

Essex Conservation Commission
Town of Essex
29 West Avenue
Essex, CT 06426

MINUTES

Regular Meeting - May 10, 2011

Call to Order:

The Essex Conservation Commission conducted their regularly scheduled meeting on May 10, 2011 in Room B of the Essex Town Hall. Members in attendance were Kay Tucker, Rich Helmecki, Doug Demarest, Jeff Lovelace, MaryAnn Pleva, Pam Bernardini and Goody LeLash. Also in attendance, Stella Beaudoin, Recording Secretary.

Ms. Tucker called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Review and Approval of the April 14, 2011 Minutes:

Changes to the April 14, 2011 Minutes are noted in italics:

Page 1, last paragraph: "Ms. LeLash stated that she had spoken with a staff person [at the DEP]." Ms. LeLash did not speak with a staff person.

Motion made by Jeff Lovelace to approve the April 14, 2011 Minutes.

Motion seconded by Goody LeLash and passed unanimously.

Maryann Pleva abstention due to absence.

Old Business:

Viney Hill Brook Preserve

1. Expenditures

Goody LeLash expended \$25.32 at Staples to laminate the signs that announces "pond restoration project."

Motion made by Jeff Lovelace approve the invoice as submitted by Goody LeLash in the amount of \$25.32 which represents the cost to laminate signs.

Motion seconded by Pam Bernardini and passed unanimously.

Tom MacWhinney Mud River Services has started work within Viney Hill Brook Park. The cost to clear the Barberry is \$3,000 and \$1,000 to clear the beaver damage around the Quarry Pond. Mr. MacWhinney asked for a \$2,000 deposit.

Ms. Tucker noted that out of the \$3,000 the Commission is expending this current year for barberry removal, \$1,000 had been encumbered from 2009/2010.

2. Survey Update

There are blue and white ties around the park and going up the yellow trail toward the old quarry. There are other markers along the southern perimeter of the newly acquired property.

3. Map Project

Mr. Lovelace indicated that the map project is moving forward and the map should be ready by mid June. Mr. Lovelace called Old Saybrook printing and they have the original copy of a previous brochure. Mr. Lovelace will go over with Ms. Tucker at a later date the wording to be used on the new brochure. Ann Penniman will supply the map portion of the brochure and Mr. Lovelace has a few pictures in mind that will offer a nice compliment to the brochure.

The Old Saybrook printer estimated a cost of \$150 which will include 1,000 printed trail maps which will be two-sided and tri-folded.

Ms. Tucker noted that June 9, 2011 marks the final meeting of the Conservation Commission for this fiscal year. Commissioners should think about what they wish to encumber.

Ms. Tucker suggested that the Commission authorize \$200 for the printing of the maps.

Mr. Lovelace displayed from his laptop, pictures he took from various locations within Viney Hill Brook Park. Commissioners will make a decision as to which picture will be included in the brochure.

Rich Helmecki suggested utilizing recycled paper for the brochures. Mr. Lovelace will price out the cost and make a determination on whether or not to use recycled paper.

Eagle Scout Bridge on Viney Hill Brook Park – Mr. Lovelace stated his concern over the hand rails proposed for the footbridge. The railing can prove to be a liability.

4. Cleanup

Joe Budrow, Essex Wetlands Enforcement Officer emailed Mr. Lovelace informing him that IW Permit approval has been granted to do some remediation on the trails. The IW Permit covers the remediation as a result of the beaver damage around Quarry Pond, the clearing of leaves and mud from the pipe in the dam, the clearing and removal of barberry and the clean up

of the trail. Further permission was granted for the new trail #7 to be cut and marked. Mr. Budrow further granted permission to scrape the mud away and to perform maintenance on the pipe.

5. Other

Review of beaver solutions as presented by Mr. Ackerman at the April 14, 2011 meeting.

Mr. Lovelace wrote a beaver control statement regarding the presentation by John Ackermann, Essex resident. In his letter Mr. Lovelace states that after "review of the information from Beaver Solutions, LLC of Southamptton, MA, the problem was not one of the coexistence with a lovely beaver pond and all the wonderful things beavers can do for the environment, but the damage and threat to our existing pond and man-made dam and to the safety of the surrounding trail area.

Two Problems: (1) Integrity of the Quarry Pond dam was threatened by beavers plugging the spill pipe and the overflow. Last summer after considerable research, we installed a pipe leveler system at a cost of a few hundred dollars verses a similar one recommended by Beaver solutions at \$1,000 to \$1,500. (2) We monitored the beaver activity all summer and fall and found the beaver activity was increasing. The integrity of our trails was becoming an expensive, safety issue requiring downed tree removal and other hazard cleanup.

The Solution: We were able to trap and remove the beaver colony as recommended by the State of CT DEP program at no cost vs. an \$800 to \$1,000 expense as quoted by information from Beaver Solutions, LLC.

While I have not seen additional threatening activity this spring, beavers may be attracted to this habitat in a year or two and additional removal may be necessary, but at no expense due to the Connecticut State program."

Mr. Helmecki suggested two methods to dissuade the beavers; the first is the wrapping of the trees and the second is the installation of a 4 foot high fence next to the beaver's lodge. Their route to the water would be blocked.

Ms. Tucker noted that \$810 was expended for the large pipe and baffle.

With every solution offered in the beaver solutions booklet, there is a notation that there will likely be a need for at least one removal of the beavers.

Mr. Lovelace noted that the water leveling devise is what is utilized to control the beavers.

One of the questions that was not answered by beaver solutions person, are the services of a humane trapping services company in Massachusetts. Salem had similar problem and the hired a trapper to trap the beavers per the Norwich bulletin. The DEP was contacted and they approved the eradication. The CT DEP reported 225 beaver issues from over 105 towns within the State of Connecticut. It was noted that the clean-up from the beaver damage can run into thousands of dollars.

Ms. Pleva stated that if the Conservation Commission is in a position where beaver remediation is required, notice will be posted in the Minutes and will also be mentioned on the Conservation Commission's Agenda.

Mr. Helmecki stated that for the \$300 that Beaver Solutions charges, their services should be called upon when the time comes.

Ms. Tucker suggested tabling this discussion until the need/problem arises.

Canfield Meadow Woods

Ms. Tucker received an email from al Macgregor. They are working on the kiosk and the Conservation Commission's contribution of \$600 is only for the kiosk in Canfield Meadow Woods.

MaryAnn Pleva stated that she likes the way the trees are marked.

Bushy Hill Preserve

Mr. Helmecki noticed that the boards are broken on the bridge again. Mr. Helmecki had replaced the bad boards, however this appears to be the work of vandalism. Mr. Helmecki stated that he will repair the bridge.

Mr. Helmecki removed several patches of Japanese Knotweed at Bushy Hill. Mr. Helmecki suggested a work party to remove the knotweed at Viney Hill Brook Park. Members will meet at Viney Hill Brook Park on May 15, 2011 at 9:30 a.m. to look at the clean up Mud River Services is doing and members will also remove the knotweed. Members will meet at the parking lot at the passive recreation area.

Other

Mr. Demarest spoke with First Selectman Miller about putting up the maps in Conference Room B of the Essex Town Hall that Mr. Demarest had laminated. Mr. Demarest will bring the maps to Joel Marzi who is a framer.

Motion made by Jeff Lovelace to authorize Doug Demarest asked for the allowance of \$200 to frame up the maps to be hung on the walls in Meeting Room B of the Essex Town Hall. The maps are an aerial view of the layout of Bushy Hill and Viney Hill Brook Park.

Motion seconded by MaryAnn Pleva and passed unanimously.

New Business:

Goody LeLash commented on an internet newsletter published by Charlie Stannard dated May 6, 2011. The Harbor Commission looked into the public access on Novelty Lane, Essex, CT. \$35,000 is left remaining in state grant monies to pursue improving access on Novelty Lane.

Goody LeLash questioned if the Conservation Commission should write a letter in support of that access. Jeff Going is proposing to remove the wall.

Kay Tucker stated that the Conservation Commission did write a letter encouraging the Selectmen and the Harbor Commission to protect the public access ways.

Ms. Pleva suggested that the Conservation Commission write a letter applauding the efforts of the Harbor Commission.

Motion made by Pam Bernardini to compose a preliminary letter that will be sent on behalf of the Conservation Commission in support of the Harbor Management Commission's effort to protect the water access points within the Town Essex.

Motion seconded by MaryAnn Pleva and passed.

Mr. Lovelace noted for the record that he recused himself from the discussion on Novelty Lane.

Mr. Lovelace questioned if the Essex Inland Wetlands Commission approval to remediate the drainage should be obtained.

Ms. Pleva passed around a brochure on Kiosks. Discussion on the kiosk for Viney Hill Brook Park and Bushy Hill Preserve was tabled to the June 2011 meeting.

IWWC Report Goody LeLash:

Ms. LeLash indicated that the eagle scout project came up at IWWC May meeting and the construction of the footbridge was approved at that IW meeting.

Joe Budrow reported at the May 2011 IWWC meeting that he had been around Viney Hill Brook Park with Mr. Lovelace. Ms. LeLash reported that the Conservation Commission is working in concert with the Wetlands Commission on all of these issues.

Mr. Budrow issued Cease and Desist Order for property located at 141 Saybrook Rd., Essex. A remediation plan was presented to include a phase project to replant trees.

Correspondence

A letter regarding humane alternatives for beaver remediation from Nan Zila.

Motion made by Goody LeLash to adjourn.

Motion seconded by MaryAnn Pleva and passed unanimously.

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Essex Conservation Commission adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Stella C. Beaudoin
Recording Secretary

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Essex Conservation Commission will be conducted on June 9, 2011.