



TOWN OF ESSEX
Conservation Commission

29 West Avenue • Essex, Connecticut 06426
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Executive Board

Kathleen Tucker, Chairman
Jeffrey Lovelace, Vice Chairman
Adrienne Forrest, Secretary

Regular Members

Frank Hall
Richard Helmecki
Mark J. Reeves
Jim O'Brien

Alternate Member

Roger Field
Vacancy

Unapproved

Minutes Regular Meeting
Thursday, January 10, 2019 at 7:30 P.M.

The Essex Conservation Commission conducted their regularly scheduled meeting on Thursday, January 10, 2019 in Room B of the Essex Town Hall.

Attending Members

Kay Tucker
Jeffrey Lovelace
Adrienne Forrest
Frank Hall
Jim O'Brien
Mark Reeves
Roger Field seated for R Helmecki

Absent Members

Richard Helmecki

Staff: Stella Beaudoin, Recording Clerk

Audience: There were no audience members.

1. Call to Order

K Tucker called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. Seated for the meeting were K Tucker, R Field, J O'Brien, A Forrest, M Reeves, J Lovelace, F Hall.

2. Public Comment

There was no public comment

3. Review and Approve Meeting Minutes

A. December 13, 2018 Meeting Minutes

MOTION made by J O'Brien to approve the Minutes of the December 13, 2018 meeting with the following amendment: 1) Page 2, under Financial Report, 2nd paragraph to read: "projected expenditures as discussed show the Commission may not have enough funds to cover other needs" 2) Page 3, under Bushy Hill Preserve, 2nd paragraph, correct the spelling of "Mugwort"; 3) Page 2, under 4a, second sentence "it was suggested that we *try to keep* the Japanese Knotweed under control"; 4) Page 2, second paragraph, second sentence to read: "Regarding the road abutting Viney Hill Brook Park that runs out along the Eversource Power lines, Frank Hall stated"; 5) Page 3, Under Canfield Meadow Woods Preserve, first sentence, capitalize "Meadow"; **SECONDED** by R Field; **Voting in Favor:** K Tucker, R Field, J O'Brien A Forrest, M Reeves J Lovelace F Hall; **Opposed:** None; **Abstaining:** None; **Approved:** 7/0/0.

Discussion: No further discussion.

3. Old Business to include:

A. Review and Approve Budget for Fiscal Year 2019-2020

K Tucker reported that the proposed expenditures for the 2019/20 budget differ from Fiscal Year 2018-2019 by \$175. due to the need to purchase some maintenance equipment and tools. Commissioners provide the labor on many of the trails in the three preserves. K Tucker briefly discussed the proposed expenditures for the 2019/2020.

K Tucker reported that the Commission will request the release of the Escrow Fund the amount of \$595 to Beaver Solutions for annual inspection and for the production of the beaver flyers Fiscal Year 2018-2019.

MOTION made by F Hall to approve the budget for fiscal year 2019/2020 as presented; **SECONDED** by M Reeves. Discussion followed initiated by J. O'Brien and M. Reeves. Both commissioners noted that keeping the budget flat in order to obtain Board of Finance budget approval would not serve the Town. The Town expects our preserves to remain safe and useable.

F. Hall withdrew his original motion. After additional discussion, the Commission agreed to increase the proposed 2019-2020 Budget by \$325. Decision for the budget increase factors in inflation, increased professional vendors' fees and the inspections at two sites to ensure that the beaver fencing and flexible pipes are functioning properly. The beaver fencing and flexible pipe inspections cost \$595 and will be paid from the Town's designated beaver Escrow Fund during the current Fiscal Year 2018-2019. This account is being depleted and will not be available for draw-down in 2019-2020.

MOTION made by F. Hall to approve and submit the amended Budget Fiscal Year 2019-2020. M Reeves seconded. **Voting in Favor:** K Tucker, R Field, J O'Brien A Forrest, M Reeves J Lovelace F Hall; **Opposed:** None; **Abstaining:** None; **Approved:** 7/0/0.

Discussion: No further discussion.

B. New Map Revisions and Update

J Lovelace reported that he met with Jim Denham, Essex Land Trust, regarding the new map revisions.

J Lovelace distributed the final draft of the Viney Hill Brook map, pointing out some corrections. Commissioners offered minor suggestions to the draft map.

MOTION made by M Reeves to authorize J Lovelace to conclude the Viney Hill Brook Preserve map work with the Essex Land Trust as per the comments from the table this evening; **SECONDED** by F Hall; **Voting in Favor:** K Tucker, R Field, J O'Brien A Forrest, M Reeves J Lovelace F Hall; **Opposed:** None; **Abstaining:** None; **Approved:** 7/0/0.

Discussion: No further discussion.

C. Trail Conditions and Reports

1. Canfield Meadow Woods

R Field reported that one Black Birch tree came down on the Orange trail at the Book Hill Woods trail head. R Field reported that he spent a good deal of time clearing at the Book Hill Woods trail entrance and he noticed a fair number of people using the trail, many with dogs. R Field reported that the property is in good shape.

2. Bushy Hill Preserve

No report.

3. Viney Hill Brook Preserve

A Forrest reported that the December 15th work party, comprised of Richard Helmecki, Frank Hall, Kay Tucker, Jim O'Brien, and herself moved the bog-bridges out of the melting ice and repositioned them so that hikers exiting the Eagle Scout Bridge can walk more comfortably along the Broadwalk Trail. R. Helmecki made repairs to the unhinged screws in some of the bog bridges. Afterwards, four commissioners walked the purple trail looking for unauthorized metal grates and bike tracks. At the December 2018 Commission meeting, R Helmecki reported that someone had placed grates making an additional trail, which is not part of Viney Hill Brook Preserve. Houses abutt the well-maintained grated and wooden board walk.

R Field reported that on another occasion he hiked through the southern section of Viney Hill Brook Preserve to the Old Saybrook Town line following the path to an open meadow. R Field reported that the trail was lightly used and he proposed the installation of a sign giving trail rules and regulations to alert hikers or bicyclists that they are entering Essex Viney Hill Brook Preserve and that bicycles are not allowed. R Field stated that there is a stream running in the area of the existing purple trail. R Field also stated that there are 3 rotting, 6" diameter Locust trees that he would like to cut down to create a bog bridge to make that part of the trail more accessible.

4. Other

J O'Brien asked if the Scouts are looking for a project. F Hall will provide J O'Brien with Scout leader contact information.

5. New Business

A Forrest reported that there is a local resident who has expressed interest in joining the Conservation Commission. R. Field reported meeting a resident who is ready to volunteer his chain saw services.

B. Other

There was no other business.

6. Financial Report

K Tucker reviewed the expenditures made to date from the 2018/19 Fiscal Year budget. A brief discussion followed on projected expenditures to June 30, 2019.

7. Adjournment

MOTION made by A Forrest to adjourn the meeting at 9:04 PM until the March 14, 2019 regularly scheduled meeting at 7:30pm, Essex Town Hall, Conference Room B, 29 West Avenue, Essex, CT;
SECONDED by J Lovelace; **Voting in Favor:** K Tucker, R Field, J O'Brien, A Forrest, M Reeves, J Lovelace, F Hall; **Opposed:** None; **Abstaining:** None; **Approved:** 7/0/0.

Discussion: No further discussion.

Respectfully submitted,

Stella C. Beaudoin
Recording Clerk