fisheries/Wildlife**

A written report was provided by staff and forwarded to the CC members.

8) **Education/Outreach**

- a) Greening Your Holidays
  A written report was provided by staff and forwarded to the CC members.

9) **Committee and Liaison Reports**

- a) Sustainability Committee
  Sesto reported the new electric car charging station for the Town Hall parking was approved.
- b) Greenscapes Committee
  Sesto reported the crocus planting at the Chestnut Alley on November 4th was successful. Over 30,000 bulbs were planted for the early spring display of colors.

  On November 2nd, Sesto attended a presentation by John Conte, Greenscape Committee to local garden clubs. The presentation was well received.
- c) Parks and Rec Board: There was no meeting to report on.
- d) Harbor Management Commission
  Baker stated the meeting focused on dredging of Greenwich Harbor and Greenwich Cove. Several coastal applications were reviewed.
e) GRAB
Dickinson reported over 450 cars driving through during the paper shredding event on October 1st.

Baker expressed concern about small fabric scraps not being accepted at the textile collection site located at Eastern Greenwich Civic Center. Dickinson will contact Farico-Greentree and check with them on list of recyclable textiles.

10) Old Business: None

11) New Business
   a) FY21-22 Budget: Sesto reported no changes to the last year budget except for the capital improvements. She would like to add a new item requesting $25,000 for survey and construction of a stonewall at Byram Cemetery as required in the 2018 stipulated agreement. Brower stated there is going to be a wide support from the community for this project.

   The capital improvement budget also includes funding designated for the coastal resiliency study implementation.

13) Adjourn – next meeting is December 3rd.

   Motion was made by Dickinson and seconded by Henrey to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried.

   The meeting adjourned at 8:33 p.m.

Submitted by,

Aleksandra Moch
Environmental Analyst