

# WASHINGTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION

## MINUTES

August 4, 2021

5:15 P.M.

Meeting Held Via Zoom Conference

MEMBERS PRESENT: Ms. Payne, Ms. Frank, Ms. Rawson

MEMBERS ABSENT: Mr. Conroy

ALTERNATES PRESENT: Mr. Gewanter, Mr. Macdonald

Others: Ms. Zukauskas, Mr. Charles, Mr. Hileman

CLERK: Mr. Buell

The Chair called the meeting to order at 5:20 p.m. and seated Ms. Payne, Ms. Frank, Ms. Rawson, and Mr. Gewanter.

### Approval of Minutes of June 2, 2021 (No July mtg)

Motion: To approve the minutes from the June 2, 2021 meeting as written by Mr. Gewanter, seconded by Ms. Rawson. Passed 4-0.

Ms. Payne stated that she would like to make a slight change to the agenda before continuing the meeting, and indicated that the discussion of the Conservation Easement proposal for 135 Bee Brook Road would be at the end of the meeting.

### Hillside Farm Project Town Meeting

Ms. Payne informed the Commission that she had been in touch with Mr. Brinton, First Selectman, regarding the Commission's desire to donate \$50,000.00 from the Open Space Fund towards the acquisition of the Hillside Farm located at Nettleton Hollow road. She stated that for this to occur it will need to be voted on and approved at a town meeting which may take place in August. Ms. Rawson asked how much funding is left in this fund, and Ms. Payne indicated that she believed it to be around \$300,000.00, and that she would verify this for the Commission.

### New Preston Falls Historic Info Signs

Ms. Payne stated that the New Preston Falls Historic Information signs have been installed.

### New Preston Open Space Management

Ms. Payne asked Ms. Frank to provide the Commission with an update on the phragmite situation at the New Preston Open Space. Ms. Frank indicated that she had been in touch with New England Aquatic regarding this project who had informed her that they had ordered a device which could cut the phragmites under the water but that there had been supply issues which have held up the delivery of this device. Ms. Frank stated that New England Aquatic hoped to begin work on this project in September or October if possible.

Following this, Ms. Payne asked Ms. Frank to provide a recap of the experiment which had been done at the state park regarding phragmites. Ms. Frank stated that Mr. Gewanter, Mr. Macdonald, and herself had gone to the state park to cut phragmites in a specific area. Mr. Macdonald explained that several months after cutting the phragmites under the water level he had returned to the location to see if the experiment had yielded positive results, but that it was difficult to see how the phragmites looked under the water with the other vegetation in the area. He then indicated that he did see few phragmites in this area and believed that their experiment had positive impact on the area at least in the short term. The Commission then held a short discussion regarding the possibility of the state

#### **2023 POCD - Wayne Hileman**

Ms. Payne introduced Mr. Hileman as the chair of the planning Commission and stated that he had asked to attend this meeting because of the upcoming POCD. Following this introduction, Mr. Hileman explained that though the POCD is set for 2023, he wished to begin discussions within the town regarding this document now. He then asked the Commission for input regarding this document. Mr. Hileman indicated that in the upcoming POCD he planned to have the Natural Inventory Report updated as well. The Commission held a short discussion regarding updated maps for the town, and the need for these maps to be revised. Ms. Rawson stated that she felt the maps needed to include climate resiliency information, and core forest information as well. Mr. Hileman indicated that this would be possible.

Ms. Payne stated that she would like to seat Mr. Macdonald for Mr. Conroy at this time.

#### **Western CT Clean Air Action Report – Linda Frank**

Ms. Frank indicated that she will be stepping down as the co-Chair of this Committee and that Mr. Gewanter had volunteered to take her place. Mr. Gewanter then provided a brief summary of the air quality reports which he had monitored over the past few weeks which showed heightened levels of particulates because of wildfires elsewhere in the country which peaked the 20<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> of last month. Mr. Gewanter then explained the process of obtaining hydrogen in a eco-friendly manner.

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

Ms. Payne indicated that she had contacted the Zoning Commission regarding these potential regulations but had not yet heard back. Mr. Gewanter volunteered to contact Mr. Furse to discuss potential recommendations to the Zoning Commission regarding solar farms.

### **LID/Low Impact Development & Tree Regs**

Ms. Payne indicated that she had contacted the Zoning Commission regarding these potential regulations but had not yet heard back.

### **Recommendations for Vacancy**

Ms. Payne stated that there are still alternate vacancies which must be filled and indicated that she wished to find new members soon if possible.

### **Other and/or Old Business**

No new or other business was discussed by the Commission.

### **Conservation Easement Proposal & Site Visit**

Ms. Payne indicated that the Commission would enter executive session to discuss the proposed easement for 135 Bee Brook road and asked the Commission if they had any questions for Mr. Charles regarding this proposed easement. Ms. Payne indicated that a memo had been forwarded to the Commission from Mr. Charles which provided information on the proposed Easement.

Executive Session Began at 5:46 p.m.

Executive Session Ended at 6:09 P.M.

The Commission passed a motion declining the proposed easement for 135 Bee Brook Road.

Motion:	Whereas the Washington Conservation Commission's easement guidelines set forth the goal of accepting voluntary easements as to maintain the rural character of Washington. Whereas easements should be visible from the roadside or contain a significant scenic vista, that can be observed by other public or eased land. Whereas smaller parcels of land must offer exceptional public benefit. Whereas in consideration of these reasons and the easement guidelines in their entirety the Conservation Commission hereby declines to accept the easement as proposed for 135 Bee Brook road. By Ms. Rawson, seconded by Mr. Gewanter. Passed 5-0.
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The Chair adjourned the meeting at 6:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'D Buell', followed by a second, less legible handwritten mark.

Dennis Buell

Conservation Commission Clerk

Town of Washington

8-9-2021