



TOWN OF ESSEX
Conservation Commission

Executive Board

Kathleen Tucker, Chairman
Jeffrey Lovelace, Vice Chairman

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Regular Members

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

Alternate Member

Roger Field
Vacancy

Minutes of the Meeting
Thursday, December 9, 2021

The Essex Conservation Commission conducted their regularly scheduled meeting on Thursday, December 9, 2021 at 7:30pm in Room A at Essex Town Hall.

Attending Members (in alphabetical order): F. Hall, R. Helmecki, J. Lovelace, M. Reeves, K. Tucker

Absent members: R. Field, J. O'Brien

1. Call to Order and Roll Call
 - A. K. Tucker recognized that the meeting had a quorum and called the meeting to order at 7:30pm.
2. Public Comments: There was no public business.
3. Prior to discussing Election of Officers, M. Reeves asked if the annual calendar could first be discussed in regards to moving the starting time of the meeting from 7:30pm to 7:00pm. With a motion by J. Lovelace, and a 2nd by F. Hall, all members agreed to first discuss the proposed time change. M. Reeves said that it would be easier for members to begin the meeting at 7:00pm, as opposed to 7:30pm, to allow for enough time for the meeting to end by 9:00pm, and for all members to get home at a reasonable time. With a motion by M. Reeves, and a 2nd by F. Hall, all agreed to the new start time of 7:00pm. Clerk S. McCann was directed to revise the annual calendar accordingly and submit to J. Marzi and the Town Clerk's office by the end of December, and to also alert Town Hall to update the website.
4. Election of Officers 2022: With a motion by J. Lovelace, and a 2nd by R. Helmecki, the ECC nominated K. Tucker for Chairman. With a motion by R. Helmecki, and a 2nd by F. Hall, J. Lovelace was nominated for Vice-Chair. R. Helmecki noted that all of the correspondence, including the Agenda, should include the commissioner's names on the letterhead.
5. Review and Approve November 10, 2021 Special Meeting Minutes: With a motion by F. Hall, and a 2nd by R. Helmecki, three members agreed to accept the minutes with one correction: to strike the statement found at 3. Viney Hill Brook Preserve: c: Right-of-Way Culvert Clean-

Out: "The north end of the quarry pond is filled up with debris." M. Reeves and J. Lovelace abstained from voting as they did not attend the November 10 meeting.

6. Old Business:

A. Trail Conditions, Management, Maintenance:

1. **Bushy Hill Preserve:**

a. Emergency Access Walk-through: R. Helmecki reported that he walked the blue and red trails, and part of the ELT's former Platt property trails, with Myron Stacks on November 16, to assess if a rescue vehicle could get through during an emergency. It was determined that half a dozen saplings need to be removed in order for a rescue vehicle to pass through. With a motion by R. Helmecki, and a 2nd by F. Hall, the recommendation carried. R. Helmecki will contact M. Stacks of the decision to proceed with sapling clearing.

b. Surveyor's Markers: K. Tucker reported that Bob Doane will write up a description of the markers. She also said that she would like to cut down some of the invasive prickles abutting the entrance trail. J. Lovelace recommended that the ECC purchase battery-operated clippers (hedge trimmers) that can operate for 45-minutes with battery-operated power. The members discussed that these could be purchased in the spring depending on funds remaining in the FY budget.

2. **Canfield Meadow Woods:**

a. ELT December 4, Sponsored Hike: F. Hall reported that he attended the hike along with 70 to 80 other participants. A geologist discussed the history of the earth's crust when North and South America separated from Africa. The Canfield Meadow Woods rocks were created when the plate from Africa ran into the Connecticut land mass. Rocks were created from the pressure and heat of that occurrence. The strange noises that are sometimes heard in Moodus can be attributed to the movement of this crust. Jacob's Rock was formed as part of this movement from Africa. The geologist reported that an ELT trail marker that indicates that the exposed rock is 100 million years old should really state that it is 600 million years old.

3. **Viney Hill Brook Preserve:**

a. Wollock's Pond Trail Work Party, November 29: R. Helmecki, F. Hall, and R. Field cut back overgrown vines and invasives to widen the green trail. R. Helmecki suggested that the sink holes and divots be marked with caution tape. K. Tucker walked Wollocks Pond trail with friends several days after the work party clean-up and found the trail beautiful and easy to access. F. Hall and R. Helmecki cut back Forest Glade, the purple trail, on November 24. Also, on November 24, F. Hall and M. Reeves trimmed around Observation Rock. K. Tucker discussed with J. Lovelace the wildflower meadow mowing. M. Reeves suggested that Clark's Custom Service be notified to add the wildflower meadow dormant mowing to their spring mowing calendar while the ground is still frozen.

b. Surveyor's Markers: K. Tucker reported that on November 29th, while inspecting the surveyor's stakes and flags with J O'Brien, they met one of the

abutting owners on the Quarry Pond trail. Commissioners briefly discussed installing Town of Essex “No Public Access” boundary signs, in exchange for the owner’s “No Trespassing” signs currently in place, once the survey data is received from Doane Engineering, PC.

- B. Review and Approve ECC Scheduled Meeting Calendar 2022 (see above).
 - C. Other: R. Helmecki and M. Reeves discussed the importance of leaving downed trees as part of the wildlife habitat.
- 7. New Business: M. Reeves asked that when ECC contracts with Beaver Solutions, Inc., for annual inspection, to inquire if M Callahan can determine if beavers still lodge in Quarry Pond. F. Hall thought the beavers were in Wollock’s Pond, not Quarry Pond. J. Lovelace thinks the beavers have left Quarry Pond and have moved south to Viney Brook. K. Tucker reminded R. Helmecki to ask All Habitat Services about continuing mosquito treatments in Bushy Hill Preserve. J. Lovelace also asked the commission to consider tick treatments, especially at VHBP. M. Reeves said that members should make a wish list about what is needed for the ECC 2022-2023 Budget.
 - 8. Financial Report and Expenditures: Department of Finance, Essex Town Hall, re-categorized \$250, cost of printing of Bushy Hill and VHBP maps, from professional services to printing services FYTD. No other service invoices received.
 - 9. Other Commission Business: F. Hall asked how members would know if meetings are canceled due to weather. Cancellation determined by town hall. ECC will circulate an updated member contact list for this purpose.
 - 10. Adjournment: With a motion by M. Reeves, and a second by J. Lovelace, the meeting was adjourned at 8:30pm.

Next Regularly Scheduled Meeting January 13, 2022 at 7:00pm.