

North Stonington Conservation Commission
May 19, 2022 @6:00 pm.
Old High School Media Center
Regular Meeting

Workshop Minutes

Called to order at 6:01 pm.

Attendance: W. Ricker, R. Degoursey, J. Mancini.
Guest: B. Mastroanni.

No Quorum

Citizen comments: see emails & discussion below from 2 citizens

Old Business:

* Fire Fly LLC:

1. Attorney Eric Callahan is investigating whether the wording in the 96 Buttonwood Road Trust with trustee Van Brown is different from Fire Fly Farm LLC. No decision as yet

2. Two people (not named) in the brief are apparently not known by the Town. They need to be identified to see whether they support the move to modify the CE monitoring judgement.

Action: Ricker to follow up

- Historic Hiking Trail with Middle Schoolers:

Two guided trips have already been completed by W. Ricker and D. Segar. Two more are scheduled next week.

- CT Hiking Trails Day.

Report pending from S. Colgan (not present). 15 people have signed up so far.

- Progress on 5-year Monitoring Status:

Ricker has completed lake of Isles.

Degoursey has questions about Perkins property, parcel #5973, at Anna Farms Estates. After comparing the map from 2019 to the most current Google mapping it appears there may be some intrusion into the CE by clear cutting and vehicular traffic. At this time it is unclear if this type of activity was allowed in the original agreement in setting up the CE. We need to clarify this before any notice is given to the property owners.

Action: Ricker to check deed wording

- Mapping of a New Bike Trail:

Report by S. Colgan (not present) deferred.

- Communication with North Stonington Citizen's Land Alliance:

As requested, the Commission has removed item #21, Doves-Patterson Subdivision from the conservation easement list.

- Continued Review of Plan of Conservation and Recreation section of the 2013 POCD: Commission members were reminded to continue to review their materials to include the possibility of identifying and adding new properties for wildlife corridors. It was noted that we must also add new properties that have been acquired since 2013 to the next 2023 POCD.

New Business:

- Pocket Park:
Maintenance mowing schedule:
May: Ricker
June: Degoursey
July: Colgan
Aug: TBD, if required at all.
Wood chips: 2 loads of chips have been delivered and need to be dispersed
Action: Ricker to send out email to schedule a work morning.
- The commission received a request from Jen Panosky to remove invasive Japanese knockweed from a stream in the Hagman Hill Preserve. The commission approved her request. She needed to coat the cut plant with an herbicide, but not use Roundup as the knockweed is growing in the stream bed.
- The BOS received a complaint from Mr. Rathbun concerning the scope of authority of the Commission with a copy to CC chairman. He asserted that the Commission exceeded its authority by creating new bike trails on town roads and town land for recreational use. The Commission chair noted that no new trails were created, specifically referencing Enduro Trails in Pachaug Forest, which were mentioned by the complainant, and which already exist. All of the Commission's work and initiatives, past and present, have followed state statutes. Each initiative had been presented to, acknowledged and approved by the past & present First Selectmen. Selectman Mastroianni asserted that the current town rules and regulations appear to be ambiguous and that the Commission may have, in fact, engaged in recreational development activities which are not part of the Commission's mandate. Chairman Ricker then pointed out that State statutes *do* specifically identify development of recreational opportunities as a Conservation Commission activity referencing C.G.S. Sec. 7-131a #9. Mr. Mastroianni countered that both the State and Town definition of the Commission's scope of authority are not clear and should be reviewed further to determine if the Commission has overstepped its authority. He suggested that a future BOS meeting address this issue.
- Sunday June 26 @ 10:00, the CC is hosting a hike along the Shunock River and Tipping Rock for Ct Trails Day

Current Wildlife magazine was handed out to Degoursey.

Workshop meeting adjourned at approximately 7:15pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Bob Degoursey, Secretary pro tem