



TOWN OF ESSEX
Conservation Commission

Executive Board
Kathleen Tucker, Chairman
Jim O'Brien, Vice Chair

29 West Avenue • Essex, Connecticut 06426
Telephone (860) 767-4340 • FAX (860) 767-8509

Regular Members

Frank Hall
Richard Helmecki
Mark J. Reeves
Elizabeth Stulga
Vacancy

Alternate Member

Vacancy
Vacancy

Minutes of the ECC Special Meeting held Tuesday, July 25, 2023, Under Town Hall Awning, 6:30 pm

1. Call to Order and Roll Call: Present F Hall, R Helmecki, J O'Brien, M Reeves, E Stulga, K Tucker. Public present T Soboleski, applicant alternate to commission and Essex Land Trust Steward.

2. K Tucker said Special Meeting required. As a municipal agency, before any changes are made within town-owned preserves, changes must be authorized by ECC at a duly posted meeting, not by e-mail consensus.

A. Mowing and maintenance FYTD:

Viney Hill Brook Preserve

M Reeves and K Tucker, each, separately, inspected VHBP today. Details described:

Trail from passive parking to Quarry Pond shows erosion from frequent rains.

Right of Way Road from passive parking area to private gate has been mowed recently;

Trail from passive parking area to bog bridges at intersection has been mowed;

Grasses on either side of bog bridges leading to intersection, grasses on either side of bog bridges leading to phragmites patch and wildflower meadow, grasses on either side of bog bridges leading to Eagle Scout Bridge are calf-high and have not been mowed.

Installation of NO BIKE sign on kiosk.

Bushy Hill Preserve

K Tucker inspected BHP July 24. Details described:

As noted by R Helmecki, July 10 ECC meeting Minutes, field (wildlife habitat) abutting pond, had been mowed; vegetation growing in pond which drains road water run-off; vegetation growing in vinca patch surrounding pond; entrance and side trails need widening.

Neighboring parking area abutting Bushy Hill parking area (illegally used by visitors to preserve as overflow parking) is now blocked by the crown of a fallen tree. Leaves, branches and limbs prevent visitors from parking on neighbor's property.

B. August, 2023 to Fiscal Year End June, 2024:

M Reeves reported on a July 17 meeting with R Welch, Essex Department of Public Works, to discuss previously agreed upon and performed maintenance in Bushy Hill and Viney Hill Brook Preserves.

In an e-mail to 1st Selectman N Needleman and K Tucker, R Welch said that EDPW would like to see, on an experimental basis, if he and the town crew had the time and labor required to mow, weed whack and maintain, during the growing season May-October, both preserves on a monthly basis. On Monday, July 24, N Needleman e-mailed "I'm ok with giving this a try." K Tucker e-mailed in reply to the selectman and director of public works that ECC will continue to work on small projects (in the preserves) such as bog bridge building, sign installation, brush and tree trunk clearing from the trails when feasible.

K Tucker reported that she e-mailed Clark's Custom Services asking that any charges for labor and services completed in Bushy Hill and Viney Hill Brook Preserves, July 1-July 21, 2023, be immediately forwarded to ECC. All invoices for Clark's Custom Services through FYE 2022-23 had been received and paid. In consideration of the report by R Helmecki, ECC Minutes July 13, and reports by M Reeves and K Tucker at tonight's Special Meeting, some mowing and maintenance had been undertaken in July.

Motion 1 made by M Reeves, second F Hall to no longer authorize Clark's Custom Service to mow or maintain town-owned Bushy Hill and Viney Hill Brook Preserves;

Motion 2 made by M Reeves, second J O'Brien to authorize Essex Department of Public Works to mow and maintain town-owned Bushy Hill and Viney Hill Brook Preserves;

Both motions passed unanimously by commissioners present.

ECC directed K Tucker to notify CCS (by e- and certified mails) of decisions and to thank Ely Clark for his years of work in these preserves.

Motion to adjourn 6:59 by F Hall and second J O'Brien. Motion unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,
Kay Tucker, Clerk pro tem