



TOWN OF ESSEX
Conservation Commission

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Executive Board

Kathleen Tucker, Chairman
Jeffrey Lovelace, Vice Chairman
Adrienne Forrest, Secretary

Regular Members

Frank Hall
Richard Helmecki
Mark J. Reeves
Jim O'Brien

Alternate Member

Roger Field
Jacob Wlochowski

Unapproved

Minutes Regular Meeting
Thursday, January 9, 2020 at 7:30pm

The Essex Conservation commission conducted their regularly scheduled meeting on Thursday, January 9, 2020 in Room B of the Essex Town Hall.

Attending Members

K Tucker
F Hall
M Reeves
J Lovelace
J O'Brien
A Forrest
J Wlochowski, Alternate arrived 7:32 p.m.

Absent Members

R Helmecki
R Field, Alternate

Staff: Stella Caione, Recording Secretary

Audience: There were no audience members.

1. Call to Order

K Tucker called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM. Seated for the meeting were K Tucker, F Hall, M Reeves, J Lovelace, J O'Brien, and A Forrest. J Wlochowski seated for R Helmecki.

2. Public Comment

No public comment

3. Review and Approve December 12, 2019 Meeting Minutes

Review: Correction was made on page 1 to note that the date of Meeting was December 12, 2019.

MOTION made by F Hall to approve the Minutes of the December 12, 2019 meeting with the following amendment; 1) page 1, the date of Meeting was December 12, 2019; **SECONDED** by A Forrest; **Voting in Favor:** K Tucker, F Hall, M Reeves, J Lovelace, J O'Brien, A Forrest; **Opposed:** None; **Abstaining:** None; **Approved:** 6/0/0.

4. Old Business to Include:

A. Discuss Fiscal Year 2020-2021 Budget

Budget submission deadline is January 17, 2020. The Commission reviewed expenditures by lined item. It was previously determined that the ECC needs to request more funds to help with all the requirements of maintaining our preserves.

K Tucker spoke with David Roach, All Habitat Services, Inc. Roach stated that the mosquitos carrying the EEE virus are situated in cedar swamps. EEE carrying mosquitos infect birds which inhabit other areas. These birds, in turn, are bitten by other mosquitos and the EEE virus is transmitted. The risk is highest in spring when they are breeding and then again in August. To prevent the hatching, All Habitat collects larval samples and applies adulticide and larvicide as needed. The Commission proposed an increase in their budget for the treatment of Phragmites.

Discussion on maintenance of the Commission-owned weed whacker and chain saw and determination to leave lined item at current rate.

Discussion on the maintenance of the bog bridges situated at Viney Hill Brook Preserve that goes from passive parking lot to the intersection. J Lovelace reported on a low impact alternative to the placement of bog bridges by creating a pathway utilizing packed, processed stone creating a raised area of stone and heavy dirt that is lined with creosote timber, creating a pathway. The creosote timber is beaver resistant.

It was brought to the Commission's attention that the bigger Wolf Tree might do better if some of the taller trees behind it were topped or taken down completely. While doing that kind of tree work is too expensive for our Commission, the Town Tree Warden, Augie Pampel was contacted. Mr. Pampel stated that he was busy for several months and recommended Wilcox Tree Service or Bartlett Tree Service to do the work. If Wilcox recommends tree take-down around the big trees, A Pampel indicated that he will look at using some of his budget toward the cost.

J O'Brien stepped out at 7:54 p.m.

MOTION made by M Reeves to submit a request to the Board of Finance and to the Selectman in the amount of \$15,360 for the ECC 2020/21 Fiscal year General Operating budget; **SECONDED** by A Forrest; **Discussion:** K Tucker reported that David Roach also spoke with her about tick treatments. There is a combo tick and mosquito treatment which can be used along the trails. Consensus by the Commission that barrier trail treatments are too expensive and not long lasting. **Voting in Favor:** K Tucker, F Hall, M Reeves, J Lovelace, A Forrest, J Wlochowski; **Opposed:** None; **Abstaining:** None; **Approved:** 6/0/0.

B. Trail Reports and Maintenance Issues

1. Bushy Hill Preserve

a. Wolf Trees & Other Specimen Trees

Report from R Helmecki relating to the boring and measurement of the Wolf Tree read into the record by J Wlochowski: R Helmecki met with Geoff Furtney, Chief Steward of ELT today at Bushy Hill and assessed the two Wolf trees. The bigger tree measured 15 feet in circumference and was estimated to be 59 inches in diameter. The Boring instrument measures only up to 22 inches; however, G Furtney can extrapolate the difference to gain an idea of the tree's age. G Furtney was concerned about the makeup of the tree and he thinks the tree might have been formed from more than one tree, thus having more than one core. R Helmecki will follow-up with G Furtney in February to further discuss and will report his findings to the ECC. G Furtney indicated that the Essex Land Trust might be interested in cleaning up around the small pond at the entrance for a quid pro quo gesture from the Conservation Commission.

J O'Brien returned to the meeting at 8:31 p.m.

2. Canfield Meadow Woods

A Forrest read into the record a report by R Field who reported that all of the trails are surveyed and in good condition. Trail markers that have been removed from the Canfield trail and will be replaced by R Field in the next week or so. The ELT experimenting with volunteers who are designated trail monitors.

3. Viney Hill Brook Preserve

K Tucker stated that the big trees in the area of Quarry pond have been demarcated with X and O's and it is unclear as to who is responsible for placement of the markings.

K Tucker reported that the ditch at the intersection is filling with water.

K Tucker reported that the Essex Town Crew opened-up and cleaned up the trail by Observation Rock.

C. Other

J O'Brien displayed a photo on his phone of a bog bridge that is situated in Cockaponset State Park.

5. New Business

The Commission will pursue a meeting with the First Selectman to discuss an alternative pathway in place of bog bridges at Viney Hill Preserve.

6. Financial Report

J O'Brien distributed a budget spreadsheet and discussed the lined items.

J Lovelace reported that Clark's Custom Services is paid to date. J Lovelace reported that Clark's Custom Services is next scheduled in the month of April for 4 hours to mow in Bushy Hill Preserve and for 6 hours to mow at Viney Hill Brook Preserve.

7. Adjournment

MOTION to adjourn was made by M Reeves at 8:50 PM until the February 13, 2020 regularly scheduled meeting at 7:30 PM, Essex Town Hall, Conference Room B, 29 West Avenue, Essex, CT; **SECONDED** by J Wlochowski; **Voting in Favor:** K Tucker, F Hall, M Reeves, J Lovelace, A Forrest, J O'Brien, J Wlochowski; **Opposed:** None; **Abstaining:** None; **Approved:** 7/0/0.

Respectfully submitted,

Stella A Caione, Recording Clerk