

**CONSERVATION COMMISSION
MINUTES OF
Regular Meeting of February 16, 2006**

PRESENT

Mike Ennis
Katchen Coley
Ellen Lukens
David O'Brien
Nancy Kiniry
Jim Fortuna

ABSENT

Sheila Stoane
Jerry Rankin
Steven Ladd
Howard Reid
Laura Hall
Jane Brawerman
Kate Miller
Len Tundermann

OTHERS PRESENT

Bill Warner, staff

A. Call to Order

B. Roll Call

C. Open-Space Committee

1. The open-space committee met at 6:00 pm in Room 208 in the Municipal Building. They reviewed the Salafia property in the North End (bordering the Coginchaug River) and are recommending to the full Conservation Committee to purchase the property, with or without matching funds. (The Economic Development Council also approved purchase.) Open Space Committee also reviewed and identified new and old target properties to acquire with \$510,000 now available for open space purchases (with the changed status of Wesleyan Higby property, see below).

A motion at the regular meeting to endorse acquisition of the Salafia property for city use, with or without matching funds was approved unanimously.

D. Public Forum

2. Bill Warner explained the progress of the negotiations between Wesleyan and the developers for the Higby property, including the donation of the majority of the (undeveloped) land to the city. A meeting is scheduled on March 9th at 4:30 at City Hall that will include Wesleyan, Developers, and commission members (Sheila Stoane, Nancy Kiniry, and Stephen Ladd, hopefully) to learn about the project and then inform the full Commission.
3. There is a proposal pending at a Legislative hearing on March 1st, Berlin Town Hall, to change the designation of land in Berlin (that is directly adjacent to Middletown land) to a GROWTH status, from its current RURAL/CONSERVATION designation. The proposal would then allow a developer to build a 100+ unit (active adult?)

subdivision on the Berlin land. The Middletown land opposite it is pristine forest/meadow that would remain Rural/Conservation, but in poor coordination with the land use nearby. Bill Warner is writing a letter on behalf of the Conservation Commission expressing our strong belief the Berlin land should Remain Rural/Conservation status. It would be great if someone/several conservation members could attend the hearing to testify to same.

4. INLAND-WETLANDS Hearing 3/1/06 New Proposed Regulations (SEE BELOW)
We are anticipating that Sheila will be able to speak officially on behalf of Conservation Commission and it's endorsement of the new regulation per our last meeting. Ellen Lukens will hopefully read a statement prepared by Kate Miller. Michael Ennis will also speak, and also introduce Barry Chernoff of Wesleyan, who will testify as well. Others are also expected to speak, including, no doubt, Robert Fusari the developer, Ralph Wilson or a proxy, etc. in opposition to the new regulations. It will be a long and controversial meeting.

E. Minutes of January 12, 2006

Approved unanimously with Kate Miller abstaining.

F. Old Business

1. Trail Guide
 - a. Addendum
2. Public Relations – Conservation Corner
3. Open Space Status
 - a. Guida Property
4. Development of Guidelines for Landscaping Plans
5. Other

G. New Business

- a. Wilcox property

H. Correspondence

I. Member Forum

J. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at pm.

