

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

MINUTES

Regular Meeting – October 13, 2011

Call to Order

The Essex Conservation Commission conducted their regularly scheduled meeting on October 13, 2011 in Room B of the Essex Town Hall. Members in attendance were Kay Tucker, Rich Helmecki, Doug Demarest, Jeff Lovelace, Goody LeLash, Pam Bernardini, Susan Malan and Ronald Skinner. Also in attendance, Stella Beaudoin, Recording Secretary.

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

Welcome Alternate Ronald Skinner

Ms. Tucker welcomed Mr. Skinner and informed him that as an alternate, the commission would greatly appreciate Mr. Skinner's input and his attendance at meetings. Ms. Tucker reminded Mr. Skinner that he cannot vote, however his input would be valued. Mr. Skinner stated that he moved to Ivoryton five years ago and that he does home improvement contracting in the area. Mr. Skinner stated that he is excited to be on the Conservation Commission and he looks forward to being a valuable member.

Ms. Tucker commented that the Essex Conservation Commission is a non-regulatory commission but that they do provide input to the other commissions noting that Goody LeLash is the liaison to the Essex IWWC.

Review and Approval of the September 8, 2011 Minutes:

The Minutes were reviewed and the following changes were noted in italics.

Page 2, Old Business: "Ms Tucker stated that the *wolf* trees."

Page 3: "the cost for phragmite removal is \$3050".

Page 3: correction on the spelling of *Anne* Penniman

Goody LeLash stated that she was present at this meeting.

Page 4: "*Jeff Lovelace* will contact Darcy Roper in the land use office and ask her to update"

Page 4: "on two occasions the numbers were over legal limit." Strike this sentence.

Page 4: correction on the spelling of Rick *Audet*

Page 5: "Joe Budrow is keeping track of *storm damage at Bushy Hill.*"

Motion made by Goody LeLash to approve the September 8, 2011 Minutes as amended.

Motion seconded by Pam Bernardini and passed unanimously.

Old Business:

Bushy Hill Park – Maintenance Report

Pam Bernardini stated that she was at Bushy Hill replenishing the maps and noted that a new post is needed at the mailbox.

Rich Helmecki stated that on Saturday, September 17th he along with Susan Malan and her husband Bob walked Bushy Hill with chain saws, planning to clean the trails. However, Tom MacWhinney had cut up and cleared all of the trees off the trail.

Mr. Helmecki stated that the boards on some of the bridges are in need of replacement.

Mr. Helmecki noted that there is a good deal of trees down in the area of the Green trail which is property owned by the Essex Land Trust.

Rich Helmecki will put together a work group to work on putting the post back in at the mailbox.

Goody LeLash will contact the Essex Land Trust and see about cleaning up the Green trail.

Mr. Lovelace stated that there are two boards that need to be replaced on the third bridge. There is chicken wire holding the boards up.

Susan Malan suggested asking Tom MacWhinney to offer a discount for his services and in turn he may take the wood pieces that he has cleared as part of a working agreement between the Conservation Commission and Mud River Services.

Mr. Helmecki suggested that commission members visit the site and scatter the wood pieces within the woods. Mr. Helmecki noted that there a few stacks of wood in the area around the red trail. It was noted that Mr. MacWhinney went off trail and cut back a bit more than was necessary. Concern was expressed about unauthorized vehicles driving onto the trails to retrieve the wood pieces.

Ms. Tucker suggested leaving the trails as is for now.

Ms. Malen stated that she would prefer to either give the wood away or for commissioners to go to the site and scatter the wood pieces into the woods. Ms. Malen suggested making this project a work day. Members will meet on Sunday, October 30, 2011 at 9:00 a.m. Members will meet at the trail head at Bushy Hill Park. It was recommended that members bring loppers and gloves.

Jeff Lovelace will ask Karl Kaufmann will be asked to come in and mow the meadow before October 30th.

Viney Hill Brook Park – Maintenance Report

Jeff Lovelace walked all the trails at Viney Hill Preserve and he noted that everything looked very well done. Mr. MacWhinney did cut down the extra tree that was compromising the dam east of the spill pipe. Mr. Helmecki and Mr. Lovelace rerouted a pipe that was installed under the Broadwalk area. The watercourse was diverted to Broadwalk trail. That area was wet today because it was not draining property. Mr. Lovelace remedied the situation.

Tom MacWhinney, Mud River Services stopped by to see Ms. Tucker today and he suggested that the Conservation Commission seek IWWC approval and trench the area on the other side of Broadwalk where the collapsible pipe comes down where the blue trail comes down and meets perpendicular to Broadwalk – the area is always wet. If a trench is constructed in the area and gravel is placed, this would allow the water level to be below the level of Broadwalk and would keep the area dry.

Ms. Tucker suggested that members plan another work day to work on the trench.

Mr. Lovelace suggested that Mr. Budrow visit the site and perhaps make suggestions on how to proceed.

Mr. Demarest suggested hand-digging a gradual ditch that goes down to the level at just before the lake.

Ms. Tucker asked Mr. Demarest to participate in this project as well. Mr. Demarest will contact Mr. Budrow and arrange a site visit.

Ms. Tucker asked Mr. Demarest to look into extending the beaver baffle coupling fixture when he visits the site with Mr. Budrow.

Trail Reports

Canfield Woods –

Ms. Malen will report next month on Canfield Woods.

Storm Irene Clean-up and expenditures

Tom MacWhinney, Mud River Services presented an invoice for Viney Hill Brook Park for trail clearing.

Motion made by Pam Bernardini to expend \$400 for services provided by Mud River Services for Viney Hill Brook Park for trail clearing.

Motion seconded by Goody LeLash and passed unanimously.

Ms. Tucker stated that \$2200 has been expended for storm damage clean up. Ms. Tucker spoke with Kelly Sterner in the Treasurer's office regarding reimbursement for the same.

Maps Update

Jeff Lovelace reported that April who is a new hire with Anne Penniman architectural firm has come up with new maps which Mr. Lovelace distributed.

Viney Hill Brook Park map was reviewed by members. The area is comprised of 104 acres. The map denotes all of the trails and points of interest. One of the big changes on the map is that Wollock's Pond will be named. Another change is that trail #5 goes all the way around Wollock's Pond and will be named Wollock's Pond Loop.

It was decided that "OM" (Old Meadow rest Area) will be deleted. The "TN" as delineated on the map, will be moved to the area above the #2 on the map.

Ms. Tucker noted that before the map is finalized, she and Mr. Lovelace will walk Viney Hill Brook Preserve to confirm the areas denoted on the map.

Mr. Lovelace suggested that this discussion be tabled pending the site walk.

Bushy Hill Preserve map was reviewed by members. Mr. Lovelace stated that he will have the borders more distinguishable and he would also suggest getting rid of the private property line denotation.

The "P" for parking will be made bigger. Trail #1 is now keyed with blue which is what the Essex Land Trust has. The blue trail goes into the red trail which is where the three bridges are located. Trail #3 will be eliminated as it no longer exists. The trails will be redrawn where the junction is between 4, 5 and 2. #3 on the map should be noted as #1.

Ms. Tucker stated that she would like to have the trails named.

Off of Oakledge drive there is an access. There is a "p" for parking noted on the map. At the Winthrop Hill Rd. there is a right-of-way which is denoted on the map.

Motion made by Kay Tucker to extend the length of time for this meeting and discussion until 9:30 p.m.

Motion seconded by Goody LeLash and passed. Mr. Demarest opposed.

Other

Susan Malan took the Bushy Hill Preserve and Viney Hill Brook maps to Joel Marzi for framing. Ms. Malan spoke with First Selectman Miller and asked if the maps could be hung in Room B and Mr. Miller approved the hanging of the framed maps in meeting Room B at the Essex Town Hall.

Motion made by Richard Helmecki that three new maps will be procured and the sum of \$400 will be allocated for procurement of the same.

Motion seconded by Pam Bernardini. Motion failed 5/2.

Discussion:

Ms. Malen will bring the maps to the meeting for review of the maps before having them framed.

New Business:

Discussion of CT Association of Conservation and Inland Wetlands Conference

The CT Association of Conservation and Inland Wetlands Commissions, Inc. will conduct the 34th annual Meeting and Environmental Conference *Celebrating Five Decades of Environmental Conservation and Habitat Protection* on Saturday, November 12, 2011 at MountainRidge High Hill Rd. in Wallingford, CT. The cost to attend is \$50. Ms. Tucker asked if any members would be interested in attending. Ms. Malan stated that she is willing to attend however she will check her schedule. Ms. Malan suggested that the Conservation Commissioners become members.

Motion made by Rich Helmecki to set aside \$100 for 2 members to attend the conference.

Motion seconded by Goody LeLash and passed unanimously.

Land Trust Event at Viney Hill Brook Park

Goody LeLash reported that this is an Essex Park and Recreation event that the Essex Land Trust is promoting will occur on Saturday, November 26, 2011 at 10:00 a.m. First Selectman, Phillip Miller will lead the 10am hike.

Other

Contract for All Habitat's services for phragmite removal. Ms. Tucker received notification from Rick Audet, Director of Essex Park and Recreation that it had been accepted. Kay Tucker suggested that the abutting neighbors be notified when the herbicide spraying is scheduled to begin through either newspaper publication or individual letters to abutting property owners. Mr. Lovelace suggested that it be the responsibility of the Essex Park and Rec department to notify the neighbors.

Ms. Tucker was notified by Dennis Robida that someone had hit the fencing at the Viney Hill Brook Park passive parking area. The impact created a domino affect so that the entire fencing was collapsed. The Town crew shirred up the fence again and Ms. Tucker crafted a letter to Phil miller expressing appreciation of the Town Crew for repair of the fence in a timely manner.

Doug Demarest stated that he checked the right-of-way down to the water on novelty lane. The contractor is widening the path and leveling it so that it is a gradual decent to the water. The stone was left in place

Susan Malan left the meeting left the meeting at 9:20 p.m.

IWWC Report Goody LeLash:

Ms. LeLash stated that at the October 2011 IWWC meeting, she reported that the Gateway Commission will present on December 8, 2011 to the Essex Planning and Conservation Commissions. The IWWC Commissioners unanimously agreed that they would wish to participate in that presentation. Ms. LeLash also reported to the IWWC on the phragmite control. Ms. LeLash's term with the Wetlands Commission will expire at the end of

December 2011. Ms. LeLash is looking for a Conservation Commission member to replace her as the liaison.

Ms. Tucker noted that she will not be available for the November 10, 2011 meeting and Mr. Helmecki will not be available to chair the meeting on November 10, 2011. Mr. Lovelace offered to chair the meeting on November 10, 2011.

Correspondence

Motion made by Jeff Lovelace to adjourn.

Motion seconded by Doug Demarest and passed unanimously.

The regular meeting of the Essex Conservation Commission adjourned at 9:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Stella C. Beaudoin
Recording Secretary

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Essex Conservation Commission will be conducted on 11.10.2011.