

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*  
*Frank Hall*

**Alternate Member**

*Jerri MacMillan*

**Unapproved**

**Minutes**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**Thursday, May 7, 2015 at 7:30 P.M.**  
**Town Hall, 29 West Avenue - Room B**

The Essex Conservation Commission conducted their Regular Meeting on May 7, 2015 in Room B of the Essex Town Hall.

**Attending Members**

Kay Tucker  
Richard Helmecki  
Adrienne Forrest  
Robert Ward  
Frank Hall  
Jeffrey Lovelace  
Jerri MacMillan  
Mark Reeves joined the meeting at 7:40 p.m.

**Absent Members**

Audience: Elise Kressley, North Main St., Essex, CT

**1. Call to Order**

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

E. Kressley expressed concern about the effects of the application of pesticides to not only humans but also to the marine and aquatic life within the Town's preserves and the effects of the pesticide in the run-off into the ponds and into the watershed.

E. Kressley commented on the tick-borne Powassam Virus in humans and suggested the use of public poster boards situated at the entrances, and within the Town's preserves, displaying a visual of the various ticks and urge visitors to take precautions.

**2. Old Business:**

**a. Viney Hill Brook Park**

## **1. Report on Current Volunteers**

F. Hall reported that there are five volunteers; Elise Kressley, Elizabeth and Richard Alvord, Chris Pimley, Bob Ward and Dana Hill. There is a weekly schedule for each volunteer which covers at least one day of the week. F. Hall reported that volunteers who have checked for beaver activity under the Eagle Scout bridge have reported very little activity in that area. The volunteers have reported that there is an area that is 30 to 40 feet in width which extends along the creek where the beavers are damming the outlet to the north of the Scout bridge. This area needs to be cleared daily. The volunteers also check the Main Drain which the beavers have dammed up that is located on the northeast side of the pond.

## **2. Discuss Conditions at and Around Quarry Pond and Options**

The water level is receding, and once the Main Drain has been cleared and protected, there is a likelihood that volunteers will not be needed on a daily basis.

F Hall stated that Andy Kressley, Deputy Chief of Essex Fire Department has volunteered to clear the drain when the necessary approvals have been obtained to perform the work. F. Hall stated that he has received one signed waiver from E. Kressley. F. Hall stated that the verbiage on the waiver is somewhat restrictive. F. Hall will email a copy of the waiver to Commissioners.

F Hall stated that he visited the circumference of the pond this week and the beavers have some trees cut within 50 feet of the pond. The beavers have taken down small saplings and trees north of the Scout bridge in what appears to be attempts to dam the creek. F. Hall stated that the lily pads are the beaver's main source of food during the summer months.

J. MacMillian suggested that F Hall create a written document which states the expectations of the volunteers to include their duties, etc.

J. Lovelace distributed pictures that he took on November 2014 and on May 2, 2015 of the pond at Viney Hill Brook Preserve which reflects the disparity in the water level over the past several months. J. Lovelace reported that in 2014, a tremendous amount of water was flowing from the outlet pipe, however at this time there is very little flow.

J. Lovelace stated that Wollock Pond had no increase in the water level. J. Lovelace asked if the volunteers are working on the Main Drain.

F. Hall stated that volunteers are working on clearing the drain, however it has become clogged again. F. Hall suggested the installation of an exclusion fence. Beaver Solutions quoted \$250 to install the exclusion fence. F. Hall recommended that the Commission utilize money from the escrow account to pay for the installation of the exclusion fence.

K Tucker stated that the installation of an exclusion fence requires Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission Permit and DEEP Permits.

J. Lovelace stated that he is opposed to the installation of the exclusion fence and suggested raking the area around the pipe.

Members will meet on Sunday, May 17, 2015 at 10:00am at the passive parking area for the purpose of cleaning out the Main Drain debris in the pond. Members will wear their Conservation Commission hats and K. Tucker suggested that members bring roof rake, pond rake, pruner and gloves.

R. Helmecki stated that he is in favor of installing the exclusion fence.

J. Lovelace will discuss the installation of the exclusion fence at the May 12, 2015 Essex Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission meeting, and at that time he will inquire about the process of receiving approval for semi-annual clearing of the Main Drain in the pond at Viney Hill Brook.

M. Reeves suggested the installation of 4' x 16' foot long, galvanized steel panels, dropped in the water and tied down with steel stakes. M. Reeves stated that Tractor Supply in Old Saybrook sells the panels for around \$22 each and the installation is simple in that the panels drop right into place.

### 3. Tick Control

K. Tucker stated that the ticks have in the past, been treated in the area around Quarry Pond, to Broadwalk and extending up to the Clark gate. K. Tucker stated that the potential health affects surrounding the use of pesticides has been a topic of previous discussions.

R. Helmecki recommended the cessation of the use of pesticides within the Preserves. R. Helmecki suggested that the grass will be kept mowed as a safeguard against tick infestation.

J. MacMillian stated that the tick infestation she has encountered during her walks in the Preserve has been overwhelming. She has used a DEET compound which was ineffective, and then used a formula that is used on horses, which was also ineffective. J. MacMillian stated that if the Commission is not going to treat the ticks, signage should be posted warning the public of the tick situation.

F Hall stated that the Essex Land Trust does not utilize pesticides in any of their properties except for special situations.

R. Ward reported that he contacted the townships of Hadley, MA and East Granby, CT and neither of these two townships utilize pesticides application, as they would like residents visting their Preserves to take personal precautions.

**MOTION** made by R. Helmecki, going forward to eliminate the use of all pesticides within Bushy Hill Park, Viney Hill Brook Park, Canfield Meadow Woods; **SECONDED** by F. Hall; **Voting In Favor:** R. Helmecki, F. Hall, M. Reeves, R. Ward; **Opposed:** K. Tucker, J. Lovelace, A. Forrest; **Abstaining:** None; **Motion Carried:** 4/3/0.

A Larvicide treatment will be applied this year.

J. Lovelace suggested the installation of two signs at the entrance to Viney Hill Brook Park, at Bushy Hill Park and at Canfield Meadow Woods which mention tick infestation and urge visitors to take precautions.

**MOTION** made by J. Lovelace to authorize M. Reeves to purchase six plastic signs spending up to \$350 to be posted at to Viney Hill Brook Park, Bushy Hill Preserve and Canfield Meadow Woods; **SECONDED** by F. Hall; **Voting In Favor:** R. Helmecki, F. Hall, M. Reeves, R. Ward K. Tucker, J. Lovelace, A. Forrest; **Opposed:** None; **Abstaining:** None; **Motion Carried:** 7/0/0.

F. Hall asked to table to the June 2015 meeting discussion on the Viney Hill Brook Park, Quarry Pond proposed tree protection action plan.

#### **4. June Public Trail Walk**

J. MacMillian stated that she will not facilitate a previously discussed trail walk due to the tick infestation. There are two scheduled hikes in June on that same day; one at Canfield Meadow Woods and one at Falls River.

#### **5. Other**

R. Helmecki suggested that the Preserves be mowed more frequently so as to control the tick population. The areas of discussion were Broadwalk, all the way around to Quarry Pond, the Blue trail, the right of way road from the two pillars up to Mr. Clark's property and the purple trail.

##### **b. Bushy Hill Preserve**

###### **1. Projects and Trail Reports**

R Helmecki reported that he and K. Tucker replaced four large boards on the Scout Bridge. R Helmecki purchased an additional six boards and a new chain for the chainsaw. The cost for the boards was \$42.39 and the cost to sharpen the chain saw was \$27.98.

###### **2. Other**

No other business.

##### **c. Canfield Meadow Woods**

R. Ward reported that Canfield Meadow Woods is in good shape and that the Essex Land Trust has been making effort to clean up the area. R. Ward reported that there is a tick infestation within Canfield Meadow Woods.

##### **d. Discuss By-laws Changes**

Members read through the amended By-laws and made further modifications.

##### **e. Other**

No other business.

#### **4. New Business**

##### **a. Fiscal Year End Projects**

R. Helmecki suggested procuring Conservation Commission hats for the Volunteers. The hats will read Essex Conservation Volunteer.

**MOTION** made by M. Lovelace to authorize R. Helmecki to procure twelve Conservation Commission hats in the color and logo discussed at this meeting; **SECONDED** by F. Hall; **Voting In Favor:** R. Helmecki, F. Hall, M. Reeves, R. Ward K. Tucker, J. Lovelace, A. Forrest; **Opposed:** None; **Abstaining:** None; **Motion Carried:** 7/0/0.

**b. Other**

No other business.

**5. Review and Approve April 2, 2015 Meeting Minutes**

The following change was suggested:

- Page 1, bottom of the page change to *Eagle Scout Bridge*.

**MOTION** made by M. Reeves to approve the April 2, 2015 Meeting Minutes as amended; **SECONDED** by A. Forrest; **Voting In Favor:** R. Helmecki, K. Tucker, F. Hall, A. Forrest, M. Reeves, R. Ward; **Opposed:** None; **Abstaining:** J. Lovelace; **Approved:** 7/0/1.

K. Tucker suggested that discussion on the fiscal budget be tabled to the June 2015 meeting.

**6. Inland/Wetlands Report - Jeffrey Lovelace Liaison:**

CT Pond Services, Fairfield, CT has filed four applications with the CT DEEP to allow aquatic plant management/pesticides within four different water bodies in Essex. Although the Town does not have unilateral rejection authority, the Pesticide Management Division (PMD) of the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection is interested in receiving comments on these applications. The PMD is particularly interested to learn of any local conditions not specified on the permit, such as downstream use of water not indicated, or conservation easements on the pond. The following applications are pending with the DEEP:

- MacElwee Pond located at 54 Dennison Road
- Tiley-Pratt Pond located on Donald Road
- Mill Pond in Centerbrook
- Industrial park Pond on Industrial Park Road

**7. Adjournment**

**MOTION** made by R. Helmecki to adjourn the Regular Meeting at 9:33pm. to the next regularly scheduled meeting which will be conducted on Thursday, June 4, 2015 at the Essex Town Hall, Room B – second floor, 29 West Avenue: **SECONDED** by A. Forrest; **Voting In Favor:** R. Helmecki, K. Tucker, F. Hall, A. Forrest, M. Reeves, R. Ward, J. Lovelace; **Opposed:** None; **Abstaining:** None; **Approved:** 7/0/0.

Respectfully submitted,

Stella C. Beaudoin  
Recording Secretary