

NORTH STONINGTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION  
North Stonington New Town Hall  
February 23, 2012 @ 6:00 pm  
Minutes

Meeting called to order at 6:03pm.

Present: Bill Ricker, Chair, Dick Blodgett, Vice Chair, Bob Fleury, Treas., Joe Spano, sec., Pat Lewis, alt., Warren Speh .

Action on January 2011 minutes: approved 6-0-0 with following changes: 1. New Business 4. Properties added to land acquisition list: Comstock(2), Macintosh, Camp Wrightman, Westbrook, Birkberk property adjacent to Hewitt Farm, White property along Shunock, Platt property, end of Avery Road. 2. CC budget request for \$300/yr for 3 years to be used for trail head signs like the one on Billings Lake.

Treasurer's report: none

Citizen Comments: 22 citizens present to discuss former YMCA Camp Anderson property. Mark Jaffan passed out a timeline of events.(see attachment A). He asked the CC to support the open space use of the property. The current owner(see attachment B) and his lawyer asked for more time to prepare their side of the story. A very civil discussion among CC board members, both parties and the general public ensued. It centered on open space vs. farms vs. original intent of donors. CC decided it needed more information(5-1-0) and will hear any further comments and make a decision at next month's meeting. In the meantime, CC will seek info from BOS and arrange a site visit.

Officer & Committee Reports: Bill Ricker met with Marc Tate and provided info on all trails(not private) in all 7 quadrants for inclusion on master map.

Old Business:

NSCLA: Madeline Jeffrey was present at the meeting. She went over an email sent to the CC on 2/20/2012. The NSCLA can't grant an easement through Milltown preserve because of legal reasons.(see attachment C), but they are looking into an alternate solution involving a small green brook side oasis. They came to this meeting to get more info on specifics of the trail. CC asked for a 2 foot wide trail that would serve horses and people. NSCLA will get back to us.

CC alternate: no change

Chester Main Bridle Trail: deed specifications. Bob Fleury presented all 3 deeds to Chairman Ricker who will ask the town attorney to rule on the matter.

Report on Schweitzer property: Warren Speh reported that the Schweitzer attorney, Mr. Nelson, has refused an appraisal of the property, so the whole process has stopped. Although the project is "dead in the water", Warren feels it might be revived. He will keep in contact with the state and the Schweitzers and the CC will review progress in 6 months.

Response from Mashantuckets regarding trail work. Letter from Steven Colebut, Tribal Councilor(see attachment D) states that Mr. Boland will contact the CC soon to develop a plan of action concerning hiking trails on tribal land.

New Business: 1. YMCA property discussion - see Citizen Comments. 2. Review of properties to be added to land acquisition list. Dick Blodgett presented a map with all properties identified. Discussion tabled to next meeting. 3. Notable Tree program draft(see attachment E): CC will support this project .6-0-0. Dick & Warren will help Bill set it up and run it. Bill will draft letter to scout groups, etc. 4. Election of officers: motion made to keep same current slate. Passed 6-0-0. 5. Review of by-laws - not acted upon.

Correspondence: 1) Ct. Wildlife magazine received. 2. Avalonia Trails newsletter received, 3.CACIWC newsletter received. State has adapted stream flow regulations. 4. LHVA minutes received for CC info.

Member forum: Adopt A Trail news release draft presented by Bill(see attachment F). Will be put in NSBB and on the BB in New Town Hall.

Motion & seconded to adjourn @ 9:15pm. 6-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,  
Joseph J. Spano, secretary

Mark Laffan

C 781-924-2424

887-1871

(A)

## TIMELINE OF EVENTS: FORMER NORWICH YMCA CAMP ANDERSON

1972, 1982	Original grant of ~127 acres to YMCA from Oat, Dahl and Brown with a Reverter in the deed stating that, <b>"if the grantee or its corporate successors cease to own said described real estate, then, in that event, title to the said real estate shall vest in the Town of North Stonington for use as open space."</b> Three deeds were filed (one original, one corrected and one intra-YMCA transfer), each stated identical reverter language. <i>(Exhibits 1, 2 and 3)</i>
May 11, 1988	YMCA obtains a Special Permit to construct a dam and create a pond of about 48 acres to be built on a land owned by the YMCA and adjacent land owned by David Geer. <i>(Exhibit 4)</i>  YMCA approaches Town of North Stonington with the intent of swapping 28 acres with Geer to obtain 35 more desirable acres for building the pond. YMCA requests Town of North Stonington to release reverter rights on the 28 acre parcel to be given to Geer in exchange for an identical reverter on the 35 acre parcel to be given by Geer.
May 31, 1988	Special Town Meeting held where it was Resolved, <b>"to release the reverter clause in favor of the Town of North Stonington which exists on 28 acres (+/-) ...in exchange for consideration for the imposition of a reverter clause in favor of the Town of North Stonington on 35 acres (+/-)..."</b> <i>(Exhibit 5)</i>
November 1989	Town records the Release of Reverter, <b>"pursuant to the Resolution adopted at a special town meeting...on May 31, 1988."</b> The Release of Reverter also references the 1972 and 1982 land deeds that contain the reverter language. <i>(Exhibit 6)</i>
1989 – 2007	No additional activity – YMCA never proceeds with construction of pond.
2007 and 2009	YMCA obtained credit facilities secured by mortgages on all of the YMCA assets, including YMCA Camp Anderson Property.  In 2009 the YMCA went into bankruptcy.
October 2010	Bank that provided credit facilities initiates foreclosure proceedings on YMCA Camp Anderson Property. <i>(Recorded on October 22, 2010 in Volume 199, at Page 892 of the North Stonington Land Records)</i>
December 2010	Town files to become party to foreclosure; claims property interest stating Reverter and charitable use trust, which provides, <b>"all estates granted for...public and charitable use, shall forever remain to the uses to which they were granted according to the true intent and meaning of the grantor, and to no other use whatsoever."</b> Town's filing also states, <b>"The Town...intends to file a special defense and seek an order that upon the foreclosure of the said premises...the Right of Reverter would operate and title would vest in the Town of North Stonington for public and charitable use as open space"</b> <i>(Exhibit 7)</i>
June 2011	YMCA sells property subject to among other things, <b>"purported rights in favor of the Town of North Stonington..."</b> <i>(Exhibit 8)</i>



## *Firefly Farms Valentine's 2012*

Winter season is supposed to be the resting season for farmers. I guess we didn't read the fine print that said, "Except the first winter".

We got our Connecticut PA 490 Farmland designation. Yay! Thank you North Stonington!

We are very happily settling into being part of North Stonington. Firefly Farms is now a member of the North Stonington Small Business Association and we are hoping to sponsor a Little League team. (I was such a mediocre baseball player. My nickname was "Charlie Brown".)

With the guidance of a certified forester, we have started a program to bring our woods back to health. They are in pretty bad shape. We felt really good when the forester came back to check on our progress and said, "This looks great, just the way I imagined it could be." Soon our piggies will move into that area.

Craig Floyd of Footstep Farms, who sold us our starter pigs, described pigs as "a garbage disposal and a rototiller on the front end, a composter in the middle with a fertilizer spreader on the back end."

To those of you who have given us what you would normally compost, thank you. Our "composters" have been hard at work fulfilling the promise in Craig's description! To the many people who give us veggies and other treats for the pigs, thank you. Our pigs thank you. To all who gave us pumpkins during the harvest season, we are just about to run out, 3½ months after the first pumpkins were picked up!!! Thank you for your incredible generosity!! Those cuties are putting on more than a pound a day with your help.

We have built our first Porcine Taj Mahal. Portable and insulated, our pigs love their new home. As a matter of fact, after moving in, they went back to their old house of straw -- yes, their first home was made out of hay bales -- and they tore it apart. Pigs are smart! They took away any option of sending them back there.

We are negotiating for our first Myotonic or Tennessee Fainting Goats; Dugan has located a herd of Randall Lineback cattle, a purely New England breed; and it is time to order chickens.

Dugan, Beth and Jim are just about through with the first forestry chores and need frozen ground to continue so have started work on the farm shop in the interim. Alan is working to rebuild the old stone walls at the entrance. Ian and Joe are working on our equipment. When the gate is open, drop in and say "hi", especially if you have questions or concerns.

For those of you who have expressed your concerns about our future, thank you. Yes, we face challenges, but Firefly Farms is here to stay. This is our farm. This is our home. This is our Town. We are very happy to be here.

Please say "Hi" to us on Facebook at FireFly Farms.

Happy Valentine's,  
Van, Beth, Allena and Dugan



North Stonington  
C · I · T · I · Z · E · N · S  
**Land Alliance**

PO Box 327, North Stonington CT 06359

Tel: 860-599-5517 Email: [landallianceinc@gmail.com](mailto:landallianceinc@gmail.com) WEB: [www.nslandalliance.org](http://www.nslandalliance.org) Fax: 860-599-5731

Conservation Commission  
Town Hall, 40 Main Street  
North Stonington, Ct 06359

February 20, 2012

**Re: Milltown Preserve on Wyassup Road**

Dear Conservation Commission Members:

We walked, we drew maps, and we talked among ourselves and neighbors about your wanting to own an easement through our Milltown Preserve on Wyassup Road or to accept the entire parcel as a gift to the town.

And on one last checking out of the deed, first with ourselves and then with our lawyer, lo and behold, we have learned we cannot do either.

Milltown Preserve, 1.24 acres, and its sister across the road, Pitcher Mountain Preserve, 1.84 acres, are bound to Land Alliance as long as it exists, or as the deeds read, until it "be dissolved." Even then, the accepting entity would have to pass the IRS Section 501-c-3 muster, which we understand that Hewitt Farm and other town lands do not.

The good news is that none of this has to hold you up with your public trails! There already is a series of wonderful entrances and exits to Hewitt Farm for the public to enjoy!

More good news, we understand that you already have requested and received some Wyassup Road easements into Hewitt Farm from our nearby Wyassup Road neighbors just down the road. We have also read that you are requesting another trail into Hewitt Farm through Wheeler Library lands in the village.

Regarding Milltown Preserve itself, several members are asking to create a small green brook side oasis with an unobtrusive upper and brook side footpath as part of its main design thrust. Perhaps in their design there can be an Alliance- owned- and- designed spur that meets up gently with Hewitt Farm, remembering that this particular area is in (and under, often) wetlands and is directly influenced by the brook's flow

We wish you well with the Chester Main Bridle Path, for both humans and horses, we support your efforts. Let's continue to talk about this,

With best wishes in your efforts to save land,

Madeline Jeffery for  
The Land Alliance Board of Directors



February 1, 2012

William S. Ricker, Chairman  
North Stonington Conservation Commission  
40 Main Street  
North Stonington, CT 06359

Dear Chairman Ricker:

I am in receipt of your January 23, 2012 letter regarding hiking trails. We share your goals of educating the public on the importance of preserving and caring for our environment, encouraging outdoor activity, improving the condition of our trails and preserving the history of significant trails.

As you may be aware, we have established new hiking trails on the Reservation in the last several years.

We welcome the opportunity to work cooperatively with you to continue our efforts to be the best stewards possible of our land.

Mr. Boland will contact you soon to develop a plan of action with you in order to accomplish these goals for our mutual benefit.

Sincerely,

Steven E. Colebut  
Tribal Councilor



**NORTH STONINGTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

The North Stonington Conservation Commission (NSCC) recognizes our town has an abundance of beautiful trees lining our road ways, growing in pastures, forests, and home owners yards. We'd like to record our notable trees, identify the species and when possible or appropriate share the location for others to view them.

In order to accomplish this task, we need your help. We ask families, service organizations, scouts, church groups, seniors, school groups, land owners and others to submit your "notable tree" for judging. Look around town, hike our numerous trails, drive along road ways. When you see a particularly large or beautiful tree, fill out the form available at the Town Hall and return it to the Conservation Commission box in the Old Town Hall.

There are dozens of different species of trees and therefore dozens of possible winnings. At the end of 2012 we will recognize the winning individual or group, take their picture with "their" tree, and publish the list in the paper.

Have fun and get out looking!

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**NORTH STONINGTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION  
NOTABLE TREE APPLICATION**

Name of individual or group: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number to contact you: \_\_\_\_\_

Species of tree: \_\_\_\_\_

Circumference (4.5' above ground):

Height (see attached page for determination):

Spread (see attached page for measurement):

NOTE: If on private land, you must ask landowner for permission to trespass and measure.

Return completed form to the Old Town Hall

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## STEWARDSHIP OF THE NORTH STONINGTON TRAIL SYSTEM

North Stonington's Conservation Commission has completed a trail map including scores of walking, hiking, horseback riding and biking trails. Developed over a three year period, the map includes state, municipal, and private trails for the public's enjoyment.

As many trails have existed over a hundred years, they now cross land under new and private ownership and landowners of course must be contacted before crossing.

Trails under the stewardship of The Avalonia Land Trust, North Stonington Citizen Land Alliance and those under ownership of the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation are included in the master map. Many of these trail maps may be found on line under their name.

The care and maintenance of our extensive trail system cannot be over stressed. Volunteers are needed to maintain the trails and care must be taken to preserve our beautiful woodlands. Bring a bag with you to carry out litter you might find. Carry out what you carry in. Take a moment to remove branches, brush, and small downed trees to the side of the trails. Storm and insect damage has littered many trails with debris the government has limited resources to for cleanup. If we all take a part to maintain our trail system, we all benefit.

Interested in being a trail volunteer? Contact the North Stonington Conservation Commission through the town hall at 860-535-2877.