



TOWN OF ESSEX
Conservation Commission

Executive Board
Kathleen Tucker, Chairman

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Telephone (860) 767-4340 • FAX (860) 767-8509

Regular Members

*Frank Hall
Richard Helmecki
Jim O'Brien
Mark Reeves
Vacancy
Vacancy*

Alternate Member

*Vacancy
Vacancy*

Minutes of a Meeting
December 8, 2022, Kitchen, 7:00 pm

1. Call to Order and Roll Call: K. Tucker called the meeting to order at 7pm. In attendance: F. Hall, R. Helmecki, J. O'Brien, M. Reeves, K. Tucker
Public: Former Commission Member J. Lovelace
2. Public Comments: J. Lovelace returned keys to the passive parking lot; lock has been changed and keys no longer functional.
3. Review and Approve November 10, 2022 Meeting Minutes: With a motion by J. O'Brien and a 2nd by F. Hall, the minutes were unanimously approved.
4. Old Business to include trail reports and management issues in town preserves:
 - A. Bushy Hill Preserve: R. Helmecki learned from Terry Stewart that a downed tree needs to be cleared near the entrance Blue Trail. He will do the clearing on Saturday. K. Tucker reported that the entrance trail is further eroding and needs more crushed stone in the heavily used wet areas.

1. Discuss ELT Platt Property Proposed Map

Discussion took place about a proposal from the ELT to change the pink-colored ELT trail signs to red and to add white connector trail signs on their proposed updated map. M. Reeves raised the concern that if someone were hurt on the trails and called EMS, it would be difficult to know whether the injured party was on the ELT or ECC side of the trail, which could delay emergency assistance. M. Reeves recommended we suggest to ELT that they contact Essex Emergency Medical Service to ask that agency how they would know where to locate a hiker needing rescue if the town trail and the Platt Property trails both had red signage. Another issue is that ECC has an abundance of Bushy Hill maps and has no funds to help pay for updated maps. R. Helmecki, K. Tucker, and Frank Hall agreed to walk the BHP trails on Saturday, December 10, 10:00 am

B. Canfield Meadow Woods

J. O'Brien said that ELT reports that a tree is down near the bridge with the cabled tree. There was washout on the trail. K. Tucker walked the Long and Mile Trails Thanksgiving Day and remarked on the beauty of the woods and the beautiful ELT educational sign regarding the nutrients that a fallen "Nurse Log" provides. George Wendell of ELT sent an email about the heavy rains on the Long Trail from the Dennison Rd. entrance.

1. Artificial Trees Removed: Chuck Grusse of ELT sent an email that the artificial trees, that for years bordered the Dennison Road entrance trail, have been removed.

C. Viney Hill Brook Preserve: F. Hall provided the following report via email and in person: "This afternoon I walked the following trails: Quarry Pond, Broad Walk, Wollock's Pond Loop, Upper Turtle, Uplands Woods, and Forest Glade. All of the Exclusion fences and pond levelers were functioning as designed. Over the past few days, there was 3.41" of rain in this area, and while the trails were wet, they were all passable. A large tree (see photos below) needs to be removed on the Upland Woods Trail (white) closest to the ROW road. It could be removed from the trail with a chainsaw and a couple of volunteers. I do not think there are any Beavers in Quarry Pond because there is no evidence of any effort on their part to dam the outlet from Tucker Pond to Quarry Pond especially in view of the recent heavy rainfall. There is evidence of Beavers on the north side of Wollock's Pond due to fresh mud on the Exclusion fence. I replaced 5 maps at the Kiosk at the entrance. No other problems noted."



Photo credit: Frank Hall, ECC Uplands Trail



Photo credit: Frank Hall, ECC Wollock's Pond

K. Tucker noted that the parking area has a noticeable sink-hole caused by water runoff from the street. K. Tucker will contact Supervisor R. Walsh to add fill there. The Cedar Grove has not been dormant cut. The town crew has agreed to mow this grove twice per year.

D. Other: K Tucker reported that J. Lovelace wrote to Essex Town Hall/Park & Rec. about agreed changes in website wording to remove references to beach and swimming. Neither is an offered town recreational activity in Viney Hill Brook Park. ELT Jim Denham was also notified that this activity should no longer be referenced. Lovelace also alerted Mary Ellen Barnes, Director Parks & Recreation, to the increased beaver activity in Wollock's Pond and suggested that Beaver Solutions inspect the culvert and exclusion fencing as shown above.

5. New Business to include:

A. Discuss Template and Town Preserves: K. Tucker presented a template that the ELT uses to document concerns/issues in ELT conservation areas. M. Reeves suggested ECC modify and adopt a format for ECC use including dates and hours needed for mowing, pruning, etc. M. Reeves will present a proposed ECC template at the next meeting.

6. Financial Report YTD 2022-23

A. Expenditures: K. Tucker reported that by January, 2023, ECC needs to formulate reasons for requesting a ECC budget increase. M. Reeves suggested that we examine what constitutes basic maintenance, and what is needed but falls outside the standard budget, such as dead tree removal and similar concerns.

K. Tucker said that Clarks Custom Services was paid \$600 for October mowing, and that the Clerk has been paid. She reported that All Habitat mosquito treatments remain the same at \$2500 as in past years. There will be a \$300 increase for phragmite treatment; from \$1200 to \$1500 (\$750 per treatment).

K. Tucker and F. Hall discussed the cost of Beaver Solutions, which was \$648 for two inspections FY 2021-2022. M. Reeves asked if ECC should contract for one inspection (the culvert/device in the pond bordering the ROW road Cedar Grove Terrace) and ask for on-call service for Quarry Pond since the beaver lodge(s) appears to be inactive and abandoned in Quarry Pond.

K. Tucker said the 2023-24 Budget must be proposed and finalized at the January 12 meeting.

7. Other to include:

A. Election of Officers 2023: With a motion by R. Helmecki and a 2nd by J. O'Brien, K. Tucker was elected 2023 ECC Chair. With a motion by M. Reeves and a 2nd by R. Helmecki, J. O'Brien was elected 2023 ECC Vice-Chair.

K. Tucker said ECC has vacancies for two regular and two alternate members. J. O'Brien suggested submitting an article to Essex Events about the commission and about volunteer opportunities on this commission.

8. Adjournment: With a motion by M. Reeves, and a 2nd by J. O'Brien, the meeting was adjourned at 8:36pm.

Next Scheduled Meeting January 12, 2023, Kitchen, 7:00 PM

Respectfully submitted,
Susan K. McCann, Clerk