

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

MINUTES

Regular Meeting – December 8, 2011

Call to Order

The Essex Conservation Commission conducted their regularly scheduled meeting on December 8, 2011 in Room B of the Essex Town Hall. Members in attendance were Kay Tucker, Chair, Susan Malan, Doug Demarest, Pam Bernardini, MaryAnn Pleva, Richard Helmecki, Jeff Lovelace, Goody LeLash and Ronald Skinner. Also in attendance, Stella Beaudoin, Recording Secretary.

Ms. Tucker called the meeting to order at 8:27p.m.

Motion made by Doug Demarest to place the 2012 meeting schedule under New Business.

Motion seconded by Pam Bernardini and approved unanimously.

Review and Approve the November 10, 2011 Minutes

Recommended changes to the Minutes are noted in italics:

Page 2 Viney Hill Brook re Forest Glade. Add "*Mr. Lovelace*".

Page 2, second from last paragraph should be "*Hemlock Grove*".

Motion made by Doug Demarest to approve as amended the November 10, 2011 meeting Minutes.

Motion seconded by Pam Bernardini and passed unanimously.

Old Business

Viney Hill Brook Park

Jeff Lovelace stated that all trails are in working order and the Forest Glade Trail is marked in purple markers. Mr. Lovelace noted that the maps have been changed but have not yet been printed. Mr. Helmecki asked if the photo was going to be changed. Mr. Lovelace indicated that the maps are not quite finalized however he wanted to have the maps available for the

Viney Hill Brook Park Essex Land Trust hike and plunge event which occurred on Saturday November 26, 2011.

Mr. Lovelace expressed his gratitude to Maria Lucarelli, Administrative Assistant in the First Selectman's office. Ms. Lucarelli copied the maps.

Mr. Lovelace reported that there was a meeting at Viney Hill Brook Park between Joseph Budrow, Essex WEO/ZEO and Robert Doane, P.E. Mr. Lovelace noted that he was out-of-town when the meeting occurred. Mr. Budrow however updated the Conservation Commission members with the following email which has been made a part of the record:

Hello Conservationists,

I met with Town Engineer Bob Doane today at VHBP where two wood roads intersect. The flooding there was in full bloom and the conditions were clear for Bob to recommend the best plan of action to see that flooding doesn't interfere with foot traffic in the future. In early-mid November I met Jeff Lovelace and Doug Demarest at the same site and flooding was evident then, too. The plan of action was to dig an open trench with gravel and water would flow from one side to another. I just didn't see that as viable seeing the topography was level on both sides and not sloped downhill in any way. So I thought it best to meet Bob there for his opinion. And here it is...

The source of the water to the north is simply an area where gravel excavation once took place and where water sits. Then it gradually flows pond-ward, leeching onto the wood roads in the process. Since the topography in this area does not change much the water does not move and thus we have the muddy, sloppy mess we see today. A trench would not solve the problem as it would simply hold water. And piping water from one side to the other also would not work because Bob did not see enough pitch to keep water flowing.

He recommended elevating the road by about a foot for a distance of 300 feet (my estimate). With an elevated road a pipe(s) could be inserted to keep water from ponding. Also, north of the intersecting wood roads there is a black tube semi-submerged that brings water from one side of the road directly to the pond. Extensive ponding occurs here and Bob suggests that the tube be worked on to improve its value.

The work probably could be done by Public Works and a conference with Bob and Dave Caroline will take place at the site in the future.

Please keep in touch with me on how the CC wants to go forward. The IWWC will need to approve this plan as the water ends up in a nearby watercourse. And work will be allowed after March 15, 2012.

Joseph Budrow
CZEO/WEA

In an email response from Chuck Corson member at large from the Essex Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission, the following has been made a part of the record:

Raising the road sounds best but, if it is wet for that great a distance, pipes may not be best. There are thin products available that would carry the water under the trail, while also keeping the surface dry and limiting settlement. Bob should review these and make recommendations, possibly with pipes also. The trail may need to be a bit higher where/if pipes pass under.

Chuck Corson

Per the Essex Inland Wetlands and Watercourses regulations, activity within the regulated wetland area is not allowed to occur between the months of October 15th through March 15th. Ms. Tucker stated that this work should not wait until March 15th.

Mr. Lovelace will contact Bob Doane, Town of Essex Engineer to arrange a meeting at the site and to seek direction and to discuss how to move forward.

Ms. Tucker asked to table this issue in order to gather additional information.

Bushy Hill Preserve Footbridges and Trails

Ms. Tucker went out to Bushy Hill Preserve on the Sunday of Thanksgiving weekend and started working at the meadow. Mr. Lovelace joined Ms. Tucker and while they were there they ran into Carl Kaufmann Jr. who suggested that the area could be cleaned up with a weed whacker.

Canfield Meadow Woods

Ms. Malan and Mr. Helmecki visited the site. Mr. Helmecki stated that there is a marker from the green trail to the white trail. There is however no marker at the fork where you go from the white to the orange trail.

Ms. Malan reported that a large chunk came off of the large tulip popular tree that has marker on it. Ms. Malan indicated that John Dube' of Deep River raises oxen and he and his son Eli will pull the felled tree out utilizing the oxen. Ms. Malen will coordinate this job with the Central CT Woodturners Association. The Central Connecticut Woodturners (CCW) was founded in 1994 to support the needs of wood turners in the central CT area. Its purpose is to promote a higher standard of excellence in woodturning. The CCW are comprised of artisans who utilize the wood to create art. Susan Malan and Goody LeLash will coordinate with Frank Hall and John Dube'.

New Business

Review and approve the 2012 meeting schedule.

Motion made by Pam Bernardini to accept the 2012 meeting schedule as presented.

Motion seconded by Jeff Lovelace and passed unanimously.

Sixth Annual New Year's Day Walk

Ms. Tucker stated that in keeping with the past years, Conservation Commission members will conduct their sixth annual New Year's day walk on January 1, 2012 at 10am. Members will meet at the passive parking area at Viney Hill Brook Park, rain or shine. Ms. Tucker reminded members that all might wish to contribute food offerings for a small breakfast that follows the walk.

Mr. Lovelace talked about the possibility of a ribbon cutting ceremony for the new Forest Glade Trail.

Discussion and Recommendations for Inland/Wetlands Liaison Representative

Ms. Tucker stated that it is with great appreciation that members thank Goody LeLash for her work as liaison to the IWWC and to thank her for the service as a valuable member to the Conservation Commission and to the Town of Essex, particularly during the difficult time when Ms. LeLash worked tirelessly to remediate the beaver situation at Viney Hill Brook Park.

Ms. Tucker referenced the upcoming vacancy as liaison to the IWWC noting that members-at-large of IWWC are appointed by the Essex Board of Selectmen. Ms. Tucker stated that the Essex IWWC membership is partially comprised of representatives from the Planning Commission, the Zoning Commission and the Conservation Commission. Mr. Helmecki suggested that members of the Conservation Commission might wish to serve as liaison on a rotating schedule. Ms. Tucker noted that she contacted Fran Nolan the Essex Town Clerk and asked her to look into the viability of the members of the Conservation Commission serving as liaison on a rotating schedule. Ms. Tucker is awaiting a response from Ms. Nolan.

There are two alternates on the Inland Wetlands Commission, Steve Knauth and Barbara Zernike. Ms. Tucker suggested that the alternate members on the IWWC might wish to consider serving on the Conservation Commission.

Other

- Ms. Pleva suggested that the Conservation Commission write a letter to the Essex Zoning Commission stating that the Essex Conservation Commission is in favor of accepting the 2004 Gateway recommendations as it is in keeping with the 2005 Essex Plan of Conservation and Development.

Ms. Pleva will draft the letter and seek feedback from Torrance Downes who is the senior planner for the Gateway Commission. Ms. Pleva will forward the draft letter to Conservation Commission members for their review. Members were in agreement that the Conservation Commission will accept the 2004 Gateway recommendations. Ms. Pleva will attend the Zoning Commission meeting on December 19, 2011 and she will read the final draft into the record at that meeting. Ms. Tucker thanked Ms. Pleva for arranging the Gateway presentation for this evening's meeting.

- A bill for the All Habitat Services for the phragmite treatment which occurred in October 2011. The balance was \$525 and the Commission was credited \$175 to the Park and Rec Commission for the permitting process.
- The purple marker signs were charged to the conservation Commission in the amount of \$208.

Motion made by Pam Bernardini to pay the bills.

Motion seconded by Doug Demarest and passed unanimously.

IWWC Report

Goody LeLash, liaison reported that the meeting will be conducted on December 13, 2011.

Adjournment

Motion made by MaryAnn Pleva to adjourn.

Motion seconded by Doug Demarest and passed unanimously.

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Conservation Commission adjourned at 9:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Stella C. Beaudoin
Recording Secretary

*The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Essex Conservation Commission is scheduled for January 12, 2011