



TOWN OF ESSEX  
**Conservation Commission**

**Executive Board**

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

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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, February 11, 2021 at 7:30pm**

**Attending Members**

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

**Absent Members**

J Wlochowski

**Staff:**

Stella A Caione, Recording Clerk

**Audience:** No audience members.

**1. Call to Order**

K Tucker called the meeting to order at 7:55 pm, due to technical difficulties with meeting ID and password. Seated for the meeting were K Tucker, F Hall, J Lovelace, A Forrest, J O'Brien, M Reeves, R Helmecki, R Field.

**2. Public Comments**

There was no public comment.

**3. Review and Approve January 14, 2021 Meeting Minutes**

**MOTION** made by M Reeves to approve the Minutes of the January 14, 2021 meeting with the following amendment; 1) Page 1, Jim O'Brien was at the meeting; **SECONDED** by J Lovelace; **Voting in Favor:** K Tucker, J Lovelace, A Forrest, F Hall, J O'Brien, M Reeves, R Helmecki, R Field; **Opposed:** None; **Abstaining** None; **Approved:** 8/0/0. No Further Discussion.

**4. Old Business to Include:**

## **A. Report on Department of Public Works Clean-up**

### **1. Bushy Hill Preserve**

R Helmecki stated that the town crew cleaned and carried out piles of deadwood, debris, recently wind-uprooted trees and massive, rotted tree trunk from the Blue Trail and the pond area, Bushy Hill Preserve. Mr. Helmecki noted that the town crew did a great job and that the area looks good.

J Lovelace displayed photos of the pond clean-up. Please refer to attached photos.

K Tucker wrote a thank you letter to Ryan Welch, Director of the Essex Town Crew, with a copy to Mary Ellen Barnes, Director of Park and Rec Department and First Selectman, Norman Needleman.

### **2. Viney Hill Brook Park and Preserve**

F Hall reported on that the town crew did an excellent job cleaning the area within Viney Hill preserve. They sawed through the leaning, multi trunk trees and removed swaths of briers on the Green Trail, Wollocks' Pond, to make the trail passage possible. Mr. Hall stated that the Town Crew is committed to extricating rows of Autumn Olive trees (invasive vegetation) along Broadwalk (Orange Trail), Viney Hill Brook Preserve; and a total take-away of massive uprooted Oak tree from rejuvenating Cedar Meadow abutting right-of-way road Viney Hill Brook Preserve.

K Tucker expressed the Commission's thanks and appreciation to the town crew for the hours expended and for the thoroughness of their work.

R Helmecki reported that he and K Tucker visited Viney Hill Brook Preserve on January 20, 2021 and filled in deep holes with dirt and logs. There were 3 or 4 holes and they were about 3 feet deep. K Tucker reported that she and R Helmecki put up caution tape.

F Hall reported that he had not seen much evidence of new trees being cut down by the beavers at Quarry pond, and noted that perhaps when the weather warms, he will visit in the site.

K Tucker reported that the beavers were chewing back trees in the area of Tucker Pond, and chewing around the trees in the area of the glacial rocks.

## **B. Trail Conditions:**

### **1. Bushy Hill Preserve Trail Conditions**

Previously reported on.

### **2. Canfield Meadow Woods Trail Conditions**

R Field reported that due to the snow he has not looked at the trail system for 10 or so days. Prior to that time, there had been no issues. R Field reported that he has observed at least three or four parked cars parked at the trail head during the morning hours.

### **3. Viney Hill Preserve Trail Conditions:**

R Helmecki reported on the App, All Trails, on which there were comments made related to the trails at Viney Hill Brook Preserve, and some of the notations were that there were not a lot of trail markers on the trails.

### **C. Inland Wetlands Permit 20A-C Bushy Hill Preserve**

IWWC Permit 20A-C on behalf of the Conservation Commission was signed off on by former zoning enforcement officer, Joseph Budrow, for completion of the 4-phase work.

M Reeves met with the new Essex Zoning Official, Carey Duques through an IWWC Zoom meeting on February 9, 2021. Carey is working in conjunction with Robert Doane, P.E. on wetlands enforcement.

J Lovelace reported that Ms. Duques previously worked as a town planner and an administrator for two municipalities in Medford and Salem, MA, and she was a planner and a planning and zoning administrator in North Branford, CT for the past six years.

### **D. Other**

J Lovelace asked if anyone has reached out to Dana Hill to address his interest in working with the Conservation Commission. F Hall stated that Mr. Hill is interested in working hands-on with the ECC, however he is not interested in an appointment to the Commission.

## **4. New Business**

K Tucker stated that the Commission collectively has beautiful pictures and if commissioners were interested in putting a story behind the pictures, perhaps submission to Essex Events for publication would be an option.

F Hall reported on the annual beaver event which has previously occurred during the month of April. Mr. Hall suggested that based on the current status of the pandemic, the spring event be postponed, and consider rescheduling to the fall. F Hall will look into an article to be placed in Essex Events.

## **6. Financial Report and FY 2021-22 Budget**

K Tucker reported that the existing budget will likely carry over to the 2021-22 budget.

K Tucker reported that other than clerk charges, there have been no expenditures this month. K Tucker authorized on February 10, 2021, a \$630 invoice for Beaver Solutions.

All Habitat put forward their mosquito and phragmite proposal as \$600 for each treatment. The ECC has budgeted \$1,600 and this project will be \$1,200. Kay suggested that the Commission consider devoting the remaining balance to the berm clearing at Bushy Hill preserve.

## **7. Other**

R Helmecki suggested that if there is extra money in the budget, to devote it to clearing around the berm on Bushy Hill Preserve.

## 8. Adjournment

**MOTION** made by F Hall to adjourn at 8:55 PM until the March 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, R Field; **Opposed:** None; **Abstaining:** None; **Approved:** 7/0/0. No further discussion.

Respectfully submitted,

*Stella A. Caione*

Stella A. Caione, Recording Clerk

\*Please see attached photos of clean up efforts in Bushy Hill Preserve and Viney Hill Brook Preserve

After Photos (courtesy Commissioner A. Forrest)











