



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

The Essex Conservation Commission conducted their regularly scheduled meeting on March 11, 2021 at 7:30 p.m. via Zoom platform.

Attending Members

K Tucker
J Lovelace
A Forrest
F Hall
M Reeves
R Helmecki
J O'Brien
R Field, Alternate

Absent Members

J Wlochowski

Staff: No staff present.

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. Public Comments



There was no public comment.

3. Review and Approve February 11, 2021 Meeting Minutes

MOTION made by F Hall to approve the Minutes of the February 11, 2021 meeting with the following amendments; 1) Page 1, Roger Field will be stricken from any vote last month as there was full attendance and he, as an alternate, should not have voted; 2) Page 2, under Viney Hill, fourth paragraph, "he will visit the site." Delete "in"; **SECONDED** by J O'Brien; **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.

4. Old Business to Include:

A. "Essex Events" Project Report and Discussion

Frank Hall wrote a brief article on the Conservation Commission to be submitted to Essex Events. Regarding the comments, and if the article has not gone over the length limit, Kay suggested the comments regarding Bushy Hill should include mentioning that the trails go down to the Falls River and she will send her suggestion to F Hall to incorporate. It was also suggested the article state that the 137 acres of Bushy Hill Preserve are co-managed by the Conservation Commission and the Essex Land Trust. Also, the photo of the Wolf Tree with the Commissioners standing in front of it should include their names.

B. Trail Conditions and Maintenance Requirements:

1. Bushy Hill Preserve

Terry Stewart sent an email to R Helmecki regarding the muddy trail at the entrance of Bushy Hill, complete with photos. It was noted that the trail is a mess to walk through. Eversource has a right-of-way over it, so there cannot be any structure crossing it. A discussion about the cost of stones and delivery ensued. R Helmecki will obtain a few estimates on cost.

MOTION made by J O'Brien to authorize R Helmecki to look into two different vendors, and to authorize R Helmecki to place an order for purchase and delivery of crushed stone, up to \$300; **SECONDED** by F Hall; **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.

R Helmecki mentioned clearing the berm and culvert at the pond. The water in the pond is full, so probably that would have to wait until summer when it dries up a bit. R Helmecki recommended that the Commission handle this project sooner, and suggested a work party to use loppers to clear lots of briars. The trails are used, including by a cross-country skier.



2. Canfield Meadow Woods

R Field reported the trails are in good condition and well used. R Field was approached by a woman whose son would like to work toward a star rank in the Boy Scouts. The Scout noticed invasive plants near the Dennison Road entrance and he seeks permission to remove them. His mother has volunteered to dispose of them. Bittersweet is the most prominent invasive. The ECC felt it would be a learning experience for the volunteer and asked that he chart a map of the area to be cleared and name the invasives and equipment and method of disposal. He could then present his plan to the Commission. Commissioners suggested that R Field guide the Scout through the process and that the proposal be presented to the ECC. R Field agreed.

3. Viney Hill Brook Preserve

F Hall reported the Eagle Scout bridge has a few boards that need to be replaced. He sprayed a blue trail blaze red as the marker is at the beginning of the red trail. F Hall checked the pond leveler pipes and they all seemed to be working as they should. Two neighbors, with whom he spoke, did not mention any significant problems. A “No Trespassing” sign next to the parking lot has been posted. The house immediately adjoining the passive parking area has new owners. K Tucker will write to welcome the new owners and arrange a meeting to walk the boundaries between the town-owned and private property. J Lovelace volunteered to join K Tucker.

K Tucker mentioned there are two double-trunk trees that have been uprooted and leaning toward the picnic table on the blue trail at Quarry Pond. The Conservation Commission does not have the money or tools to take on that project. The double-trunk trees are leaning against other trees so there does not appear to be any immediate danger. K Tucker also reported the beavers are enlarging their dam on Tucker Pond allowing areas of Broadwalk to dry. Three bog bridges on Broadwalk need replacing. M Reeves has constructed bog bridges for this purpose. The dormant phragmites are visible; the town crew agreed to again cut the dormant stalks in preparation for All Habitat, Inc. to herbicide the remaining vegetation.

5. New Business

Dennis Robida, Viney Hill Brook Preserve neighbor, saw a bobcat near the power lines, possibly to scope out the beavers. He also observed a Great Horned Owl around Forest Glade trail.

Bushy Hill Preserve; Bob Nussbaum, Essex Land Trust, reported that neighbors on Winthrop Hill Road asked if the land designated as Open-Space could be used as a new trail into Bushy Hill Preserve. ECC members had inspected that location in the past but agreed that the area was uneven, had lots of vegetative debris, and wetlands.



6. Financial Report and FY 2021-22 Budget

K Tucker reported that the ECC Recording Clerk was paid for February. \$630 was paid to Beaver Solutions by the Commission for the annual inspection of the beaver dissuasion devices in Quarry Pond and in the pond abutting the right-of-way road. There is \$8,554 left in the budget which is mostly earmarked for future work.

7. Other

There was no other business.

8. Adjournment

MOTION made by F Hall to adjourn at 8:54 PM until the April 8, 2021 regularly scheduled meeting; meeting site TBD; **SECONDED** by M Reeves; **Voting in Favor:** K Tucker, J Lovelace, A Forrest, F Hall, J O'Brien, M Reeves, R Helmeckj; **Opposed:** None; **Abstaining** None; **Approved:** 7/0/0. No Further Discussion.

Respectfully submitted,

Stella A. Paione

Stella A. Caione, Recording Clerk

