

TOWN OF DURHAM
Conservation Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, May 12, 2015
7:00 at the Durham Town Hall

Members present: Carl Dahlman, Jon Herzig, Rick Huntley, Bill LaFlamme, Lucy Meigs (7:05), Bob Melvin (7:05), Josh Miller, Bob Thody, Bill Ward

Call to Order/Roll Call: Rick Huntley called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM.

Amendments to Agenda/Approval of Agenda: Bill LaFlamme, seconded by Bill Ward to approve the May agenda as distributed, made a motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Approval of April regular meeting minutes: Bill Ward, seconded by Bill LaFlamme to approve the April 2015 regular meeting minutes as distributed, made a motion. Motion passed with abstentions by Carl Dahlman and Josh Miller.

Payment of Bills: Jon Herzig, seconded by Bill LaFlamme to approve payment of \$40 to Pam Huntley for secretarial services, made a motion. Motion passed with one abstention by Rick Huntley.

Public Session: None

Patrick Hedden – New Haven & Middlesex County 4-H Fair Association – Use of Whites Farm: Rick Huntley read a letter from Patrick Hedden who was unable to attend the meeting. The 4-H Fair requests the use of Whites Farm from July 31 – August 2, 2015 for overflow parking and staging for pulls. Jon Herzig, seconded by Bob Melvin to approve the use of Whites Farm by the 4-H Fair for overflow parking and staging of pulls provided appropriate proof of insurance is provided and they meet with a member of the Commission on site to designate areas okay for parking, made a motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Glastonbury Modelers – Use of Whites Farm: Bob Melvin, seconded by Bill LaFlamme to approve the use of Whites Farm field on June 14 and August 9, 2015 provided appropriate proof of insurance is provided and they work with other groups that may be on the property, made a motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Reissuance of Approval of CATO Rocket Club use of Whites Farm, with specific restrictions on size of rocket motors and times of launch: Rick Huntley requested information from Rick Comshaw of the CATO Rocket Club about rocket sizes and noise levels of the rockets. Mr. Comshaw was unable to find information about decibel levels, but provided information about rocket restrictions. The size of the rockets are based upon altitude. The club restricts somewhat noisy motors to after lunch time launches. Skidmark and Thunder class motors greater than G are prohibited. F20 econojets, G skidmarks and I motors launch after lunch. Model rockets don't carry altimeters, but H and I rockets may not go above 2500 feet. Written simulations are required by members flying these rockets to prove the rockets won't go above 2500 feet. Rick Huntley, seconded by Lucy Meigs to approve to the use of Whites Farm by the CATO Rocket Club with the rocket specifications included in Rick Comshaw's email and that these specifications will be included in all future requests, and that all prior conditions remain, made a motion. Prior conditions include proof of appropriate insurance, no use of a loud speaker, rockets are labeled with the club name, and the launch site is located as far north to the hedgerow side of the field as wind conditions permit. Rick Huntley reported on a letter received from Tina Gossner about the sound levels on launch days. Motion passed unanimously. Bill LaFlamme reported that John Corona has not had CATO club members on his property to retrieve rockets and the noise level is less noticeable.

Property Steward Reports/Parcel Status Updates

- Whites Farm – Jack Stahl: no report

- Pent Road/Parmelee Hill Road/David Road – Melynda Naples: Melynda reported that most of the Agriculture Commission attended that last Selectman’s meeting in reference to the well issue. No Conservation Commission members were able to attend. The water tank has been drained to below the seam. Public Works put in a swale. She asked Bill Milardo about using a camera to inspect the well and check the casing. Discussion ensued. Rick Huntley explained that the area around the well was filled back in to reduce the amount of surface water going down the casing. Melynda is treating the well once a month. Lucy Meigs commented that action should be taken soon to make sure there is adequate clean water. Bob Melvin stated that it is the responsibility of the sanitarian as the regulatory authority to provide a resolution to the issue. Lucy Meigs, seconded by Jon Herzig to let Bill Milardo know that it is urgent that the current well should be inspected and repaired or to drill a new well so that the property has quality water, made a motion. Discussion ensued. There was concern expressed about the lack of activity to address the problem. Options suggested included using a camera to inspect the well, installing a treatment system, repairing the existing well, drilling a new well, and supplying bottled water. Rick has been assured that the sanitarian and the State Health Department are treating this situation the same as they would treat any other similar circumstance. Costs and reasonableness of the solution are considered. The motion was amended by Lucy Meigs and seconded by Jon Herzig to include sending a letter to Bill Milardo stating the Conservation Commission’s position, to request a status update on the process for resolution of the issue, the timetable for resolution and to invite Bill Milardo to report on the progress at the next Conservation Commission meeting. Motion passed unanimously. The letter will go out under the signatures of the two co-chairs with a “cc” to the Selectmen. Rick Huntley stated that Dick McManus is supposed to contact Melynda about the part of the barn that was not painted. Melynda should contact Dick McManus to remind him if he doesn’t contact her. More stone needs to be added to the driveway. Lucy Meigs suggested that if items seem to be dropped, to send an email as a reminder. There is no need to wait for the next meeting. Melynda commented that at the Selectmen’s meeting last night, they accepted the Roadside Maintenance Task Force’s recommendation to not use Roundup or other products with similar chemicals on Town owned properties.
- Howd Road – Josh Miller: no update. Josh Miller reported that the parking lot is not completed and the gate has not been installed. Rick Huntley indicated that this work should get completed by the end of this fiscal year. All the berms have been mowed. There is a lot of Japanese knotweed and it should be cut before August 1st. The property still needs signs posted.
- Pisgah Mountain and Chalker Brook Valley – Bill LaFlamme & Rick Huntley: Bill LaFlamme reported that the parking lot looks good. Signs have been posted. Rick Huntley has walked the initial work on the new mountain bike trail and it looks great. Jon Herzig had a question about maintenance of the pond. The outlet to Whitney Pond is being washed out. The pond is on land trust property. Rick Huntley reported that a sign has been installed to indicate the trails to Mt. Pisgah and Pyramid Rock. There was discussion about the gates and locks. Gates can be locked if keys are supplied to the two property owners. It would be nice to get a design so that the locks cannot be easily cut.
- Curtis Woodlands – Mark Smolley & Charles Ingold: Charles Ingold reported that there are no issues. Rick Huntley reported that the trail on Curtis Woodlands is now up on the MyTownTrails.com site. Rick and Pam Huntley GPS’d the trail this afternoon and Rick put it up on the site. The trail needs to be modified and re-blazed in the future. Russell Robinson was present to state that he is willing to cut the fields on Saw Mill Road and Curtis Woodlands this year. Jon Herzig, seconded by Josh Miller to authorize mowing of the two pieces of property for 2015 as a service by Russell Robinson provided appropriate proof of insurance is provided and the mowing is done weather permitting after August 1, 2015, made a motion. Motion passed unanimously. Charles asked for information about the substitute product the Town will use instead of Roundup. Charles also indicated a potential Boy Scout project would be to construct and install bluebird boxes on the property.
- Portion of Wimler Property with Public Access – Dick Porter: no report.
- Sawmill Road – Ray Koba: no update.

Old and New Business

Status of Deerfield Farm well issue – Follow up from Selectman’s Meeting: discussed above.

Status/review of proposed open-space regulations revisions: no update.

Status of Review of Plan of C & D; Need to add bicycle friendly streets and highways to Plan – CAT

Discussion: Rick Huntley has sent an email to Geoff Colegrove asking to update the plan to include discussion of complete streets. This is essentially an initiative to include bicycles and pedestrian opportunities on Town or State

roads whenever maintenance and repair or upgrades are being considered. Another addition was to try to plan a Town bikeway project which was brought up at the Cuginchaug Area Transition (CAT) meeting Rick attended.

Index of all open areas as mandated by the Connecticut General Statutes, Section 7-131a (b): no update.

Current Budget Status: Rick Huntley reported that the Commission's still has funds to spend for this fiscal year.

Tree Removal: Tim Larkin has identified five trees for removal on open space properties (Howd Road property and Curtis Woodlands property). Rick Huntley, seconded by Bob Thody to approve spending \$2,500 out of line item 456 for removal of the five trees by the Town contracted tree removal company, made a motion. Motion passed unanimously. Bob Melvin reported on the plans for planting two trees in memory of Ray Kalinowski on the Town Green. The committee is looking at planting two red buds and the Conservation Commission could contribute to the purchase of the trees. Bob Melvin, seconded by Bill LaFlamme to approve contributing \$300 towards memorial tree plantings for Ray Kalinowski on the Town Green, made a motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Sign for Memorial Tree Grove: Rick Huntley met with Torrance Downs and the sign will be placed close to the entrance to Whites Farm. It will include a picture of the grove with artwork, tree species and who the tree is dedicated to. The contract should be in place by June 30, 2015.

Status of ERT Comprehensive Plan Request: The request for a Curtis Woodlands comprehensive management plan has been approved. No update as to when work will start.

Website Content for Conservation Commission: no update. If members have suggestions for content it should be emailed to Rick Huntley.

MyTownTrails: Connecticut Forest and Parks Association has signed a contract to supply the data for all trails in Connecticut to Mob Action Games for use in the MyTownTrails application.

Report of Co-Chairmen:

Discussion of Guilford Road Property/Request for NRCS assistance: A request has been sent to NRCS by the First Selectman to develop a management plan for the property.

Bob Thody reported that the witch hazel plant has been replaced.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 8:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Pam Huntley
Recording Secretary