



TOWN OF ESSEX
Conservation Commission

Executive Board

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

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

Regular Members

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

Alternate Member

Roger Field
Jacob Wlochowski

Unapproved

Minutes Regular Meeting
Thursday, January 14, 2021 at 7:30pm

via Zoom platform at

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88696258029?pwd=dHRqakI3dWVvYSC8rMW9QcFJnS1FuZz09>

Meeting ID: 886 9625 8029. Passcode: 073782.

Participate by Telephone: +1-646 558 8656 US (New York) OR

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88696258029?pwd=dHRqakI3dWVvYSC8rMW9QcFJnS1FuZz09>

Attending Members

K Tucker
J Lovelace
A Forrest
F Hall
M Reeves
R Helmecki

Absent Members

J Wlochowski
R Field

Staff:

Stella A Caione, Recording Clerk

Audience: 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, J Lovelace, A Forrest, J O'Brien, M Reeves, R Helmecki.

2. Election of Officers

MOTION made by J Lovelace to nominate Kay Tucker, as the ECC Chair; **SECONDED** by A Forrest; **Voting in Favor:** J Lovelace, A Forrest, F Hall, J O'Brien, M Reeves, R Helmecki; **Opposed:** None; **Abstaining** None; **Approved:** 6/0/0. No Further Discussion.

MOTION made by M Reeves to nominate Jeff Lovelace, as the ECC Vice-chair; **SECONDED** by R Helmecki; **Voting in Favor:** K Tucker, A Forrest, F Hall, J O'Brien, M Reeves, R Helmecki; **Opposed:** None; **Abstaining** None; **Approved:** 6/0/0. No Further Discussion.

MOTION made by R Helmecki to nominate Adrienne Forrest as the ECC Secretary; **SECONDED** by K Tucker; **Voting in Favor:** K Tucker, J Lovelace, F Hall, J O'Brien, M Reeves, R Helmecki; **Opposed:** None; **Abstaining** None; **Approved:** 6/0/0. No Further Discussion.

Kay Tucker acknowledged Frank Hall who has worked diligently to coordinate the monthly ECC zoom meetings.

3. Review and Approve December 10, 2020 Meeting Minutes

MOTION made by F Hall to approve the Minutes of the December 10, 2020 meeting with the following amendments; 1) Page 4, under Item 4, **Phragmite Patch**, add the word *meadow* to the end of the last sentence in that paragraph; 2) Page 4, under Item 5, **Trails and water flow**, 4th line, remove the sentence "Wollock Pond." 3) Page 4, under Item 5, **Trails and water flow**, 8th sentence to read; "*M Barnes indicated that the Park and Recreation Department budget for VHBP was reduced from \$12,000 to \$7,000*"; **SECONDED** by J Lovelace; **Voting in Favor:** K Tucker, J Lovelace, A Forrest, F Hall, J O'Brien, M Reeves, R Helmecki; **Opposed:** None; **Abstaining** None; **Approved:** 6/0/0. No Further Discussion.

4. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

5. New Business to include:

A. Discuss FY 2021-2022 Budget

K Tucker stated that there will be no increases in the 2021 budget. Brief discussion on additional monies needed toward grounds maintenance and repairs, lined item.

MOTION made by M Reeves to carry over 20-21 budget to the 21/22 budget; **SECONDED** by J Lovelace; **Voting in Favor:** K Tucker, J Lovelace, A Forrest, F Hall, J O'Brien, M Reeves, R Helmecki; **Opposed:** None; **Abstaining** None; **Approved:** 7/0/0. No Further Discussion.

B. Other

Robert Doane, P.E. contacted K Tucker and informed that he has been appointed the IWWC wetlands enforcement agent. R Doane reported that a beaver pond has been filled in the area of Falls River Drive, and a new beaver dam has been built all the way across, which has dammed up the culvert.

6. Old Business to include:

A. Viney Hill Preserve

1. Report on Maintenance of Wollock's Pond Trail (active park area)

J Lovelace and F Hall met with Ryan Welch, Director of the Essex Town Crew. R Welch has agreed to maintain the area, in the spring, to include clearing of the undergrowth of the 40-foot swath situated in the northeast quadrant of the pond, just before the clearing to the power lines. There is a good deal of growth in that area. K Tucker suggested that members conduct a maintenance work

party prior to the spring, to clear some of the branches and clean up in the area of the green trail. K Tucker stated that in the area of Wollock's pond, where the power lines are located, one of the big trees (with a green marker), on left side approaching the power lines is being chewed from the bottom, by the beavers, and to the right of it is a new beaver lodge.

2. Trails and Repairs Needed

R Helmecki reported that there is a slat in one of the Eagle Scout Bridges that is rotting.

F Hall reported that he was hiking in the Durham/Guilford area and he noticed that there are trail blazes/markers that are fabricated out of plastic, which offer an advantage over the ECC metal trail markers. F Hall reported that the squirrels use the metal marker discs to grind down their teeth, noting that the circular metal markers bear marks from the inside out, which is a sign of the squirrels grinding their teeth. Their teeth grow 12 inches per year and the squirrels grind and gnaw preventing their molars from going through their jaws. F Hall noted that the plastic markers are easy to see, durable, hold up and better retain their paint color. F Hall will forward a picture of the plastic markers for members to review.

F Hall reported that he visited Quarry Pond this past week accompanied by Dana Hill of Ivoryton, CT who expressed his interest in doing some volunteer work in conjunction with the Essex Conservation Commission. D Hill has volunteered for many years in the past for the Essex Land Trust and he was a previous steward of Canfield Woods and also Johnson's Farm.

B. Canfield Meadow Woods

1. Trails and Repairs Needed

K Tucker reported that she walked Dennison and Canfield Meadow and she stated that the new signage is excellent.

C. Bushy Hill Preserve

R Helmecki walked the trails yesterday and noted that the piles of wood and trees that were cut down are still there. The yellow trail gets a little muddy this time of the year but for the better part, the trails all look good.

K Tucker reported that the bridges look fine.

K Tucker reported that in an email, she asked Ryan Welch if the Town crew could clear the debris previously reported on, in the area of Bushy Hill Pond. Kay suggested that if the Town crew was unable to remove the debris, a professional hauler would be hired. However, the Town's dump sticker would be required in order to dispose of the debris at the Town dump without incurring a fee. ECC awaiting a response from R. Welch.

1. Trails, Signage and Repairs Needed

M Reeves will install the DEEP and tick signs on the kiosk at Bushy Hill Preserve. The post on which the signs had been posted had been taken from the ground.

A Forrest reported that there is a plastic children's pool hung up on some branches in the area of the Falls River.

7. Financial Report YTD

K Tucker reported that she will authorize a contract with Beaver Solutions for two inspections and small, needed repairs, and will contract with All Habitat when they put forward their mosquito and phragmites management proposals.

Commissioners authorized K Tucker to transfer the current budget to the new fiscal year budget. M Reeves noted that the ECC mission and the work are the same each year and the need to maintain the trails remains high priority.

8. Adjournment

MOTION made by F Hall to adjourn at 8:43 PM until the February 11, 2021 regularly scheduled meeting; meeting site TBD; **SECONDED** by J O'Brien; **Voting in Favor:** K Tucker, J Lovelace, A Forrest, F Hall, R Helmecki, M Reeves, J O'Brien; **Opposed:** None; **Abstaining:** None; **Approved:** 7/0/0. No further discussion.

Respectfully submitted,

Stella A. Caione

Stella A. Caione, Recording Clerk