

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Minutes

June 13, 1991

PRESENT

R. Klattenberg, Chair  
E. Kelsey  
P. Bogue  
C. Harris  
M. Giamei  
A. Siniscalchi  
K. Coley

ABSENT

J. Chace  
L. Tundermann  
J. Brawerman  
G. Russo  
C. Peterson  
E. Patton

ALSO PRESENT

J. Pierce  
C. Wilcox, Staff

A. Chairman R. Klattenberg called the meeting to order at 7:08 p.m. in Room B-20 of the Municipal Building. Alternate, J. Chace was seated as a regular member.

B. Minutes:

Minutes of May 9th were reviewed with recommendations for additions and corrections. Upon a motion by A. Siniscalchi and seconded by C. Harris, the minutes were approved as amended. All voted in favor except E. Kelsey, L. Tundermann, P. Bogue and K. Coley who abstained.

C. Officers' and Committee Reports:

1. Officers - A. Siniscalchi wished to acknowledge the service of M. Giamei, as acting secretary, to which the Commission consented. He reported on a meeting he attended of the Inland Wetlands Commission in Middlefield. They showed slides of the Coginchaug River taken in conjunction with the McBroom report commissioned by DEP and the Coginchaug River Task Force. Middlefield is considering reforming the Task Force. J. Brawerman suggested keeping track of the various groups in existence, and just forming, with their focus on the river. K. Coley suggested having representatives from the Conservation Commission.

C. Wilcox reported on a water quality and non-point pollution study of the Mattabassett River under consideration by the EPA. This would cover portions of Berlin and Middletown and all of the river's course through Cromwell. Craig Minor, Cromwell's planner and Alan Page of SCS are co-ordinating this effort; they have contacted Bill Kuehn; have done a site walk along the river; and will be requesting support from Middletown should EPA decide to fund the study.

R. Klattenberg noted that P. Bogue was not on the list of Committee assignments. He further reported on the Environmental Manager Position indicating that it would be advertised this week in the Boston Globe, Hartford Courant, N.Y. Times, and Middletown Press. They are hoping for a closing date around July 15 or 30 and the specifications are the same as originally advertised (i.e. without the forestry component).

2. Natural Resources Inventory Committee: J. Brawerman reported that her Committee had not met and she will report under "Old Business".
3. City Commission Liasion Committee: L. Tundermann reported that his Committee had been scheduled to meet on Monday regarding the IWWA application of Sunrise Farms; however, since the IWWA already approved the application, there was no reason to meet.
4. Open Space Preservation: A. Siniscalchi reported that his Committee was making progress; and that he and R. Klattenberg had met with a representative of the "Trust for Public Land", a non-profit organization from Massachusetts which the Council has engaged to assist in the acquisition of open space parcels. They try not to duplicate the efforts of the Nature Conservancy or Land Trusts; and basically, they will review all recommended sites by the end of the summer. K. Coley asked what their relationship was with the Council Committee, to which A. Siniscalchi responded that the Council Committee had decided to "job out" the task of negotiation with homeowners. The "Trust" will be re-evaluating the parcels, using their own systems; need no money up front; and will be taking their operating expenses out of the transaction of transfer. E. Kelsey asked what the profit margin was. A. Siniscalchi replied around 5% depending on fair market value and the difference between that and the purchase price. C. Harris asked about the priority ranking, and A. Siniscalchi noted that ~~the~~ the Conservation Commission ranking ~~will~~ hold priority over any others. The Commission discussed the scenario of running out of money; however, it was noted that now is a good time to buy. The City will probably be able to buy all parcels under consideration, and still leave a considerable amount in the fund. It is the Committee's preference to bring all the properties with their negotiated sales agreements to the Council as one package. Hopefully, the owners will be eager to sell. K. Coley asked if there were any new sites; reply.... three. L. Tundermann asked if all sites were under consideration for fee simple purchase only, or were they considering the purchase of development rights and/or conservation easements. Reply: all vehicles are being considered, depending on the needs and wishes of the property owners. J. Brawerman and L. Tundermann suggested that the purchase of rights or easements would make the money go farther, which A. Siniscalchi noted is a goal of the Mayor and the Council. C. Harris also pointed out that where the City purchases the development rights instead of taking full ownership, it does not lose all the property taxes. K. Coley asked if the Cenacle was still under consideration.... A. Siniscalchi replied yes, it had not been dropped from the list and the fire may, hopefully, have lowered the price.

*Should*

*he and R. Klatt emphasized to the Trust representative that ...*

5. Lamentation Mountain: R. Klattenberg reported that there had been a meeting of the three towns (Middletown, Meriden and Berlin) on May 23rd at which a series of questions which had been distributed to each planner had been answered and a data base established. He was pleased to report that Bill Warner had been officially assigned to work on this project. The next meeting will be a site walk of the mountain on Saturday, June 15th at 9:30 starting at Giuffrida Park in Meriden. All Conservation Commissions received notices. He will be compiling the information received at the May meeting, and anticipated another meeting in August to do the base maps and "vacant analysis".

D. Old Business

1. Dennison Park. R. Klattenberg reported that he had not yet had a response to his letter to Mr. Digiullio re: tree planting. C. Harris remarked that he had some unusual maples grown from seeds from Harkness Memorial Park. E. Kelsey remarked about radioactivity in that area.
2. McCutcheon Park. The IWWA approved the Park & Rec plan at their last meeting. R. Klattenberg congratulated the Commission on this since every recommendation they had made was incorporated in the plan. The YCC will be recreating the walking trails.
3. P&Z Subdivision Regulations. L. Tundermann noted that there had been some "brain-storming" on these, at previous meetings, and suggested the commission might want some outside expertise on this. He had spoken to two eminent land-use attorney/educators on the possibility of doing several workshops - Terry Tondro and Tom Byrne. The most suitable seems to be Terry Tondro, professor at UCONN Law School, who is willing to come for \$125 per hour. He would like to know the issues ahead of time. Discussion ensued regarding the need to get recommendations to Bill Warner regarding subdivision regs versus the need to work through the issues of the model conservation plan. On one hand, it is necessary to get through the latter analysis in order to get to the potential revisions; and on the other, there are probably some immediate changes which could be made now. The consensus was to let both processes proceed independently; to express interest to P&Z, but not to make specific recommendations at this time. Regarding potential topics for Prof. Tondro... J. Chace suggested exploring the concept of "what is a buildable lot?" C. Harris commented that compliance with the Plan of Development and Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Plan should be mandated. Except for the Open Space component, and land use map, the new P.O.D. has been recently revised and adopted. There should be consistency between the P.O.D. and subdivision regulations and the Conservation Commission should also inform themselves on the POD and SESC

Plan. E. Kelsey suggested asking Prof. Tondro about broader topics regarding land-use law, its recent changes, explanations and interpretations. K. Coley asked about ways to write "regs" in order to prevent a developer from avoiding any open space donations by bringing in the development applications "piecemeal". J. Brawerman suggested the Commission do some relevant reading, and C. Harris warned against asking questions already in the subdivision regs. Staff will look into getting copies of the P.O.D., subdivision Regs and Soil Erosion & Sedimentation Control Plan for the Commission.

Upon a motion by M. Giamei, seconded by J. Chace, it was voted unanimously to encumber funds from the current year's budget for Prof. Terry Tondro to speak to the Conservation Commission at (up to) three sessions.... topics to include questions on P&Z issues, conservation issues and related topics, at dates to be announced and for a cost not to exceed \$1200.

It was noted that because L. Tundermann had asked for quotes, and these were professional consulting services, this item did not need to go to bid.

(The Conservation Commission recessed at 8:33 p.m. and reconvened at 8:44 p.m.).

4. South Middletown Model Conservation Plan. R. Klattenberg noted that the scope of services (handed out to the Commission) was put together by Midstate RPA. He and Geoff Colegrove had attended the previous night's P&Z meeting to answer questions on this. The total cost is broken up into two studies: A-1) South Middletown Model Conservation Plan (SMMCP) including Sumner Brook and A-2) a townwide conservation plan. P&Z approved funding for this in concept. G. Reif and the Mayor have met with MRPA and are supporting their efforts and modern mapping procedures. C. Harris asked if the study would include the stream and streambelt; however R. Klattenberg pointed out that it might be a "misnomer", in that it was not going to be a hydrological study....it would be a mapping rather than engineering study. C. Harris suggested time studies were needed and that the State was treating Sumner Brook badly. L. Tundermann indicated that developers can be required to calculate peak time discharge calculations. R. Klattenberg went on to remark on the exciting prospects of using G.I.S. mapping, and the many questions it can answer with its various overlay capabilities.

E. New Business

1. City of Middletown Aquifer Protection Program. R. Klattenberg noted that he had asked Elsie Patton to ~~pursue this~~. Several members had attended a UCONN workshop on this with Jim Gibbons and Jim Murphy of DEP. The Mayor has asked the Conservation Commission to decide at what level their committment on this issue will be. Upon a motion by A. Siniscalchi, seconded by C. Harris, it was voted unanimously to defer this item until the arrival of E. Patton.

*Discuss this  
Have with  
the Commission*

2. Sunrise Farms - no action taken owing to previous IWWA approval.

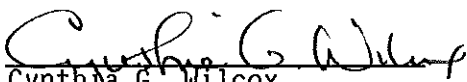
F. Correspondence

1. CT Chapter APA is having a workshop tomorrow on the topic of "Fees in Lieu of Open Space". L. Tundermann and C. Wilcox plan to attend.
2. The Nature Conservancy's Conn River Protection Plan is asking for funding from local conservation commissions since they had no state or federal funds. K. Coley felt this to be an appropriate request; J. Brawerman noted she was aware of this program, that it focused on protection of habitat for endangered species, and that it complemented the work of the Watershed Council. Upon a motion by M. Giamei, seconded by L. Tundermann, it was voted to contribute \$100 to the CRPP's comprehensive field survey of the CT River Watershed, which is deemed important because Middletown has a lot of shoreline and Wilcox Island. Motion carried 9-1. (opposed: E. Kelsey).
3. A memo was received from MRPA regarding Hazardous Waste Collection day on October 19, 1991. They would like to make a presentation lasting 20-30 minutes at the July CC meeting. The Commission concurred.
4. CACIWC sent a newsletter with a booklet on forestry practices in wetland areas, and with a call for nominations for "Outstanding Conservationist". Staff was asked to call them for information on nominations. One member suggested nominating C. Harris. J. Brawerman suggested writing an article for their newsletter on what they are doing with Midstate RPA.
5. Alan Page of the Department of Agriculture and Middlesex County SCS introduced himself by letter and offered his services as District Conservationist.
6. Copy of a letter from Dennis Cunningham of DEP Water Resources Division to Bill Baron informing him of approval of a permit for filling around the new wells was sent to the Commission for information purposes. No action taken.
- G. Public Forum. J. Pierce spoke on the subject of Open Space acquisition and A. Siniscalchi's report. He pointed out that landowners who sold their property to the City, State, or a non-profit like a land trust or nature conservancy would receive the same tax benefit as selling to the Trust for Public Lands. In each case, three appraisals are needed, and the difference between the sales price and appraised value (less capital gains tax) can be deducted. The City does not need this outside group in order to offer this tax incentive.

H. Member Forum

1. J. Brawerman spoke about the River Watch Program which will be monitoring water quality on the Mattabassett, Coginchaug, Sumner Brook and parts of the Connecticut River. There will be a volunteer recruiting meeting on July 2 at the Library followed later in the month with river walks in areas where there is heavy use and potential pollution problems.
2. J. Brawerman also reported on a workshop she had attended on "Pingo Potholes" which are geological formations which formed ~~on the bottoms of~~ former lakes. Some are dry, others wet. It is not known yet if they are unique habitats. Jane suggested inviting Janet Stone of USCS to speak to the Commission on this in August or September... or perhaps at a special joint meeting with the Wetlands Agency. from  
Isada leaf  
glacial  
blocks
3. L. Tundermann spoke on the value of starting a resource library for the Commission and suggested several items such as Randall Arendt's video, "The Conservation Easement Handbook", "Creating Successful Communities" and "Ecological Planning".... all available through the APA Planners Bookstore from the 1990-1991 budget. Upon a motion by E. Kelsey, and seconded by K. Coley, it was voted unanimously to purchase up to \$500 of library materials from the APA Planners Bookstore. The MDC office will put aside a shelf and members may borrow the books.
4. Mattabassett non-point pollution memo: C. Harris felt the Commission should support any effort to clean up the local rivers; however the Commission wished more time to read over the proposal. No action was taken.
5. R. Klattenberg pointed out that there was a large patch of poison ivy in the tree planter in front of the Middletown Press on Main Street and asked that the City do something about it.

There being no further business, meeting adjourned at 9:42, upon a motion made by A. Siniscalchi, seconded by M. Giamei and voted unanimously.

  
Cynthia G. Wilcox

CGW/lmk

Accepted: July 11, 1991