



TOWN OF ESSEX
Conservation Commission

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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, December 13, 2018 at 7:30 P.M.

The Essex Conservation Commission conducted their regularly scheduled meeting on Thursday, December 13, 2018 in Room B of the Essex Town Hall.

Attending Members

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

Absent Members

Jeffrey Lovelace

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, R Helmecki, J O'Brien, M Reeves, A Forrest, F Hall and R Field.

2. Public Comment

There was no public comment

3. Review and Approve Meeting Minutes

A. November 9, 2018 Meeting Minutes

MOTION made by A Forrest to approve the Minutes of the November 9, 2018 meeting with the following amendment: 1) Under Viney Hill Brook Preserve, 3rd paragraph, second line to read “during a big rain event the existing *channel* could jam and may not handle the drainage”; **SECONDED** by J O’Brien; **Voting in Favor:** K Tucker, R Field, J O’Brien A Forrest, M Reeves; **Opposed:** None; **Abstaining:** F Hall and R Helmecki; **Approved:** 5/0/2.

MOTION made by M Reeves to move up on the Agenda, Item 6, Financial Report; **SECONDED** by J O’Brien; **Voting in Favor:** K Tucker, R Field, J O’Brien, A Forrest, M Reeves, R Helmecki, F Hall; **Opposed:** None; **Abstaining:** None; **Approved:** 7/0/0.

6. Financial Report

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

K Tucker asked members to consider if they would wish to forgo treatment of the Japanese Knotweed. Members were in favor of continued Larvicide treatment by All Habitat in Bushy Hill Preserve however commissioners may consider forgoing the treatment for the Japanese Knotweed to save money. Projected expenditures, as discussed, show there may not have enough funds to cover other needs. M Reeves suggested asking the Essex Land Trust if the Conservation Commission could pay for their portion of the new maps on an extended payment schedule rather than in a fiscal year lump sum payment.

4. Old Business to include:

A. Authorize Map and All Habitat Services, Inc., Expenditures

There was further discussion of what we should do regarding the Japanese Knotweed. It was suggested we try keeping the Japanese Knotweed under control by having a work party pull up the emerging plants rather than using All Habitat to spray them.

K Tucker stated that there is a new iteration of the trail map which she would like to defer to J Lovelace for review.

B. Trails and Projects:

1. Viney Hill Brook Preserve

The bog bridges from the intersection of Broadwalk and the Blue Trail had been underwater and are now completely frozen to the ground. Moving them to an area that needs them will not be possible until the ice melts and frees them up. R Helmecki distributed the newly created “Flooded” signs which will be installed by R Field to advise the public on “Flooded” trail conditions.

F Hall provided a status on the beavers noting that he saw fresh cuttings of the small saplings. F Hall pointed out the road abutting Viney Hill Brook Preserve that runs under the Eversource power lines. Hall stated that Eversource has brought in truckloads of gravel to upgrade the road on the west side of the power lines. F Hall will contact M Lucarelli to inquire about and obtain further information on the new Eversource gravel road.

R Helmecki reported that the Yellow (Old Quarry) Trail is impassable and suggested that it be eliminated and incorporated into the Purple trail. R Helmecki and K Tucker followed the trail toward Old Saybrook and pointed out on the map that it was off of 144 Bokum Road. R Helmecki stated that someone has placed metal grates in an area of the Purple Trail. There was evidence of mountain bike tracks (DEEP prohibits bicycles in the park) over the Forest Glade and Upland Trails. F Hall e-mailed commission members a photo, taken by R Helmecki, of the four metal grates staked in the trail. K Tucker will forward the photo to First Selectman Norman Needleman and ask the selectman to inform the resident trooper.

R Helmecki stated that he would like to relocate the bog bridges. The rain, projected for the weekend, should it make it possible to free the bridges from the ice

Members will meet on Saturday December 15, 2018 at noon to look at the frozen bog bridges and attempt to move them.

2. Canfield Meadow Woods

R Field reported that Canfield meadow Woods is in good shape. R Field commented about the installation of a new trail on the western slope and noted that this trail appears to be well utilized and is receiving good response from the public. This trail is called Margaret's trail in homage to Earl Canfield's wife. R Field reported that the Town line signs had been found buried out in the woods. A hiker, who found the signs, reinstalled them.

3. Bushy Hill Preserve

R Helmecki stated that he brought replacement boards for the bog bridge and hid them in the nearby woods by the bridge to be used to repair the bridge slates later in the season.

K Tucker stated that the meadow is overgrown with Mugwort. K Tucker indicated that she looked at the second Wolf tree and recommended that the best thing to keep the trees intact and growing would be to cut all the smaller trees around them allowing the crowns to receive more sun.

4. Other

K Tucker commented on a new iteration of Viney Hill Brook Preserve. The entrance points have been deleted, the Old Quarry loop will be discontinued and a portion of that trail is now colored purple.

F Hall recommended incorporating the new map on to a smart phone app called "Maplets." Maplets shows trail maps and shows GPS locations.

R Helmecki noted that Mike Callahan, Beaver Solutions LLC, is written up in this issue of The Habitat.

5. New Business to Include:

A. 2019 Election of Officers

MOTION made by A Forrest to nominate K Tucker as Chair; **SECONDED** by J O'Brien; **Voting in Favor:** R Field, J O'Brien, A Forrest, M Reeves, R Helmecki, F Hall; **Opposed:** None; **Abstaining:** K Tucker; **Approved:** 6/0/1.

MOTION made by R Helmecki to nominate J Lovelace as Vice Chair; **SECONDED** by J O'Brien; **Voting in Favor:** K Tucker, R Field, J O'Brien, A Forrest, M Reeves, R Helmecki, F Hall; **Opposed:** None; **Abstaining:** None; **Approved:** 7/0/0.

MOTION made by R Helmecki to nominate A Forrest, Secretary; **SECONDED** by J O'Brien; **Voting in Favor:** K Tucker, R Field, J O'Brien, M Reeves, R Helmecki, F Hall; **Opposed:** None; **Abstaining:** A Forrest; **Approved:** 6/0/1.

K Tucker appointed J O'Brien to assist with the budget.

B. Other

There was no other business.

7. Adjournment

MOTION made by M Reeves to adjourn the meeting at 8:53PM until the January 10, 2019 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, R Field, J O'Brien, A Forrest, M Reeves, R Helmecki, F Hall; **Opposed:** None; **Abstaining:** None; **Approved:** 7/0/0.

Respectfully submitted,

Stella C. Beaudoin
Recording Clerk