

TOWN OF ESSEX
Conservation Commission

29 West Avenue • Essex, Connecticut 06426
Telephone (860) 767-4340 • FAX (860) 767-8509

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

Unapproved

Minutes

Special Meeting

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

The Essex Conservation Commission conducted a Special Meeting on December 1, 2015 in Room B of the Essex Town Hall.

Attending Members

Kay Tucker
Jeffrey Lovelace
Mark Reeves
Richard Helmecki

Absent Members

Frank Hall
Jerri MacMillian
Adrienne Forrest
Robert Ward

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. Election of Officers

J. Lovelace nominated K. Tucker for the Chairman.

MOTION made by J. Lovelace to nominate Kay Tucker as Conservation Commission Chair; **SECONDED** by R. Helmecki; **Voting In Favor:** K. Tucker, J. Lovelace, R. Helmeck, M. Reeves; **Opposed:** None; **Abstaining:** None; **Approved:** 4/0/0.

MOTION made by M. Reeves to nominate Jeffrey Lovelace as Conservation Commission Vice Chair; **SECONDED** by R. Helmecki; **Voting In Favor:** K. Tucker, J. Lovelace, R. Helmeck, M. Reeves; **Opposed:** None; **Abstaining:** None; **Approved:** 4/0/0.

MOTION made by M. Reeves to nominate F. Hall as Conservation Commission Secretary; **SECONDED** by R. Helmecki; **Voting In Favor:** K. Tucker, J. Lovelace, R. Helmeck, M. Reeves; **Opposed:** None; **Abstaining:** None; **Approved:** 4/0/0.

3. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

4. Review and Approve November, 2015 Meeting Minutes:

MOTION made by M. Reeves to approve the November, 2015 Regular Meeting Minutes with the following amendments; Page 2, bottom of page “Richard Helmecki said that each beaver *pair* will produce two kits *or more* per year.” Page 3, under Other: “K Tucker reported that the first selectmen has reappointed A. Forrest, K. Tucker, J. MacMillian, *R Helmecki*”; **SECONDED** by J. Lovelace; **Voting In Favor:** K. Tucker, J. Lovelace, R. Helmecki, M. Reeves; **Opposed:** None; **Abstaining:** None; **Approved:** 4/0/0.

5. Old Business:

A. Discuss Flow Pipe & Exclusion Fence Quarry Pond

1. Current Status

M. Reeves stated that he visited the site of installation today and there are a few trees down, however the flow pipe and exclusion fence is working fine and performing exactly as expected. It is apparent that the beavers have attempted to bring in large trees, however the exclusion fence has thwarted their efforts. The amount of water in the culvert remains status quo and the big turtle rock in the middle of the pond is exposed up to 18”, whereas before the installation of the flow pipe and the exclusion fence it was barely visible.

2. Unauthorized changes & Beaver Solutions remedies

Immediately after installation, Beaver Solutions visited the installation to ensure all was working properly and to handle a repair. Kay Tucker e-mailed the Selectmen’s office stating asking that an announcement be posted on the town’s web-site referencing the installation of the flexible pipe and exclusion fence at Quarry Pond.

3. Inquiries, comments, and commissioners’ responses

M. Reeves suggested the installation of a sign for educational purposes which would also serve to alert the public that this is Town property.

B. Trail Reports

1. Viney Hill Brook Preserve

J. Lovelace walked the Quarry Pond trail today and the Broadwalk Trail, the White, Yellow and Purple Trails and all seemed to be in order.

J. Lovelace stated that the beavers have taken out ten or so trees on the other side of Broadwalk.

K. Tucker reported that in the area of the wildflower meadow, Clark’s Custom Service has done a great job of clearing the area. There are however a number of Autumn Olive Trees along the fence and along the back in the area of the hardwoods.

M. Reeves stated that he met Dave Caroline, Town Crew Foreman today at the passive area of Viney Hill Brook Park and discussed the Town Crew doing about upgrades to the parking lot.

2. Canfield-Meadow Woods - No report.

3. Bushy Hill

R. Helmecki commented on the clear cutting work commissioners conducted on two separate occasions within Bushy Hill Preserve. On one of the cuts involving a general clean up, all of the logs were removed. On the second cutting, Commissioners cut further back, however it was agreed that the wood that was cut was to be left onsite and allowed to naturally decay. R. Helmecki stated that he was on site last Sunday, and in the location of the discarded wood there are large briars and overgrowth. R Helmecki stated that he cleared a small path and found that there were large logs which would make it difficult to bring in machinery to clean up the area. R. Helemcki noted that some of the wood is rotted and it is heavy, however he noted that there were a good deal of birds in that area. R. Helmecki suggested that the Commission hire someone to come in and mow and brush hog the area. R Helmecki, M. Reeves and J. Lovelace will invite Clark's Custom Services to join them on a trip to the site to assess the work that needs to be done.

R. Helmecki stated that it appears that there is an eagle's nest on the high tension wire bordering Broadwalk and the Lee Company at Viney Hill Brook Park.

C. Financial Expenditures

Through November, 2015, the Commission has expended \$3,364 leaving a balance of \$7,000 left remaining in the Conservation Commission budget through June 30, 2015. Some of that available balance will be expended toward payment to Beaver Solutions in the amount of \$1,930.

Additional invoices to be paid are Clark's Custom Services for mowing at Bushy Hill Park in the amount of \$400 and mowing at Viney Hill Brook Park in the amount of \$600. Those invoices do not include the recent mowing of the wildflower meadow for which K. Tucker received a quote of approximately \$550. Once these invoices are paid, the available balance will be \$3,681.00 for the remainder of the year.

K. Tucker stated that she has placed a request to All Habitat to provide a quote on the removal of phragmites and for the Japanese Knotweed and Autumn Olive trees. All Habitat will inspect the site and provide a a quote for Autumn Olive treatment. However K. Tucker noted that the previous contract for phragmite and Japanese Knotweed removal was \$2,000. K Tucker suggested budgeting the \$2,000 in this year's current budget, leaving \$1,681 left remaining in the budget through June 30, 2016.

M. Reeves suggested that the Commission publish a public thank you for all of the efforts made and donations made toward subsidizing the remediation services provided by Beaver Solutions. Based on the Conservation Commission's new ongoing obligation for beaver remediation, M. Reeves suggested, in order to maintain the many hours of sweat equity commitment that the Conservation Commission members have devoted in conjunction with the remediation, that the Commission request additional funding to be included in the 2016/17 budget.

D. Organize 10th Annual New Year's Day Hike

J. Lovelace has agreed to lead the group this year. M. Reeves will do a brief presentation on the Flexible Pipe and Exclusion Fence; R. Ward will present briefly on the pond draw-down. F. Hall will describe the volunteers' involvement in breaking up the beaver dams. The Hike will begin at 10:00 AM. Members and the public are asked to bring food to share. Dogs will not be permitted on the walk. The walk will take an hour or so.

6. New Business

A. Prepare Budget for FY 2016-2017

Proposed 2016/17 FY Budget:

Part time payroll	\$2500
Office supplies	100
Printing services	300
Other/Consultants	300
Grounds maintenance & repair	9500

Total \$12,700

K. Tucker stated that the Conservation Commission contributed \$500 in 2008 to the Essex Land Trust toward the construction of a kiosk. K. Tucker suggested that members decide what type of project they would like to embark on, i.e., footbridges, bat house and then make a determination as to what type of lumber will be needed to move forward with the project. The Essex Land Trust will be asked to pay \$500. toward the cost of the lumber.

A few of the projects the Commission would like to accomplish in the upcoming year includes the construction of the kiosk in Bushy Hill Preserve and Bushy Hill Preserve forest management.

Members agreed to earmark \$4,750 toward mowing of the \$9,500 toward the grounds maintenance and repair budget.

7. Inland/Wetlands Report

J Lovelace reported that at the November 10, 2015 IWWC meeting, a Permit was approved for Application No. 15-17 – Patricia Park, 13 Hemlock Drive. This is an application to locate a concrete stairway with retaining walls within a deeded right-of-way to South Cove

8. Correspondence

There was no correspondence.

9. Open Discussion

J. Lovelace referenced to the 2014/15 Essex Annual report and commented on the excellent coverage that was given to the Conservation Commission. J. Lovelace commented on the beautiful photos featured in the 2016 Essex Savings Bank calendar with photo credit to Conservation Commission member, M. Reeves who is an avid photographer.

K. Tucker commented on the contribution of the Conservation Commission to the Planning Commission as related to the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD). K. Tucker noted the Town Transportation Study which is referenced in the POCD and suggested that Commission members acquaint themselves with the Study.

K. Tucker briefly discussed the Freedom of Information criteria and the importance of the Commission remaining in compliance with those guidelines.

10. Adjournment

MOTION made by M. Reeves to adjourn the special meeting at 9:07pm to the next regularly scheduled meeting which will be conducted on January 7, 2016 at 7:30pm, Essex Town Hall, Conference Room A, 29 West Avenue, Essex, CT; **SECONDED** by R. Helmecki; **Voting In Favor:** K. Tucker, M. Reeves, R. Helmecki, J. Lovelace; **Opposed:** None; **Abstaining:** None; **Approved:** 4/0/0.

Respectfully submitted,

Stella C. Beaudoin
Recording Secretary