

**Conservation Commission Meeting  
Town Hall Meeting Room  
December 7, 2017**

**Minutes**

**Attendance:**

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

**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: na
- 2) **Review and approval of minutes** for November 2, 2017 regular meeting: A motion was made by Brower and seconded by Silberberg to approve the minutes as presented.
- 3) **Review of Correspondence:** Savageau handed out the copies of Connecticut Wildlife magazine and the fall issue of The Habitat.
- 4) **Chairman's Report:** Rutherford stated that several Conservation Commission members attended the annual Land Trust meeting on November 29th which had some great speakers. Rutherford announced that on December 5th he has received a letter from Denise Savageau of her intent to retire as of February 1, 2018. He indicated this Savageau is willing to stay until March 1<sup>st</sup> and that they both will meet with the First Selectman on December 8th to discuss the details, including the retirement date. After the announcement, the Commission discussed several options of moving forward.
- 5) **Staff Report**
  - a) **Administration**
    - i) **FY2019 Budget:** Savageau reported that the budget was submitted. The final copy contains the propose upgrade of the part-time Conservation Resource Manager I position to a full-time.
    - ii) **FY2019 Operational Plan:** Savageau stated that she had not received any comments from the Conservation Commission members regarding the draft that was submitted.

iii) **Capital Improvement Projects (CIP):** Savageau reported that she had submitted 3 projects relating to sea level rise to the CIP. The projects would take place over 3 years and include: 1) vulnerability assessment of infrastructure to sea level rise; 2) evaluation of freshwater ponds that are now converting to tidal ponds; and 3) potential living shoreline protection at Greenwich. Funds for the projects will be in the CC budget if approved.

**b) Water supply**

- i) **Update on water conservation restrictions:** Savageau stated that the reservoirs are only 40% full comparing the average of 70% this time of the year. The long term drought situation is getting closer to the conditions recorded in year 1960 where the levels dropped to the historically lowest. Recent weather patterns result in uneven rain distribution which shifts from dry months to intensive rain event. Intensive precipitation over a short period of time produces high runoff and very limited ground infiltration. Drought condition is not limited only to the Greenwich system. She indicated that Aquarion has now included Newtown and Westport in the two days a week watering restrictions in efforts to conserve water.
- ii) **Water conservation outreach/education:** was not discussed
- iii) **State Water Plan:** The draft plan is now closed for comments and the final plan will be presented to Connecticut General Assembly in January.

**c) Long Island Sound/Watershed Management**

- i) UConn/Greenwich initiative: Savageau reported that a letter will go out to request support for Greenwich initiatives.
- ii) Long Island Study – Citizens Advisory Committee: Savageau indicated next meeting was December 14.
- iii) **LIS Blue Plan – stakeholders meeting – 12/13/2017:** Savageau stated that this special plan for Long Island Sound will be discussed at the Cone Room between 7 and 9 pm. She encouraged folks to attend.

**d) Sustainable Greenwich**

- i) **Sustainable CT – CMM Lunch Nov. 28:** Savageau reviewed the new program. The CT program is modeled after a similar program in NJ. This is a voluntary program that creates a roadmap to sustainability. Savageau prepared a resolution for the Board of Selectmen to adopt. This includes naming the Conservation Commission as the lead department for implementation. She expects that this will be supported by a local public/private partnership that includes many of our longstanding environmental groups and also some new group. She hosted a meeting in October start the dialogue with the various groups and a follow-up meeting is planned for January. The resolution will be presented at the December 18th Board of Selectman meeting.
- ii) **Education/Outreach:** Moch reported that the newly created Compost Club at Greenwich High School is working on implementation of composting. Recently the

group was joined and supported by custodians and other cafeteria workers. In addition, high school volunteers are assisting in education and compost management in other public schools.

- e) **Eversource Substation Update:** Savageau stated that in November 2017, the Connecticut Siting Council (CSC) voted to approve Eversource's application to build a new transmission line and substation in Greenwich. The alternative that included an enclosed substation which was developed with the Town was turned down due to the additional expense which would be passed on customers. The alternative enclosed design would result in lesser impact on the aesthetics and provide for better flood protection.
- f) **Greenwich Point Master Plan:** Savageau stated that after a public meeting the consultant began working on the draft.
- g) **POCD Update:** Savageau stated that a company from Chicago was hired to draft the plan. The representatives are going to be in town on December 18 and 19th from 2 to 4 pm. Two meetings will be held on January 17th and 18th. The existing Open Space Plan would either be included into the plan or act as an addendum.

## 6) Committee and Liaison Reports

- a) **Parks and Recreation Board:** Baker reported that due to unexpected death of Nancy Caplan, the December meeting was canceled and substituted with a working session on December 6th. The goal of this meeting was to divide the workload covered by Caplan into several groups to ensure a smooth transition and the ability to move forward. Conservation staff and members worked closely with Caplan on numerous projects including the dune restoration project. All acknowledged the tremendous contributions that Ms. Caplan made to the Town.
- b) **GRAB (Greenwich Recycling Advisory Board):** no meeting
- c) **Harbor Management Commission:** Baker stated that a special meeting was held on December 6th. The discussion focused on the proposed by Planning and Zoning changes to the Water Front Business Zone (WB). It was decided that the proposal needs more work; therefore, it should be withdrawn to allow more time for revisions.
- d) **Cemetery Committee:** no updates
- e) **Energy Committee**
  - i) **Strategic Energy Plan for Town:** Savageau stated that the detailed audit of the Town Hall will be done for the cost of \$14,500. The amount will be split 50/50

between the Town and Eversource. Eversource has offered to do audits, at no cost to the town at the Waste Water Treatment Plant and Greenwich High School.

ii) **Community Energy Panning**

- (1) Home Energy Solution – Light bulb swap: Savageau reported that the event is scheduled December 16, 2017 from 9-12 pm at the Town Hall Meeting room. Postcards about this event were mailed to each property owner in Town.
- (2) Small Business Advantage Program: was not discussed

**7) Old Business:**

- a) **Waste Ordinance –status:** Savageau reported that the Ordinance Prohibiting Waste Associated with Natural Gas and Oil Extraction is scheduled to be heard by RTM in December.
- b) **Plastic Bag Ban – status:** Savageau stated that Bring Your Own (BYO) representatives requested that their proposal be moved to the January meeting. It is expected that the new RTM members will produce overwhelming support for the initiatives.
- c) **Mylar balloon – status:** Silberberg reported progress in reaching out to the local state and House representatives. The initiatives gained great support from both Scott Frantz and Fred Camillo. Roger Reynolds, Legal Director of CT Found for Environment is also aboard.

**8) New Business**

a) **P&Z regulations amendments – Historic Overlay Zones:**

Savageau stated that P&Z requested the Commission review the proposed Historic Overlay Zone Regulations dated November 9, 2017 to be heard at the 12/12/17 P&Z meeting. The Commissions review specifically focused on the section relating to Conservation zones. Section 6-13-d refers to incentives and 3-B includes the provision requiring that in certain acres, anyone applying for HO would also be required to utilize the Conservation Zone. After discussion, where various members expressed concerns about how these two zones impact each other, the following resolution (*italics*) was made by Baker and seconded by Dickinson:

*The Conservation Commission identified areas where the HO and CZ regulations need to be reconciled and therefore recommends that the Section 6-13-d-3-B not be approved at this time and that it be held open for further review and discussion. The Commission recognizes the inherent relationship between the HO zone and Conservation zones and strongly recommends that Conservation and P&Z work together to update both sets of regulations simultaneously to ensure that the regulations work together seamlessly, and provide the needed incentives to be effective.*

*Both Conservation and P&Z have long recognized that the Conservation Zone needs to be updated to create meaningful incentives to ensure that the Conservation Zone is a viable development alternative. Requiring the HO zone to utilize the Conservation Zone, without updating them first, is counter-intuitive to this process and could result in both regulations being under-utilized. Additionally, as proposed the HO zone focuses primarily on buildings and does not specifically address historic landscapes that may include stone walls, gardens, and old mills. Often these are located in open space areas. Designing the HOZ and CZ regulations to include historic landscapes would further enhance the intent of both sets of regulations.*

Motion carried unanimously.

## 9) **Adjournment**

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

The meeting adjourned at 9:02 p.m.

Submitted by,

Aleksandra Moch  
Environmental Analyst