

**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*

**Alternate Member**

*Jerri MacMillian*

**Unapproved**

**Minutes Regular Meeting  
Thursday, December 1, 2016 at 7:30 P.M.  
Town Hall, 29 West Avenue - Room B**

The Essex Conservation Commission conducted their regularly scheduled meeting on December 1, 2016 in Room B of the Essex Town Hall.

**Attending Members**

Kay Tucker  
Mark Reeves  
Rich Helmecki  
Adrienne Forrest  
Frank Hall

**Absent Members**

Jeffrey Lovelace  
Robert Ward  
Jerri MacMillian

Staff: Stella Beaudoin, Recording Secretary

Audience: There were two audience members present

**1. Call to Order**

K. Tucker called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m.

Seated for the meeting were K. Tucker, R. Helmecki, M. Reeves, A. Forrest, F. Hall

**2. Public Comment**

Kathy Esfahanian, 8 Hillside Drive presented. K. Esfahanian referenced the Quarry Pond Trail, coming from the passive parking area, turning right onto Blue trail and going around Quarry Pond and across the Eagle Scout Bridge. She stated that she walks the Blue Trail at Viney Hill Brook Park daily and she commented on the extensive damage the beavers have done to the trees making the trails virtually impassable. K. Esfahanian stated that the trail has become dangerous to walk due to the number of trees that have been felled by the beavers and those broken trees that have toppled into the water, as a result of beaver activity.

K. Esfahanian stated that since the water level has dropped in Quarry Pond in the last year, the beavers have been cutting trees and building their lodges in overtime and she noted that if the beavers are allowed to continue destroying the forest, it is her suggestion to close down the trails as they are becoming a hazard to traverse.

K. Esfahanian stated that her home is situated in the area where the beaver devastation is the most apparent and if the beavers are allowed on this course, the area will return to swamp and her property will devalue and she indicated that the eco system has changed due to the extensive damage created by the beavers.

K. Esfahanian suggested that the trails be shut down based on the safety issue the beavers have created and thanked the Commission for their time.

**MOTION** made by K Tucker to change the Agenda to move **Election of Officers; SECONDED** by F. Hall; **Voting In Favor:** K. Tucker, M. Reeves, R. Helmecki, A. Forrest, F. Hall; **Opposed:** None; **Abstaining:** None; **Approved:** 5/0/0.

### **3. Discuss Active Area Viney Hill Brook Park--Beaver Activity Wollock's Pond and Trails**

Robert Russo, Chairman of the Park and Recreation Commission stated that he is an ecologist and an environmental scientist. He stated that there is no good solution related to the abatement of the issues and devastation of the forests, created by the beavers.

R. Russo stated that he walked part of the trail around Wollock's Pond this morning and he found one culvert partially flowing, and he stated that he will have volunteers clean out the site tomorrow. R Russo stated that he is looking to perhaps install in the area of the twin black pipes, a similar system to that of the pond leveler in Quarry Pond.

F. Hall stated that in 2015 he recruited 5 or 6 volunteers and when the beavers became active in the spring, and continuing until the exclusion fence and pond leveler were installed in November of that same year, every night the beavers would come out at Quarry Pond. The main drain consisted of the concrete culvert and an 8' long PVC pipe inserted into the concrete culvert and the beavers proceeded to rapidly fill and clog that pipe. In early November, the PVC pipe was removed and in doing so, the culvert opened up and the water level decreased by 18".

M. Reeves asked to have it be made a part of the record that additional funding is needed for Trail maintenance and additional funding will be required in order to keep the trails open.

R. Russo stated that Park and Rec would cover the costs of the installation of the pond leveler in Wollock's Pond and that Commission would also oversee the maintenance of the system during the year.

F. Hall stated that the earliest that M. Callahan, Beaver Solutions would install would be May or June 2017.

F. Hall recommended the R. Russo start the Permitting process with the Inland Wetlands and Watercourse Commission.

R Russo stated that in terms of inspection and management of the system, the Park and Rec Department could send someone out periodically to inspect the system. R. Russo suggested that the Park and Rec volunteer would be happy to check both of the systems in Quarry Pond and in Wollock's Pond. R Russo stated that there is a Park and Rec Commission meeting on December 6<sup>th</sup> and he will suggest action be taken to install a similar system at Wollock's Pond.

#### **4. Review and Approve Conservation Commission Meeting Schedule January 2017-January 2018**

**MOTION** made by M. Reeves to approve the 2017/18 Meeting Schedule; **SECONDED** by A. Forrest; **Voting In Favor:** K. Tucker, M. Reeves, R. Helmecki, A. Forrest, F. Hall; **Opposed:** None; **Abstaining:** None; **Approved:** 5/0/0.

#### **5. Election of Officers**

**MOTION** made by A Forrest to nominate K. Tucker as Chair; **SECONDED** by M. Reeves; **Voting In Favor:** K. Tucker, M. Reeves, R. Helmecki, A. Forrest, F. Hall; **Opposed:** None; **Abstaining:** None; **Approved:** 5/0/0.

**MOTION** made by M Reeves to nominate J. Lovelace as Vice-Chair; **SECONDED** by R Helmecki; **Voting In Favor:** K. Tucker, M. Reeves, R. Helmecki, A. Forrest, F. Hall; **Opposed:** None; **Abstaining:** None; **Approved:** 5/0/0.

**MOTION** made by M Reeves to nominate F Hall as Secretary; **SECONDED** by K Tucker; **Voting In Favor:** K. Tucker, M. Reeves, R. Helmecki, A. Forrest, F. Hall; **Opposed:** None; **Abstaining:** None; **Approved:** 5/0/0.

#### **6. Old Business to include:**

##### **a. Bushy Hill Preserve and Oak Ledge Drive Entrance Maintenance**

R Helmecki stated on November 5, 2015 he and K. Tucker dismantled an old, decayed pedestrian bridge which was previously installed by the Boy Scouts, and they flipped over the second bridge. R. Helmecki reported that there are 3 bridges and the third is in good shape.

A Forrest reported that on November 12, 2016 she met with K. Tucker, R. Ward and F. Hall and they spent time cleaning the parking area situated at the entrance of Oak Ledge Drive.

K Tucker reported that Clark Custom Services weed whacked the entrance area as well.

##### **b. Canfield Meadow Woods**

R Helmecki stated that the Essex Land Trust is facilitating an upcoming hike at Canfield Meadow Woods.

##### **c. Viney Hill Brook Park**

M Reeves commented on the earlier discussion related to the Beavers at Viney Hill Brook Park and the devastation they are creating in and around the nature trails. M Reeves suggested that signage be installed stating that the area is a nature preserve and to be mindful where you walk. M Reeves suggested to table this discussion to the January meeting.

##### **d. Other**

K. Tucker commented on the New Year's day walk which is scheduled to begin at 10:00 am. She stated that she visited the site and she could not get around Wollock's Pond. K Tucker suggested that the Commissioners visit the site and make sure the area is passable.

A Forrest suggested that the Commission consider the possibility of walking on New Year's Day at one of the other parks.

K Tucker presented two invoices; one in the amount of \$30.52 for chainsaw replacement chains and two invoices from Clarks Custom Services in the amounts of \$800 and \$1200 for mowing.

F Hall suggested to approve the pending invoices.

K Tucker stated that she has a tentative estimate of \$1050 for mowing the field section at Bushy Hill.

R. Helmecki will contact Clark's Custom Services and remind them to complete the job.

## **7. New Business**

There was no new business.

## **8. Review and Approve November 2016 Minutes**

**MOTION** made by R Helmecki to approve the November 2016 Meeting Minutes with the following amendments; Page 2. Under, Schedule of Pedestrian bridges; "R Helmecki stated that the *remaining* pedestrian bridges are in good shape." Page 3. Under New Business, last sentence: remove, "*is situated.*" **SECONDED** by M Reeves; **Voting In Favor:** K. Tucker, R. Helmecki, A. Forrest, M. Reeves **Opposed:** None; **Abstaining:** F Hall; **Approved:** 4/0/1.

## **9. Inland Wetlands Report**

The following administrative Permits were issued at the November 2016 meeting:

- Permit for Application 16-15 Cello Partnership d/b/a Verizon Wireless-improvements to existing structures under water tower.
- Application 16-16 Peter Sarner, 10 Heron Pond Road, to allow the construction of a chicken coop.
- Permit for Application 16-17 Little Village Construction, LLC, 7 Main Street, Ivoryton for improvements along the bank of the Falls River
- Permit for Application 16-18 Essex Land Trust to install a 3-car parking area on open space property 60 feet from an intermittent watercourse and wetlands. Also to establish a driveway to the parking area.

## **10. Correspondence**

The winter edition of The Habitat.

## **11. Adjournment**

**MOTION** made by M Reeves to adjourn the regular meeting at 9:05pm to the special meeting which will be conducted on January 12, 2017 at 7:30pm, Essex Town Hall, Conference Room B, 29 West Avenue, Essex, CT; **SECONDED** by A. Forrest; **Voting In Favor:** K. Tucker, M. Reeves, R. Helmecki, A. Forrest, F Hall; **Opposed:** None; **Abstaining:** None; **Approved:** 5/0/0.

Respectfully submitted,

Stella C. Beaudoin  
Recording Secretary