

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*

**Regular Members**

*Richard Helmecki*  
*Adrienne Forrest*  
*Robert Ward*  
*Mark J. Reeves*  
*Frank Hall*

**Alternate Member**

*Jerri MacMillan*

**Unapproved**

**Minutes**  
**Special Meeting**  
**Thursday, March 12, 2015 at 7:30 P.M.**  
**Town Hall, 29 West Avenue - Room B**

The Essex Conservation Commission conducted a Special Meeting on March 12, 2015 in Room B of the Essex Town Hall.

**Attending Members**

Kay Tucker  
Richard Helmecki  
Adrienne Forrest  
Mark Reeves  
Frank Hall  
Jerri MacMillan seated for Jeffrey Lovelace

**Absent Members**

Robert Ward  
Jeffrey Lovelace

Staff:  
Stella Beaudoin

Audience Member:  
Phillip Miller, Representative 36<sup>th</sup> District

**1. Call to Order**

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

**2. Old Business:**

**a. Fiscal Year 2015-16 Conservation Commission Budget Submitted & Allocation**

K. Tucker stated that she submitted the 2015-16 budget with the amendments discussed at the February 2015 meeting. K. Tucker stated that in a discussion with First Selectman Norman Needleman, she was informed that the modified Conservation Commission budget as presented was not approved. The original budget request was for \$13,475 and more specifically, the lined item for Grounds Maintenance Repair which was submitted at \$9,775, was reduced to \$6,825 for an entire reduction decrease of \$2,950.

The Commission also included in their budget request, an escrow account created for “Beaver Sanctuary Project” which was not addressed. R. Doane’s bill for engineering services in the amount of \$1,750 will be paid by the Town of Essex.

**Audience:**

Phil Miller, Essex resident, 24 Bushy Hill Road, Ivoryton, CT presented. P. Miller who is the State Representative, 36<sup>th</sup> Assembly District stated that he sponsors the January Session CT House Bill6955- An Act Prohibiting the Sale and Trade of Ivory and Rhinoceros Horn. There is a provision in the Bill that would exempt musical instruments made before 1965 and antiques over 100 years old. P. Miller stated that ivory was used in the construction of musical instruments, etc. until 1965 when a federal ban went into effect and he noted that the historic pieces will be placed into museum collections to be appreciated by the public. This Bill has widespread support.

P. Miller stated that there are only about 30,000 wild elephants left remaining in the world and over 3,000 elephants are lost to poachers annually. This Bill is of significance for not only those reasons stated, however also because the State of CT is making a concerted effort to develop ports and other shipping industry, and the State hopes to mirror other eastern states by being able to secure this Bill.

The second Bill is one of 3 or 4 Pesticide Bills. In 2006, the State of CT banned the use of pesticides in pre-k thru 8<sup>th</sup> grade. There are overwhelming studies linking pesticides to cancer, lymphoma, behavioral disorders and other maladies. P. Miller stated that while we cannot get a complete scientific notation, because live, time studies have not been conducted, in 2011 Yale conducted a study on 300 mothers and found more than 200 pesticides in birth tissue. The State of New York has banned the use of pesticides in pre-k thru grade 12.

P. Miller stated that the efforts of the supporters of this Bill have been met by the industry with ferocious attempts to foil. The pesticide industry are huge donators to the CT Park and Recreation Association and other Sports industries. P. Miller was able to extend the ban to State properties of all kinds and last week the Bill passed on a 10-2 vote, and will hopefully go to the house and the senate this week.

P. Miller requested that the Commission refrain from spraying Bushy Hill Nature Preserve with pesticides and he noted that mosquitos may be controlled in a natural way. Every year the CT Audubon identifies bird species that eat insects and whose numbers are diminishing. Essex, Deep River and Chester have successfully refrained from using pesticides on the playing fields.

P. Miller stated that the legislative session ends June 3, 2015.

K. Tucker questioned if P. Miller was suggesting that the Town should not control the Phragmite at Viney Hill Brook Park. P. Miller stated that the State eradicates Phragmite by cutting it down to the ground and applying a one-time application of Round Up, as close to the roots as possible. P. Miller stated that every year the pesticides become more powerful and concentrated as the fungi, etc. develop a

resistance. P. Miller stated that ticks are naturally occurring and the best defense is to dress appropriately and to individually apply insect repellents.

M. Reeves questioned the absence of the use of pesticides in those years prior to 2014, a time when the mosquitos were not being treated. M. Reeves asked to open for discussion at this meeting or at the April meeting the use of pesticides for treatment of mosquitos in Bushy Hill Nature Preserve.

P. Miller suggested that if Commission finds that the mosquito problem is objectionable in the ponds within Bushy Hill, that they look into “duncacide” tablets that are thought to be a milder way to control.

M. Reeves asked about the return of the bats whose numbers have greatly diminished over the past several years.

P. Miller stated that the State has utilized federal funds to research the white nose fungi which have killed so many bats. P. Miller will forward the numbers of the House Bills to F. Hall.

K. Tucker stated that she will add the pesticide discussion to the April 2015 agenda.

M. Reeves asked to have placed on the April Agenda discussion for the addition of a line item for “Public Comment.”

K Tucker stated that the Bylaws would need to be revised in order to do so.

#### **b. Process for Painting Trees**

F. Hall contacted Laura Simon, Wildlife Ecologist, Humane Society of the United States and he distributed a copy of her December 9, 2014 letter addressing the beaver issue via non-lethal options.

In her letter, L. Simon urged the Commission to contact the Town of Bethany’s First Selectwoman, Derry Gorski. The Town of Bethany has dealt with beaver problems on a recreation site similar to Viney Hill Brook Preserve. F. Hall stated that he would contact the First Selectwoman from the Town of Bethany and ask how they proceeded in management of the beaver population.

Members will further discuss at the April 2015 regularly scheduled meeting a future date to conduct a walk through Viney Hill Nature Preserve.

#### **c. Engineer’s Recommendations for Broadwalk/Viney Hill Brook Park**

M. Reeves asked that R. Doane color code and incorporate his comments from the site walk into the site plan which was originally drafted by R. Doane. M. Reeves stated that it would be in the Town’s best interest to have on file a finalized copy of this adjusted, amended and completed plan.

K. Tucker will send an email to R. Doane and inform him that it was the understanding of the Commission that he was going to provide a completed, color coded map which incorporated his

comments and suggestions made at the Site Walk at Viney Hill Brook Park, specifying the points that were outlined in his January 19, 2015 letter. M. Reeves will schedule time to meet with R. Doane.

K. Tucker stated that R. Doane had previously discussed elevating a 300 foot swath on Broadwalk because the area is always wet. M. Reeves read into the record a letter which was sent to the Commission in 2011 from J. Budrow, Essex Wetlands Enforcement Officer in which he referenced an inspection and subsequent discussion with R. Doane regarding Viney Hill Brook Park, related to the flooding and foot traffic.

**MOTION** made by K. Tucker to authorize payment to R. Doane of up to \$300 for the completion of the amended map; **SECONDED** by M. Reeves; **Voting In Favor:** R. Helmecki, K. Tucker, F. Hall, A. Forrest, M. Reeves, J. MacMillian; **Opposed:** None; **Abstaining:** None; **Approved:** 6/0/0.

**d. All Habitat Services Contracts**

Discussion tabled.

**e. Other**

K. Tucker reported that twenty-three people participated in the New Year's Day Walk.

**3. New Business**

**a. CT Trails Weekend Event**

J. MacMillan has created an account with the CT Trails Weekend Event known as "Essex Conservation" and she will organize a June 6, 2015 hike through Viney Hill Brook Park.

**b. Preliminary Review Conservation Commission By-laws**

F. Hall distributed information relevant to the State of CT Conservation Commission Bylaws. F. Hall asked members to review this document along with the Town of Essex Conservation Commission Bylaws which were adopted in 1977, and be prepared to discuss at the April 2015 meeting.

M. Reeves noted that there is room for amendments and procedural changes within the Bylaws.

K. Tucker stated that the Bylaws may be made to be more restrictive but not more permissive.

**c. Other**

No other business.

**4. Correspondence**

Ms. Tucker distributed the Habitat quarterly Publication.

**5. Review and Approve Minutes of the Special Meeting January 14, 2015**

The following amendments were suggested:

Page 2, second paragraph: "Bob Ward stated that he has lived in Essex for five years and *that* he holds"

Page 2, 4<sup>th</sup> paragraph: "J. Lovelace stated that the beavers *create* habitat in areas along streams"

Page 4, first paragraph: "F. Hall spoke with Mr. Haney *who is an abutting neighbor* who informed him"

Page 4, first paragraph: "that the *culvert* pipe was installed by his uncle."

Page 4, 6<sup>th</sup> paragraph: "which was not *properly* functioning"

Page 4, 6<sup>th</sup> paragraph: "swap out the existing *inflexible* pipe"

Page 5, 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph, Remove the sentence “K. Tucker stated that she does not feel any shame in having made the motion”

Page 6, first paragraph, remove the words “*in place*”

Page 6, second paragraph: “Viney Hill Preserve *is* to serve as a recharge area.”

Page 6, 6<sup>th</sup> paragraph “replaced a slat in the blue bridge on the blue train *at Bushy Hill* and there are several others”

Page 6, 8<sup>th</sup> paragraph: “be utilized for assistance *in new bog* bridge”

Page 6, last paragraph: “Kelly Sterner, *Director of Finance*”

Page 7, 7<sup>th</sup> paragraph: “The Japanese Knotweed, a tenacious invasive, *eradication* will be factored.”

Page 7, 10<sup>th</sup> paragraph: “budget has increased from *2013-2014*”

Page 8, second paragraph remove the words: *that the*.

Page 8, 6<sup>th</sup> paragraph remove the words *amount of*

Page 8, 7<sup>th</sup> paragraph, upper case *March*

Page 8, 7<sup>th</sup> paragraph, remove the words *and a sign*

**MOTION** made by F. Hall to approve the Special Meeting Minutes of January 14, 2015 as amended;  
**SECONDED** by A. Forrest; **Voting In Favor:** R. Helmecki, K. Tucker, F. Hall, A. Forrest, M. Reeves, J. MacMillian; **Opposed:** None; **Abstaining:** None; **Approved:** 6/0/0.

#### **Review and Approve the Minutes of the February 5, 2015 Regular Meeting**

The following amendments were suggested:

Page 1, under Old Business: “Kelly Sterner, *Director of Finance*”

Page 4, last paragraph to read: “K. Tucker suggested to table the *Agenda Items* until F. Hall, who is researching the Commission’s bylaws has had an opportunity to report to the Commission”

**MOTION** made R. Reeves by to approve the February 5, 2015 Regular Meeting Minutes as amended;  
**SECONDED** by A. Forrest; **Voting In Favor:** R. Helmecki, K. Tucker, F. Hall, A. Forrest, M. Reeves, J. MacMillian; **Opposed:** None; **Abstaining:** F. Hall None; **Approved:** 5/0/1.

#### **6. Adjournment**

**MOTION** made by J. MacMillan to adjourn the Regular Meeting at 9:25 pm. to the next regularly scheduled meeting which will be conducted on Thursday, April 2, 2015 at the Essex Town Hall, Room B – second floor, 29 West Avenue: **SECONDED** by R. Helmecki; **Voting In Favor:** R. Helmecki, K. Tucker, F. Hall, A. Forrest, M. Reeves, J. MacMillian; **Opposed:** None; **Abstaining:** None; **Approved:** 6/0/0.

Respectfully submitted,

Stella C. Beaudoin  
Recording Secretary