



TOWN OF ESSEX
Conservation Commission

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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

Essex Conservation Commission
Minutes Regular Meeting
Thursday, September 9, 2021

The Essex Conservation Commission conducted their regularly scheduled meeting on Thursday, September 9, 2021 at 7:30 pm.

Attending Members

K Tucker
F Hall
R Helmecki
M Reeves
A Forrest

Absent Members

J Lovelace
R Field
J O'Brien

1. Call to Order

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

2. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

3. Review and Approve August 12, 2021 Meeting Minutes

K Tucker made one correction to the Minutes from the August meeting on page 2, under Viney Hill Brook. The pond leveler was described as "Robida's pond leveler" but it should be "right of way road pond leveler." M Reeves made the motion to approve the minutes with the correction. F Hall seconded. **Voting in Favor:** K Tucker, F Hall, R Helmecki, M Reeves and A Forrest. **Opposed:** None; **Approved:** 5/0/0. No further discussion.

4. Old Business to include

A. Trail Reports

1. Bushy Hill Preserve

R Helmecki reported a tree had fallen on the ECC Oakledge Drive entrance trail taking out signs marking the trail. R Helmecki made repairs and replaced the signs. R Helmecki and K Tucker also cleared the trail leading from Oakledge parking lot into the preserve. They walked trails around the preserve and reported they were in good shape. K Tucker also felt that the displaced erosion diverter should be repositioned. After some discussion as to whether the diverter is preventing erosion as intended, commissioners decided to table the matter until it is checked more thoroughly.

K Tucker mentioned All Habitat, Inc., did mosquito remediation on June 16, July 19, and August 13. When All Habitat inspected in August, they found evidence of adult mosquitoes and larvae. They will inspect and treat if needed in September. K Tucker was asked where exactly All Habitat does their treatment and if it remains the same as they've done in the past. It was reported All Habitat generally treats areas with standing water as that is the breeding ground for mosquitoes. The question was asked whether the rest of the preserve needs treatment. K Tucker suggested that R. Helmecki call All Habitat for definitive detail on their professional inspections and remediation. Weeds have emerged through the vinca cover bordering the cleared pond area that need to be cut back. Commissioners will go back and clear them.

2. Viney Hill Brook

F Hall walked the trails at VHBP and reported that the Quarry Pond Trail needed trimming. As reported in August, weeds and shrubs were overgrown and impinging on trail access. The Turtle Trail needs some tree cutting. The trees are small and can be done by the commissioners with a chain saw.

The pond levelers are doing well. The ponds didn't appear to be overly full. F Hall said due to the copious amount of rain we had in the last month that water from the right of way road pond appeared to have flowed over Broadwalk. Debris was evident where the water had flowed. The screen over the culvert (cattle panels) needs to be staked back in. It was decided it was too small a job for Mike Callahan, Beaver Solutions, Inc. M Reeves and F Hall agreed to repair the cattle panels and to chain saw the small trees as needed.

All Habitat to reschedule a final phragmite treatment as they were rained out on the day scheduled.

3. Canfield Meadow Woods

R Field submitted his report via email: All trails surveyed since the heavy rain of last week and with the exception of a washed-out bridge (now repaired), trails are in good shape. The bridge in question is located at the southern end of the green or Long Trail and had washed downstream about 30 feet. Scott McCoid and chief steward, Lief Owens, ELT, were able to get it back in place.

K Tucker suggested a site-walk of Canfield Woods with stewards of the Essex Land Trust to locate areas in need of improvement. The ECC reviewed a survey map of Canfield Meadow Woods and the historical acquisition of the property. Tuesday, September 21, 9:00 AM was set with a rain date of Thursday, September 23, 9:00 AM. Everyone will meet at the Dennison Road parking area.

5. New Business

Several ECC commissioners' terms expire December, 2021. A Forrest declined reappointment. R Helmecki and K Tucker will ask the first selectman to consider renewing their terms of service.

6. Financial

ECC FYE 2020-21 was under budget. Funds designated to cover year-end expenditures had not been properly encumbered. (In years past a form was sent from the Financial Office requesting encumbrances. No form was received by the ECC for encumbrances FYE June 30, 2021.). ECC Minutes note that services were contracted for but professional surveying, map printing, and signs were not completed nor invoiced by FYE. All of these costs, approximately \$2000.00, will be added to the ECC 2021-22 budget. These costs will show a negative to an already limited budget. Once all contracted services have been paid, a letter from the ECC will be sent to the First Selectman and Board of Finance explaining this deficit.

7. Other

M Reeves shared with the commissioners an article regarding Old Lyme's management of beavers and the difficulty of what to do when they impact private property. Also, Connecticut Magazine had an excellent article on Canfield Meadow Woods in their August, 2021 magazine.

8. Adjournment

MOTION made by M Reeves at 8:33 pm to adjourn until the October 14, 2022 regularly scheduled meeting; **SECONDED** by F Hall; **Voting in Favor:** K Tucker, F Hall, R Helmecki, M Reeves and A Forrest. **Opposed:** None. **Abstaining:** None; **Approved:** 5/0/0. No further discussion.

Respectfully submitted,

Adrienne Forrest
Secretary