

TOWN OF DURHAM
Conservation Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, July 14, 2015
7:00 at the Durham Public Library

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

Excused: Lucy Meigs, Bob Melvin, Bill Ward

Call to Order/Roll Call: Rick Huntley called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Amendments to Agenda/Approval of Agenda: Bill LaFlamme, seconded by Rick Huntley to approve the July agenda as distributed, made a motion. Motion passed with one abstention by Carl Dahlman.

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

Payment of Bills: Bill LaFlamme, seconded by Bob Thody to approve payment of \$30 to Pam Huntley for secretarial services, made a motion. Motion passed with abstentions by Rick Huntley and Carl Dahlman.

Public Session: Fred Mastele, Roger Passavant and Dick Porter from the Agriculture Commission were present. Roger stated that regarding the well at Deerfield Farm they recommend replacing the well as being in the best interest of the farm and the Town.

Property Steward Reports/Parcel Status Updates

- Whites Farm – Jack Stahl: Rick Huntley received a letter from Beth Manley that was read. She indicated that the fields were mowed too early. The grasslands serve as habitat for birds such as the bobolink and red-winged blackbird. The early mowing has killed many baby birds. She also noted that since access to the brook is blocked seniors who are not able to walk far can no longer get to the brook. Rick Huntley explained that part of the field was mowed early to accommodate overflow parking for the *Relay for Life* event. It was thought that further mowing could occur after July 1st. The recommendation found on the UCONN CLEAR website is to not mow fields until after August 15th. Rick would like to limit future parking approvals for Whites Farm to the edges of the fields. Rick Huntley will contact Beth Manley and explain the early mowing and that the Commission appreciates her concerns. There was discussion about access to the brook. Rick Huntley showed the proof for the Memorial Tree Grove sign. The American Hornbeam in memory of Bob White is no longer there and needs to be replaced. All the other trees were identified. A tree also needs to be planted in memory of Leo Willett. Rick will ask Bob Melvin to look into quotes for two trees. The split rail fence needs repair again. Rick would like to get a work party together to clean up the slope bordering Maple Avenue before the Durham Fair. The dirt pile has been removed.
- Pent Road/Parmelee Hill Road/David Road – Melynda Naples: no report.
- Howd Road – Josh Miller: Josh Miller reported that rest of the berms need to be cut. The property still needs to have boundary signs posted. A density study for bow hunting needs to be conducted so the Commission has information about how many hunters could be allowed on the property should it be opened for bow hunting. Rick Huntley will call the Connecticut Wildlife Division for assistance.
- Pisgah Mountain and Chalker Brook Valley – Bill LaFlamme & Rick Huntley: Rick Huntley reported that a lot of oak trees toppled from the microbursts last month.
- Curtis Woodlands – Mark Smolley & Charles Ingold: no report.
- Portion of Wimler Property with Public Access – Dick Porter: no report.
- Sawmill Road – Ray Koba: no report.

Old and New Business

Status of Deerfield Farm well issue: Rick Huntley read various options from Bob Melvin (included at the end of these minutes). Rick Huntley met with Bill Milardo and Laura Francis this morning (July 14). A camera inspection of the well was conducted on July 7, 2015 by Rodger Craig Pump & Well Services. Rick read the findings and recommendations (included at the end of these minutes). The water level in the storage tank has been lowered below the seam and significantly chlorinated. The current plan is to close up the pitless adapter and to install backflow preventers. Discussion ensued. Bill Milardo is having a difficult time obtaining the well test data from the Connecticut Department of Agriculture sampling of the well. Laura Francis will pursue obtaining the data. There is general confusion about when water samples are taken, both the State sample and the Town samples, and when chlorination happens. Roger Passavant stated that the water level in the storage tank was not below the seam and did not smell of chlorine on June 10th. Discussion ensued. Rick reported that Bill Milardo believes that proper tank management (put water in the tank and then chlorinate it) is the solution for tank contamination issues. Fred Mastele commented that this issue continues to be addressed at both Conservation Commission and Agriculture Commission meetings. The same CT Department of Agriculture person has been testing the well for years and has indicated no issues until after the tank went it. Bob Thody stated that is why we need to have the physical data to support that claim. Roger Passavant commented he thought that at the Board of Selectman's meeting they agreed to implement the recommendation from the camera inspection. This issue has been dragging out for months now – what is the timeline for actions? Bill LaFlamme, seconded by Bob Thody to agree with all the recommendations from the camera inspection done by Rodger Craig Pump & Well Services at 337 Parmelee Hill Road on July 7, 2015, made a motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Status/review of proposed open-space regulations revisions: Rick Huntley asked Laura Francis to have the new town attorney review the revisions and to come up with a mechanism to implement the changes.

Status of Review of Plan of C & D: no update.

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 most of last year's funds were spent. The current budget is less than last year's budget.

Tree Removal: Rick Huntley did not check on the status.

Sign for Memorial Tree Grove: The sign has been ordered and should be delivered by the end of the month.

Status of ERT Comprehensive Plan Request: The request for a Curtis Woodlands comprehensive management plan has been approved, but no start date has been set.

Website Content for Conservation Commission: no update.

MyTownTrails: Connecticut Forest and Parks Association (CFPA) signed a contract to supply the data for all trails in Connecticut to Mob Action Games for use in the MyTownTrails application. Rick Huntley is checking to find out the status of the data transfer.

Discussion of Commission Officers for 2015/2016 Fiscal Year: Election of officers is not on a mandated timeline. Elections are needed only when a change in officers is wanted.

Report of Co-Chairmen: Rick Huntley reported on correspondence received – a hunting lottery application, Connecticut Land Conservation Council membership renewal request, and *Connecticut Wildlife* magazine. Rick Huntley, seconded by Jon Herzig to renew Connecticut Land Conservation Council membership for 2015-16 at the \$100 level, made a motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 8:20 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Pam Huntley
Recording Secretary

Thoughts for options by Bob Melvin:

I've been giving some thought to the options for addressing the Deerfield Farm water-quality problem. Before any action is taken Bill Milardo should ask the Department of Agriculture for the results of all water analysis they have performed on samples collected from Deerfield Farms. Ms. Naples has been selling milk for several years so I assume they have numerous analysis. The object of this request would be to determine if any analysis prior to installation of the water tank show elevated levels of coliform bacteria. If there are some elevated levels it would indicate that the problem predates the installation of the tank. There should be no problem in getting this information from the State as the well belongs to the Town of Durham. The condition of the well and well casing should also be assessed as soon as possible. Bill Milardo has obtained a reasonable estimate for a TV survey of the casing and well bore. Information from this survey should give some information on the integrity of the casing and conditions at the casing-well bore interface.

The following options exist if there is no evidence of prior contamination and the well appears to be in good shape.

Remove the water tank. After removal continue to monitor well water for any indication of bacteria. (In my opinion, it would also be a good idea to also have one analysis of inorganic constituents to provide background data in the event of any future water-quality problems.)

Empty and disinfect the water tank. Subsequently continue to sample the well water to determine if coliform bacteria are still present. If present after a reasonable period of time, it would suggest another source.

Empty and disinfect water tank and then refill with clean water from the Town's public supply source. This water should be transported in a clean tanker truck. It is also my opinion that this water tank should always have been filled with water suitable for human consumption as it was placed so close to the well.

Leave the water tank where it is and drill a new well at a suitable distance from any source of contamination and that also meets the public health code. This may be the least desirable option as the yield and quality of water from a new well can only be determined after the well is completed.

Finally, leave everything alone and install a system to disinfect the water by chlorination or any other suitable means.

Perhaps there are other options but I can't think of any others at this time.

Rodger Craig Pump & Well Services Camera Inspection conducted at 337 Parmelee Hill Road on July 7, 2015:

There is a second pitless adapter installed in the well at 6 feet, no one knows if the pitless has been plugged, or if it is open ended someplace.

No fractures, holes or splits in the casing were noted at time of inspection.

There was no evidence of water seeping into the drive shoe.

There is not a backflow preventer on the water line to isolate water for the animals and the water in the processing room.

Recommendations:

- 1) Dig up well and install a 1" plug in the second pitless to eliminate the possibility of contamination from the surface.
- 2) Install backflow preventer between water for the barn and processing room.
- 3) Install sediment filter and UV light to ensure the water into the processing room remains bacteria free.
- 4) Thoroughly chlorinate the entire system after the above work has been completed.