



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
Mark J. Reeves
Jim O'Brien*

Alternate Member

*Roger Field
Vacancy*

Unapproved

**Minutes Regular Meeting
Thursday, October 11, 2018 at 7:30 P.M.**

The Essex Conservation Commission conducted their regularly scheduled meeting on Thursday, October 11, 2018 in Room B of the Essex Town Hall.

Attending Members

Kay Tucker
Frank Hall
Richard Helmecki
Adrienne Forrest
Mark Reeves
Roger Field seated for J Lovelace

Absent Members

Jeffrey Lovelace
Jim O'Brien

Staff: Stella Beaudoin, Recording Clerk

Audience: There were no audience members

1. Call to Order

K Tucker called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. Seated for the meeting were K Tucker, F Hall, R Helmecki, M Reeves, A Forrest and R Field seated for J Lovelace.

2. Public Comment

There was no public comment

3. Review and Approve Meeting Minutes

A. September 11, 2018 Site Walk and the September 13, 2018 Meeting Minutes

MOTION made by A Forrest to approve the Minutes of the September 11, 2018 Site Walk Minutes as presented: **SECONDED** by F Hall; **Voting in Favor:** K Tucker, R Field, R Helmecki, A Forrest, M Reeves, F Hall; **Opposed:** None; **Abstaining:** None; **Approved:** 6/0/0.

MOTION made by M Reeves to approve the Minutes of the September 13, 2018 Regular Meeting Minutes with the following amendments: 1) Page 2, Under B1, correct the spelling of “September”, 2) Page 2, Under 3C Other to read: “Frank Hall stated that he resigned as the Conservation Commission Secretary *at the end of 2018*; **SECONDED** by A Forrest; **Voting in Favor:** K Tucker, R Field, R Helmecki, A Forrest, M Reeves, F Hall; **Opposed:** None; **Abstaining:** None; **Approved:** 6/0/0.

4. Old Business to include:

A. Discuss Proposed Map Expenditures

K Tucker reported that J. Lovelace spent a good deal of time with Jim Denham, Essex Land Trust member, working out the Conservation Commission’s share for the cost of the maps. The Conservation Commission must pay \$100% of the cartography fees for Viney Hill Brook Preserve, 50% of cartography fees for Canfield Meadow Woods Preserve, and 50% of the cartography fees for Bushy Hill Preserve for a total of \$600.

Jim Denham has proposed that large signs for each preserve be installed in the kiosks. The cost for large signs is \$75. Neither Viney Hill Preserve nor Bushy Hill Preserve has a kiosk.

K Tucker contacted M Barnes to ask if Park and Rec would contribute toward the cost of Viney Hill Brook Park maps; M Barnes declined stating that Park and Rec has no line item in their budget for maps.

MOTION made by M Reeves to approve the expenditure of up to \$600 to the Essex Land Trust for the production of the maps at Viney Hill Brook Preserve, and the Conservation Commission’s share at Bushy Hill and Canfield Meadow Woods Preserves; and to further inquire whether payment may be made over a 2 year period; **SECONDED** by F Hall; **Voting in Favor:** R Helmecki, A Forrest, M Reeves, F Hall; **Opposed:** K Tucker; **Abstaining:** R Fields; **Approved:** 4/1/1.

K Tucker stated that she objects to the motion noting that it might be beneficial to pay directly to the vendor who is creating the maps and that the expenditure should be contributed in this fiscal year.

B. Trails and Projects:

1. Viney Hill Brook Preserve

A Forrest reported that she, K Tucker, R Helmecki, R Field and M Reeves walked and blazed two trails. In-process it was discovered that the turtle nesting area was not listed properly on the current map and the snake head rock was unique enough to merit placement of a sign. The group also looked at Tucker’s pond.

K Tucker noted that one area that needs attention is on the detour trail closest to wildflower meadow. K Tucker reported that members had placed some Birch logs over the stream to aid in crossing the trail. The beavers have piled sticks over the logs, making traverse over the stream precarious.

Frank Hall offered to attach ropes secured to trees on either side of the stream in this area of the bypass detour trail to aid in crossing the stream.

A brief discussion ensued related to securing the trails and placement of markers. It was recommended that Observation Rock Trail be designated #1A and have a new color and that a new trail running east from

Observation Rock Trail (approximately halfway from Turtle Nesting Trail to Observation Rock to Broadwalk) be created and marked.

M Reeves suggested the use of aluminum flashing, which is inexpensive and comes in rectangular sizes, and with the use of spray paint the Commission can make the signs. M Reeves offered to make the 3 x 3 white squares from coil stock. R Helmecki volunteered to spray paint the 30 squares.

K Tucker met with Ryan Walsh, Essex Public Works Director on October 4. R Walsh agreed that the town maintenance crew would repair the passive parking area; the town crew will mow the Cedar field across from the Robida's, leaving Cedars and mature trees and eliminate shrubs and undergrowth; the crew will mow down the Autumn Olive along Broadwalk and place a large rock in the area where the CL&P right-of-way road intersects Broadwalk. The wildflower meadow will not be mowed; the town crew will snow plow all 3 preserves and pave the Oak Ledge parking lot;

2. Bushy Hill Preserve

R Helmecki reported that he walked Bushy Hill Preserve and he purchased 6 boards to replace rotten boards at the Eagle Scout Bridge. Helmecki will make the repairs when the temperatures are cooler.

3. Canfield Meadow Woods Preserve

R Field reported that on 10/6 /18 he and Essex Land Trust member, George Wendell, cut 2 fallen trees on the Blue trail off of Dennison Road and cut one tree off of the Orange trail.

R Field reported that at the Book Hill Woods trail head entrance there is a large, dead Oak tree which he reported to Augie Pampel, Tree Warden.

R Field noted that in the past few weeks he has observed several newspaper articles related to White Oak trees dying off in the state of CT. R Field stated that the White Oak trees in Canfield Meadow Woods Preserve look healthy.

K Tucker stated that per a newspaper article, the Park and Recreation Department is offering a nature course to children ages 5-11 to be conducted at the Canfield Meadow Woods Preserve at a cost of \$75. The class will be offered spring 2019. K Tucker suggested that the Conservation Commission connect with Park and Rec and offer this program to children who might wish to observe the beavers in their habitat at Viney Hill Brook Preserve. K Tucker will ask the Park and Rec Department to include Viney Hill Brook Preserve in their spring program.

R Field reported that at the Book Hill Woods trail head entrance there is a large, dead Oak tree which he reported to the Essex Tree Warden

4. Other

C. Discuss Endorsing Essex Land Trust Application for Accreditation by Land Trust Alliance

K Tucker submitted the following for the record:

October 11, 2018

Land Trust Accreditation Commission
info@landtrustaccreditation.org

The Essex Land Trust deserves praise, support and accreditation for 50 years of dedication to preserving and protecting important natural places and working lands.

In the past two years the Essex Land Trust completed a detailed assessment for governance, finance, acquisitions and stewardship then followed-up by developing a new strategic plan for all of their functional areas.

The Essex Conservation Commission, which shares with the land trust some responsibilities and expenses for two preserves within Essex Township, endorses the Essex Land Trust in their quest for accreditation.

We encourage the National Land Trust Alliance Accreditation Commission to act favorably upon the Essex Land Trust's application.

Thank you for your commitment to standards for protecting public lands.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Tucker, Chair

cc: Robert Nussbaum
Essex Land Trust
P.O. Box 373
Essex, CT, 06426

MOTION made by M Reeves to approve the issuance of the letter recommending accreditation to the Essex Land Trust to the National Land Trust Commission, with K Tucker's signature on the referral letter;

SECONDED by F Hall; **Voting in Favor:** K Tucker, R Helmecki, A Forrest, M Reeves, F Hall; **Opposed:** None
Abstaining: R Field; **Approved:** 5/0/1.

5. New Business to Include:

A. Ballot Initiative Protect CT, Public Lands, November 6, 2018

R Field stated that the State of CT may dispense public property and that it does not need public input or oversight. This ballot initiative is to place some controls on the sale or trade of public land.

B. Other

K Tucker commented on the annual New Year's Day walk. Members agreed to cancel the 2019 walk.

6. Financial Report

K Tucker reviewed the expenditures made to date from the 2018/19 Fiscal Year budget. A brief discussion ensued on future expenditures.

A bill was received from Clarks Custom Services covering the period through September 2018, for mowing Viney Hill Brook Park and Bushy Hill Preserve. These preserves will require mowing again in May and June. K Tucker suggested that only the wild flower meadow be mowed again in 2018 and only after the first frost.

7. Inland Wetlands Report – No report. J Lovelace absent.

8. Adjournment

MOTION made by M Reeves to adjourn the meeting at 8:35 PM until the November 8, 2018 regularly scheduled meeting at 7:30pm, Essex Town Hall, Conference Room B, 29 West Avenue, Essex, CT;

SECONDED by F Hall; **Voting in Favor:** K Tucker, F Hall, R Helmecki, R Field, M Reeves, A Forrest; **Opposed:** None; **Abstaining:** None; **Approved:** 6/0/0.

Respectfully submitted,

Stella C. Beaudoin
Recording Clerk