

WASHINGTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION

MINUTES April 6, 2022

MEMBERS PRESENT:	Ms. Frank, Mr. Conroy, Ms. Rawson
MEMBERS ABSENT:	Ms. Payne, Mr. Gewanter,
ALTERNATES PRESENT:	Ms. Stagen, Mr. Macdonald
CLERK:	Mr. Buell
OTHERS	Mr. Larson, Ms. Zukauskas, Mr. Hileman, Mr. Vogt

Seating of Members and Alternates

Ms. Frank, Vice Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:20 p.m. and seated Ms. Frank, Ms. Rawson, Mr. Conroy, Mr. Macdonald, and Ms. Stagen.

Approval of Minutes of Mar. 2, 2022

Ms. Frank indicated that the first item on the agenda was the approval of the March 2, 2022 meeting minutes. She asked if any member of the Commission had any comments or revisions for these minutes. Ms. Rawson stated that she would abstain from the vote as she had not attended this meeting. Mr. Conroy noted that the minutes indicated that the meeting had ended at 7:43 which was incorrect and asked that this be amended.

Motion: To accept the amended minutes for the March 2, 2022 Conservation Commission meeting by Mr. Conroy, seconded by Ms. Frank. Passed 4-0 with 1 abstention.

New Preston Open Space Management-Phragmites, Ryan Conroy

Mr. Conroy introduced Mr. Vogt as the owner of New England Aquatic Services and indicated that Mr. Vogt had been invited to the meeting to discuss the removal of phragmites in the New Preston Open Space. Mr. Vogt explained the type of work which New England Aquatic Services typically conducts, and informed the Commission that his company had recently purchased a new machine which help New England Aquatic Services to more quickly cut and remove the phragmites in this area. Mr. Vogt indicated that this machine would enable New England Aquatic Services to cut a much larger area of the pond than they initially planned for the same cost that had initially been discussed. Ms. Stagen asked how much removing the phragmite's roots would cost

opposed to simply cutting the plans. Mr. Vogt stated that the cost of labor in this area for their initial plan was \$2,000 a day but without a more thorough investigation of the area he could not provide a specific cost for the additional labor of digging up the phragmite's roots. Discussion regarding this machine and the process of cutting phragmites under the water level ensued.

Mr. Conroy proposed having New England Aquatic Services spend the majority of their time cutting phragmites and a small portion of the day digging the plants up. Ms. Stagen indicated that she felt the plants should be dug out opposed to simply cutting them. Mr. Vogt suggested spending half of a day cutting the phragmites under the water level in the pond, and spending the other half of the budgeted time digging up the phragmites and their roots to see which method of removal was more effective.

Ms. Frank suggested cutting the phragmites and covering the area with heavy tarping to determine whether or not this would prevent the plants from returning. Discussion regarding this method of removal and the overall permitting process to obtain an Inland Wetlands permit ensued.

Tree Regs Progress -Zoning Hearing continued on March 28

Ms. Frank stated that consideration of new Tree Zoning Regulations had been continued to March 28, 2022. She indicated that Attorney Ziska had reviewed the document, and had indicated that some wording of this document had been too vague. Ms. Frank went on to explain that a small group of Commissioners would meet to tighten up the document. Ms. Stagen volunteered to join this group alongside Ms. Payne, Ms. Branson, and 2 members of the Zoning Commission.

2023 POCD ongoing discussion of items to be included in 2023 – Focus of this meeting

Ms. Frank stated that this agenda item would be more effectively discussed at an in-person meeting.

Earth Day April 23

Ms. Frank stated that she had no update for Earth Day, but that she had information regarding Arbor Day. She went on to explain that Eversource had offered to provide seedlings to the town and to trim a heritage tree within the town. Ms. Stagen asked if labor would be included with the donation of the seedlings and Ms. Frank indicated that she did not know. Ms. Rawson offered to hand out seedlings at the farmers market for Arbor day. Discussion regarding these seedlings ensued. Ms. Stagen stated that she had previously attempted to grow seedlings but had found this process to be very difficult. She indicated that she had attempted to plant 100 seedlings, and less than half survived.

The Commission agreed that before making any effort to distribute these seedlings, they would need to investigate the species which would be offered, the cost of purchasing more, and which ways the community could be involved in the distribution and planting of these seedlings.

Western CT Clean Air Action Report – Linda Frank

Ms. Frank informed the Commission that Mr. Gewanter had recently been placed on hospice following a cancer diagnosis and treatment. She indicated that Mr. Gewanter had been a valued member of the Conservation Commission, and of the Western Ct Clean Air Action Committee.

Ms. Frank went on to state that she held Mr. Gewanter in the highest of regards and thanked him for his insight, hard work, dedication to the Commissions upon which they both served, and for the friendship which they have shared. The Commission expressed agreement with this sentiment and thanked Mr. Gewanter for his efforts.

Following this, Ms. Frank informed the Commission that the Air Pollution Impact of Cricket Valley Energy Center written by Ms. Wagstrom, PhD, had finally been completed and that this report had been made available to the Commission. The document will be reviewed at the next Conservation meeting. She indicated that this would be shared with the Conservation Commission, and that the Western Ct Clean Air Action Committee would also review the document at a meeting.

Revisit guidance re Solar Panel placement (Do want this?)

Ms. Frank indicated that she had no update for this agenda item and indicated that it would be beneficial for a Commissioner to consider this at a later time.

Recommendations for one Alternate Vacancy

Ms. Frank indicated that the Commission would soon need 2 members and asked for Commission members to recommendations for these vacancies.

Other and/or Old Business

No new or other business was discussed by the Commission.

Ms. Frank adjourned the meeting at 6:23.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dennis Buell", with a stylized, flowing script.

Dennis Buell
Conservation Commission Clerk
4-12-2022