

**Conservation Commission Meeting  
Cone Room  
December 6, 2018**

**Minutes**

**Attendance:**

**Members present:** William Rutherford, Eric Brower, Nancy Dickinson, and Gary Silberberg.

**Staff present:** Patricia Sesto, Sarah Coccaro, 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 draft minutes for November 1, 2018 meeting:** A motion was made by Silberberg and seconded by Brower to approve the minutes as corrected.

**3) Review of Correspondence:** *Connecticut Wildlife* was distributed to the Conservation Commission members.

**4) Chairman's Report:** Rutherford reported, Greenwich Land Trust held their annual meeting on December 5<sup>th</sup>. The guest speaker from CT DEEP covered land preservation initiatives in CT. Our state ranks number three in terms of the acreage owned by the land trusts, follow by California and Massachusetts. Land preserving organizations are important, as the state struggles to reach the goal of 21% protected open space by 2023.

Rutherford serves on the subcommittee for Binney Park restoration project. He walked the commission members through the existing conditions of the park and the proposed site improvements considered in the Master Plan. About 100 existing trees will be removed and replaced. Some areas along the pond may need additional plantings to increase the density.

**5) Staff Reports**

a) Fisheries/Wildlife:

- Coyote lecture – February 3<sup>rd</sup> at Seaside Center: Brower had heard from a retired policeman working in backcountry Greenwich about deer population

declining due to the increased presence of coyotes. Rutherford noticed less deer kill reports on the roads and less complaints from the property owners. Dickinson asked about whether or not there were any complaints about coyote in Riverside. Coccaro responded, she hears complaints from time to time. A new and more updated fact sheet about the coyotes will be posted on the website.

- b) Education/ Outreach: a detailed written report for this topic was prepared by Moch/Coccaro and forwarded to the Conservation Commission members. The report included:
- Pollinator Pathway initiatives
  - Greenwich Grown – invasive seed planting
  - Green School Committee – Composting
  - *Zero Waste Challenge – Trash & Bash* 11/15/2018 7:00 pm at Byram Library: was canceled due to snow
  - *Skip the Straw*
  - *CT DEEP Water Quality Conference April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2019*
- c) New initiatives: Details were provided in the staff report.
- Waste Reduction program
  - *Phragmites* removal at Bruce Park – Parks and Recreation: Rutherford supported early detection of invasive species and action to address the invasion before it spreads.

## 6) Committee and Liaison Report

- a) Cemetery Committee: no report
- b) Energy Committee: Sesto reported Tony Malkin will be the guest speaker at the energy committee meeting in February 22<sup>nd</sup> held at Boys and Girls Club of Greenwich.
- c) Parks and Recreation Board: No report.
- a) Greenwich Recycling Advisory Board (GRAB): Moch reported Green School Committee celebrated November 15<sup>th</sup>, National Recycling Day, by retraining students in recycling at several public schools. Julie DesChamps wrote a sustainability plan for public schools and emailed it to Dan Watson, director of facilities seeking his approval and engagement.

*Skip the Straw* will be screened on January 27<sup>th</sup> and Greenwich Point cleanup is planned for March 2019.

Recycling outreach will be provided for Temple Sholom and Boys & Girls Club.

Reverse vending machines will be installed at Greenwich High School.

At the GRAB meeting, Patrick Collins reported leaves collected in town this year are hauled to Scott's Earthgro in Lebanon, CT and Snow's Farm in Easton, CT. The tonnage of yard waste has been increasing over the last several years. Collins stated more educational outreach is needed, especially with the newly revised recycling list. Recycling in Greenwich neither costs the town nor does the town make any money, which is good comparing to Stamford where the contamination is higher and there is a cost to dispose it. Sesto suggested Conservation Commission could help GRAB with town-wide mailing of the new list of recyclables.

Dickinson pointed out the successful 60% waste reduction results with the reusable-tray pilot program at Cos Cob implemented by DesChamps last year. Brower stated, a large grant for study plastic has been offered by the federal government.

Silberberg recommended to reach out to Bimbo Bakeries regarding reduction of the use of plastic bags for their breads. He spoke with them briefly. He felt it would be helpful to arrange for a meeting between Sesto and their business management.

Sesto reported, about 2,000 businesses were affected by the new bag ordinance. There have been several complaints, which she followed up. She used one of the church thrift shops as examples of non-compliance. They have a large stock of bags and use only a few of them daily. Bon Ton Fish Market, Lobster Bin and Aux Delices were examples of businesses having requested exemptions. Only the fish markets were given limited waivers for wet food.

- b) Harbor Management Commission: No report.

## 7) Old Business

- a) High Water Marker at the Holly Grove, Greenwich Point: Coccaro stated a small committee was formed to work on the replacement of four existing markers. At the meeting short- and long-term goals were set. The short-term plan will include fixing the existing markers and update them so they use NAVD units. The long-term need is to replace them. Brower stated, they are too short to show the 100-year storm event. Sesto shared an article which shows the difference between the level of the FEMA-established 100-year storm elevation in Texas and the actual flooding caused by the recent hurricanes.
- b) Mylar balloon – status: was not discussed
- c) USGS ground water study in Greenwich: Sesto stated the 2004 Ground Water Study needs to be updated.

## 8) New Business:

- a) Concession stand vendor contract language: Sesto stated she spoke with Joe Siciliano regarding the ban on straws desired by this commission. The discussion was held just on time before the new contract negotiations. She was pleased to see some of the items (metal, plastic, and glass) already prohibited in the old contract. Sesto provided suggested language for the new vendor contract proposal which included several other items with the potential to create unnecessary beach trash. Due to timing, the draft was reviewed and approved by Rutherford and Brower rather than the entire commission. The suggested language was fully accepted by P&R. Rutherford was very pleased with the outcome.
  
- b) Proposal to amend Building Zone Regulations: Sesto attending a working meeting with the P&Z commission members and staff to discuss limitations of the current Building Zone Regulations and homeowners desire to lift their homes above the minimum required by the State Building Code. This has been thwarted by building height maximums. In response, Sesto conducted a research of the current regulations and recommendations offered by the Connecticut Institute for Resilience and Climate Adaptation (CIRCA), National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE), and Homebuilder's Guide to Coastal Construction. Base on her founding. She concluded: *providing just one foot of freeboard over the Base Flood Elevation (BFE) is inadequate over the life of a structure.*

In at least one case, ZBA required lopping off the peak of the roof to comply with the height requirement where the house was raised higher than BFE+1. Past storms had proven, one foot is not enough to keep some of the residences safe. Further, FEMA sets BFE based on past storms and does not look forward to accommodate sea level rise. Going higher above the BFE should be encouraged. Brower stated grade plane is usually the subject of manipulations to satisfy the current requirement. This means bringing more fill to the site and raising the land. Sesto pointed out FIRM is rewarding owners of the structures going above one foot of the BFE with reduced rates. She recommended to go at least 3 feet higher than BFE.

Brower asked whether there is a group working on resiliency. Sesto stated there is \$75,000 in the budget for studying the town-owned facilities.

Brower felt there should be a committee established to study the impact of climate change and determine which areas in Town are the most vulnerable. Sesto expressed doubt, noting people are not willing to pay for what is going to happen in the future.

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Submitted by,

Aleksandra Moch  
Environmental Analyst