

TOWN OF ESSEX
Conservation Commission

29 West Avenue • Essex, Connecticut 06426
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Executive Board

*Kathleen Tucker, Chairman
Jeffrey Lovelace, Vice Chairman
Frank Hall, Secretary*

Regular Members

*Richard Helmecki
Adrienne Forrest
Robert Ward
Mark J. Reeves*

Alternate Member

Jerri MacMillian

Minutes

Regular Meeting

**Thursday, October 1, 2015 at 7:30 P.M.
Town Hall, 29 West Avenue - Room B**

The Essex Conservation Commission conducted their Regular Meeting on October 1, 2015 in Room B of the Essex Town Hall.

Attending Members

Kay Tucker
Jeffrey Lovelace
Frank Hall
Richard Helmecki
Adrienne Forrest

Absent Members

Robert Ward
Jerri MacMillian
Mark Reeves

Staff: Stella Beaudoin, Recording Secretary

Audience: There were no audience members.

1. Call to Order

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

2. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

3. Review and approve September 3, 2015 Special Meeting Minutes:

MOTION made by F. Hall to approve the September 3, 2015 Regular Meeting Minutes as presented;

SECONDED by A. Forrest; **Voting In Favor:** K. Tucker, R. Helmecki, F. Hall, A. Forrest; **Opposed:** None;

Abstaining: J. Lovelace; **Approved:** 4/0/1.

4. Old Business to include:

a. Discuss Inland/Wetlands Application and Presentation

On September 22, 2015 F. Hall submitted a Permit application request to the Essex Land Use Office to be heard at the October 13, 2015 Inland Wetlands and Watercourse Commission meeting. The Conservation Commission is seeking an IWWC Permit for a proposal to install a pipe leveling device (Flexible Pond Leveler) and (exclusion) fencing project in Quarry Pond, within the Viney Hill Brook Preserve, to prevent the beavers from blocking the drain pipe.

b. Review and Approve Revised Conservation Commission Bylaws

Commissioners modified the Bylaws with a few minor amendments.

MOTION made by F. Hall to approve the revised Conservation Commission Bylaws as corrected and submitted on October 1, 2015; **SECONDED** by A. Forrest; **Voting In Favor:** K. Tucker, R. Helmecki, F. Hall, A. Forrest, J. Lovelace; **Opposed:** None; **Abstaining:** None; **Approved:** 5/0/0.

c. Discuss tools & equipment needed for October 11, 2015 work party

On October 11, 2015 members will meet at 8:30am at the passive parking area, Viney Hill Brook Preserve to clear saplings in the area of the wildflower meadow, to construct and repair the bog foot bridges in the area of Broadwalk and to install three mailboxes.

F. Hall will bring a portable drill. R. Helmecki will bring a chain saw, loppers and screws.

J. Lovelace reported that there is a growth of Autumn Olive in the area of the wildflower meadow which members will cut down during the upcoming work party.

d. Mowing and maintenance contractors

K Tucker spoke with Beverly Clark regarding the maintenance work her sons have done for the Commission in Viney Hill Brook Preserve, and they are working on obtaining EIN numbers. A detailed bill of their services is forthcoming.

e. Other

F Hall reported that he visited Viney Hill Brook Preserve, Quarry Pond area and there has been minimal increase in the water level. He cleared the north dam and increased the flow coming out of the north end of the culvert. The main drain is situated on the east side of Quarry Pond and there was no flow at the southerly intake. There has been a slight increase in tree cutting by the beavers and there was a felled tree about 6" in diameter on east side near the gravel path.

F Hall commented on a recent Hartford Courant article related to the increase of the bobcat population. The bobcat averages three feet in length and they weigh on average of 35 lbs. The article indicated that the bobcats have have been seen in every town within the state of Connecticut.

K. Tucker stated that beavers can range in weight from 25 lbs. up to 85 lbs.

J. Lovelace reported that on September 27th he walked Viney Hill Brook Park and found it to be well cut and maintained. J. Lovelace walked Broadwalk, the Purple trail, the Yellow trail and in the area of the Blue trail, there was a felled tree as a result of beaver activity.

J. Lovelace reported that he has recently visited Chile which retains one of the largest preserves in the world. There over 1,000 square miles of mountains, prairie, streams and glacier fed lakes. In the summer there are in excess of 100,000 visitors to this Preserve. J. Lovelace stated that in 1946, twenty beavers were trapped in Canada and flown to Tierra del Fuego, an island situated between Argentina and Chile at the southernmost tip of South America. The Argentinian President, Juan Peron imported the beavers in hopes that they would thrive and reproduce, fostering a fur trade in the economically lackluster territory. Six decades later the descendants of those 20 beavers number in the tens of thousands in Patagonia. The beavers have swum from Tierra del Fuego to the continent and beyond, and now occupy an unknown number of islands in the vast uninhabited archipelago, off the coast of southern Chile. As they have migrated to the north, building dams, creating ponds and procreating, they lay waste to vast tracts of land, which appear scorched or bulldozed. The destructive power of the beavers in Patagonia surprised ecologists in North America, where the same animals have been reintroduced to wetlands in need of restoration.

Argentina's Austral Center for Scientific Research (CADIC) has reported that the beaver pond's cause rivers to retain 75 percent more organic matter than they otherwise would, altering the watershed's carbon cycle. Fifty percent of Tierra del Fuego's riparian forests are now damaged by beavers and they are responsible for the biggest transformation of southern Patagonian forests since the last ice age.

J. Lovelace provided the following link for additional information through the Scientific American web site;
<http://scientificamerican.com/article/argentina-and-chile-decide-not-to-leave-it-to-beavers/>

R. Helmecki reported that he visited Bushy Hill Preserve and performed some maintenance related to trimming and cleaning.

R. Helmecki reported that there is no water in the small pond and no water in the Falls River.

5. New Business to include:

a. Discuss Conservation Commission's Town Report Fiscal Year 2014-15

K. Tucker distributed the article which will be incorporated into the Essex annual report for the 2014-2015 fiscal year. Members read through the draft, suggested modifications and K. Tucker will prepare a final version for the Town report.

MOTION made by F. Hall to accept the Conservation Commission's Town Report for Fiscal Year 2015-15 as corrected, for submission to Kelly Sterner, Town of Essex Deputy Treasurer; **SECONDED** by A. Forrest; **Voting In Favor:** K. Tucker, R. Helmecki, F. Hall, A. Forrest, J. Lovelace; **Opposed:** None; **Abstaining:** None; **Approved:** 5/0/0.

b. Other

There was no other business.

6. Financial Report

K. Tucker reported that as of June 30, 2015 the original budget appropriation was \$9,475 and the Commission has spent \$9,430 to date. The current fiscal year budget for the Commission is \$10,525 and Commission has spent \$500 to date.

K. Tucker spent \$9.84 for stamps to be utilized for Commission mailings, and is seeking reimbursement.

MOTION made by R Helmecki to approve reimbursement to K Tucker in the amount of \$9.84 for stamps.

SECONDED by A. Forrest; **Voting In Favor:** K. Tucker, R. Helmecki, F. Hall, A. Forrest, J. Lovelace;

Opposed: None; **Abstaining:** None; **Approved:** 5/0/0.

7. Inland Wetlands Liaison Report

J. Lovelace reported that the IWWC conducted their regular meeting on September 8, 2015. At that meeting two permits were approved; one permit was issued for removal and replacement of two bridges on Ivory Street, Ivoryton and the second permit was issued to Dan Ryan, Eagle Scout who is constructing a 30 foot long bridge span across a small stream in the Comstock ball park area. This is Essex Land Trust property.

8. Correspondence

F. Hall read into the record a letter from the Clinton Tree Committee who will facilitate an informational public meeting on October 26, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. related to invasive trees and species.

9. Adjournment

MOTION made by J. Lovelace to adjourn at 9:04pm to the next regularly scheduled meeting which will be conducted on November 5, 2015 at 7:30pm, Essex Town Hall, Conference Room A, 29 West Avenue, Essex, CT; **SECONDED** by J. Lovelace; **Voting In Favor:** K. Tucker, F. Hall, R. Helmecki, J. Lovelace and A. Forrest; **Opposed:** None; **Abstaining:** None; **Approved:** 5/0/0.

Respectfully submitted,

Stella C. Beaudoin
Recording Secretary