

## WASHINGTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION

### MINUTES April 5, 2023

MEMBERS PRESENT: Ms. Payne, Ms. Frank, Mr. Conroy, Ms. Rawson, Ms. Stagen  
ALTERNATES PRESENT: Mr. Horne  
CLERK: Mr. Buell

#### **Seating of Members and Alternates**

The Chair called the meeting to order at 5:17 p.m. and seated Ms. Payne, Ms. Frank, and Ms. Stagen.

Ms. Rawson joined the meeting at 5:19 p.m.

Mr. Conroy joined the meeting at 5:25 p.m.

Mr. Horne joined the meeting at 5:30 p.m.

#### **Approval of Minutes of Jan. 4, 2023 (Feb. & Mar. mtgs cancelled)**

Motion: To accept the January 4, 2023 meeting minutes as written by Ms. Frank,  
seconded by Ms. Stagen. Passed 3-0.

#### **Tree Regs Progress**

Ms. Payne indicated that no update was available for this agenda item.

#### **Invasive Management– Linda Frank**

Ms. Frank informed the Commission that she had met with Mr. Brinton, First Selectman, Mr. Papsin, Chair of the Inland Wetlands Commission, Mr. Hagenbuch, Executive Director of the Steep Rock Association, and Ms. Payne earlier in the day to discuss Invasive Species management within the town.

She stated that at this meeting attendees were informed that the Steep Rock Association had posted a job opening for a summer intern to assist with invasive species management, and that the town had also budgeted for a paid intern to map invasive plant species on town properties. Ms. Frank went on to explain that she also hoped that a Shepaug Valley High School senior would be willing to assist in this endeavor as a part of their senior project.

Following this, Ms. Frank indicated that the Judy Black Memorial Park was hosting an event on May 20, 2023 from 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. called Gardenpalooza. She explained that Meadowbrook Gardens, who had done the plantings for this park, would be in attendance and that

the Judy Black Memorial Park had requested that volunteers attend the event to assist with public outreach on invasive plant species. Ms. Stagen volunteered to assist at this event.

### **Conservation Easement Forms – review**

Ms. Payne stated that Mr. Buell had circulated a minor change to the easement form which indicated that all donation fees must be made payable to the Town of Washington.

Ms. Frank and Ms. Rawson indicated that they both had additional revisions for the Commission to consider going forward. Ms. Payne stated that she felt the document required no revisions beyond what had been circulated to the Commission for immediate consideration but that the Commission may consider revisions at a future meeting. A brief discussion ensued.

Motion: To change the language of the easement forms to state that donation fees must be made payable to the Town of Washington by Ms. Rawson, seconded by Ms. Frank.  
Passed 5-0.

### **New Preston Open Space Management-Phragmites, Ryan Conroy**

Mr. Conroy shared his screen with the Commission and displayed several photos to show the condition of the phragmites before, during, and after they were cut over the past 12 months. He stated that he did not feel that the Commission should continue having New England Aquatics cut the phragmites due to the limited progress that had been made by the previous attempts.

Ms. Rawson expressed agreement with Mr. Conroy's sentiment. She stated that this area is an important watershed and that the Commission should refrain from the use of chemical treatment of these phragmites, and that phragmites are incredibly difficult to remove from an area like the New Preston Open Space. She stated that the Commission could revisit efforts to remove the phragmites if a new treatment option becomes available for the Commission to consider.

Mr. Horne asked what the long-term impact would be if the Commission ceased its efforts to remove phragmites from this location. Ms. Rawson explained that the invasive species will outcompete native species for space and resources and that eventually the native species would be pushed out of the area. A brief discussion ensued.

Ms. Rawson proposed hiring a herpetologist to create a report on the New Preston Open Space so that the Commission has a more accurate understanding of the native wildlife at this site, and what the impact of future treatments may be on this wildlife.

### **Trees, Loretta Skagen's article**

Mr. Conroy stated that his wife was still working on the graphic for this article and that he hoped to have this ready for the Commission's consideration for the May meeting.

### **2023 POCD ongoing discussion of items to be included in 2023**

Ms. Payne indicated that she would like to consider this agenda item at a future meeting.

### **Revisit guidance re Solar Panel placement**

Ms. Payne indicated that no update was available for this agenda item.

**Recommendations for two Alternate Vacancies**

Ms. Frank indicated that she wished to reach out to the Steep Rock Association to see if any of their employees or volunteers would have an interest in joining the Conservation Commission as an alternate member.

**New and/or Old Business.**

Ms. Frank reported that she had tried to review minutes for the Conservation Commissions in Avon and Simsbury but had found that these towns do not have Conservation Commissions. The Commission then discussed the work conducted by the Conservation Commissions in nearby towns like Kent and Warren.

Mr. Conroy stated that he had recently learned of a Zoning regulation in the town of Easton which prohibits the sale and planting of invasive plant species, and requires the removal of existing invasive species when it is possible to do so. A brief discussion ensued.

Motion: To adjourn the meeting at 6:07 by Ms. Payne, seconded by Ms. Stagen.  
Passed 5-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Dennis Buell*

Dennis Buell  
Conservation Commission Clerk  
Town of Washington  
4-11-2023

A link to access a recording of this meeting is below.

[https://townofwashingtongcc-my.sharepoint.com/:f:/g/personal/dbuell\\_washingtonct\\_org/EghWY6RxS9NOnRFLZeL8954BIYXdjnCiYf-QUcVJ1aRH1w?e=E1MCeL](https://townofwashingtongcc-my.sharepoint.com/:f:/g/personal/dbuell_washingtonct_org/EghWY6RxS9NOnRFLZeL8954BIYXdjnCiYf-QUcVJ1aRH1w?e=E1MCeL)