

WASHINGTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION

MINUTES February 2, 2021

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

Seating of Members and Alternates

The Chair called the meeting to order at 5:16 p.m. and seated Ms. Payne, Ms. Frank, Ms. Rawson, Mr. Conroy, and Ms. Stagen (for Mr. Gewanter).

Approval of Minutes of December 1, 2021 and January 5, 2022

Ms. Payne stated that the December meeting minutes had been brief and that the January meeting had been canceled.

Motion: To accept the December 1, 2021 meeting minutes as written by Ms. Frank, seconded by Ms. Payne. Passed unanimously.

Election of Officers

Motion: To elect Ms. Payne as Chair, and Ms. Frank as Vice Chair of the Conservation Commission by Ms. Rawson, seconded by Mr. Conroy. Passed unanimously.

New Preston Open Space Management, Ryan Conroy

Mr. Conroy explained to the Commission that he had spoken with Mr. Vogt from New England Aquatic who had conducted a site visit of the New Preston Open Space. Mr. Conroy stated that Mr. Vogt had found that most of the phragmites in this area were either in shallow water or in mud which would prevent New England Aquatic from cutting the phragmites several inches under the water level to perform the test which had been proposed by the Conservation Commission. Mr. Conroy went on to state that Mr. Vogt had determined that to conduct this

test, he would need to perform this work in a deeper section of the pond. Mr. Conroy then shared his screen with the Commission and showed the device which New England Aquatic would acquire for this task.

Ms. Stagen asked what would happen with the plant material after this work was performed. A short conversation regarding how these cuttings would be disposed of ensued. Mr. Larson, a representative from the Steep Rock Association, stated that the Steep Rock Association would be mulching phragmites this year on their properties and using herbicides afterwards. Ms. Frank explained that it was the Commission's hope that cutting the plants approximately 8 inches under water level would effectively drown the plants. Mr. Conroy stated that it had been the Commission's desire to avoid the use of herbicides in their effort to eradicate phragmites in this area as the Commission did not wish to potentially pollute the East Aspetuck River. Ms. Frank asked how much the machine would cost, and Mr. Conroy stated that he would look into this.

Tree Regs Progress- Branson Memo

Ms. Frank stated that the next item on the agenda was the Tree Cutting Regulation which would be considered on February 28, 2022 by the Zoning Commission. She stated that Ms. Branson had written potential language for the Zoning Regulations which would prohibit certain activities in regard to tree cutting within Washington. Ms. Frank went on to state that she had drafted a memo requesting that members of the community email the Zoning Commission to express support for this proposal. Ms. Payne stated that these proposed regulations had been started by the Conservation Commission when Ms. Branson had been a member of this Commission, and that these proposed changes to the Zoning regulations had been sent to the Zoning Commission in 2019. Ms. Stagen stated that she would like for the proposed regulation be attached to this memo. Ms. Frank stated that if members of the Commission would like for the memo to be revised, she would ask that Commissioners send these proposed edits to her so that she may complete the memo.

2023 POCD Ongoing Discussion of Items to be Included in 2023

Ms. Frank and Ms. Payne stated there was no update available for this agenda item.

Western CT Clean Air Action Report- David Gewanter

Ms. Frank stated that Mr. Gewanter had suffered several health setbacks, and that the Western Ct Clean Air Action Committee would soon wind down. She went on to state that this Committee would soon receive a detailed report on the air quality based from a scientist working for the University of Connecticut based on the monitoring which had been conducted by members of this Committee. Ms. Frank stated that once this report is published, the Committee as a whole would no longer continue their monitoring efforts and would disband. She stated that the Committee had learned a great deal about the air quality in this region of the state, and that they had found that this air quality was "quite good." She stated that 8

towns had worked together to gather this information, and that Mr. Gewanter had been invaluable to the Committee because of his scientific expertise.

Revisit Guidance Re Solar Panel Placement

Ms. Frank stated that she had no update to provide regarding this agenda item. Ms. Payne noted that the Selectmen would discuss solar at an upcoming Selectmen meeting. Mr. Buell clarified that this may not be a discussion of solar regulations, but instead may be consideration of solar on town buildings.

Recommendations for One Alternate Vacancy

Ms. Frank stated that the Commission was still in need of a new alternate.

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 5:44 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Dennis Buell
Conservation Commission Clerk
2-7-2022