

Conservation Commission
MINUTES
Regular Meeting of June 15, 2007

Members Present

Sheila Stoane
Kate Miller
Jim Fortuna
Jane Brawerman
Steven Ladd
David O'Brien
Katchen Coley
Michael Ennis

Members Absent

Nancy Kiniry
Len Tunderman
Howard Reid
Ellen Lukens

Others Present

Matt Dodge, Secretary
Michiel Wackers, Deputy Director PCD

A. Call to Order

Sheila Stoane called the meeting to order at 7:10 pm in Room 208 in the Municipal Building.

B. Roll Call

The roll was called and a quorum was determined.

C. Public Forum

No members of the public were present.

D. Minutes of May 10, 2007

Motion to approve minutes was moved by Jane Brawerman and seconded by Jim Fortuna. Sheila Stoane and Michael Ennis abstained. Remaining Commissioners voted in favor. Motion passed.

E. Old Business

Michael Ennis spoke regarding article on BioBlitz in Chronicle. He passed around an article from the Hartford Courant about farms and said that the July article was needed by June 19th.

A discussion ensued regarding doing follow up article on BioBlitz. Michael will contact David Wagner to get information and write an article. Sheila Stoane will also provide information. Matt will email David Wagner and Jim Gaudreau to determine prizes for species guess contest.

An article is needed for August. Michael will write an article possibly on Farmer's Markets.

Kate discussed moving Trail Guides & Green Buying Guides directly under Conservation Commission on the website. A discussion ensued regarding lack of search mechanisms to find subjects at Middletown.com.

Sheila suggested that just in case no meeting in August, then Kate Miller will do an article for September.... possibly on Maromas Plan. Kate mentioned that Michiel should write an article on CVH property when he thinks most appropriate. Kate also mentioned writing an article on Len's alpaca farm (possibly for spring).

1. Public Relations- Conservation Corner

Matt spoke about Wilcox, Signs A2's, ATV usage. A discussion ensued regarding ATV use and an article should be written discussing this.

2. Open space status

A discussion ensued regarding resolution to authorize the construction of Urban Green & Community Gardens on Hamlin Street property. Also discussed was regarding the legality to use open space funds to purchase the Hamlin Street building and the lack of communication between PCD Dept. and the commission.

Matt updated the commission regarding the Farm Viability study.

- Maps have been reviewed;
- Properties have been visited to see if they match with 490 status;
- Workshop dates are being proposed.

3. Open space signs

A formation of a subcommittee to work on the signs.
Subcommittee to be Stephen Ladd, Sheila Stoane and Katchen Coley.

4. Bio Blitz

- Kate updated on planting of trees and shrubs behind Snow School;
- Middletown Natural Diversity Database through the Jonah Center;
- Kate discussed the project goals;
- Matt to produce GIS maps showing open space areas in more detail;
- Kate would like to delineate recognizable areas; Subcommittee formed; Kate, Eric Mosher & Jane;
- Sheila to send out tally to commission members;
- Sheila discussed poster winners and the success in bringing in members of the public;
- Jane discussed her experiences in collecting aquatic macro invertebrates, electro shocking fish and looking at bird species in Cromwell.
- Katchen discussed DNA analysis on soil and water from the sewerage plant and river by 454 life sciences; found over 40,000 bacteria "species" one extremophile bacteria found. These bacteria live in boiling water which was a unique find.

5. Organic Lawn Care

Matt handed out DEP's DVD on organic land care to those interested.

6. Site Plan Review

Reviewed wetland applications 07-14, 07-15 and 07-16.

F. New Business

Maromas Land Use Plan

Michiel presented and explained the Maromas Land Use Plan. Michiel discussed possible uses such as baseball fields, dog parks, amphitheater, golf course, open space, trail network and farming with VO-AG involvement and baseball fields. The commission discussed these plans and who would maintain any of the above items/uses.

According to Michiel farming and open space seem to be most supported.

- A public hearing to get public opinion is to be held in October.
- November / December - Advisory opinions;
- December / January - Common Council approval;
- March & beyond – Implementation of plan

G. Correspondence

Reviewed correspondence from Trevor Davis (letter was in mailout packet)

Matt will write letter in response that the commission approves efforts and they will look into these issues and to tell Mr. Davis about the group formed to look at issues affecting the lake. Matt to get more info from Wendy Goodfriend.

H. Member Forum

There are currently two (2) vacancies in the commission. Kate spoke with Barry to suggest people to fill these spots and discussed a couple of possible people. Eric Mosher has written Mayor Giuliano regarding his interest. Kate will have Eric call Joe Bibisi for support and have Barry write letter of support.

Kate spoke of the Merriam Tree Farm and the future possible conservation easement. Kate would like the commission to ask Director Bill Warner to assess situation and to purchase property. Once it goes to auction, it would be unavailable for the City to purchase.

Motion to request the City to table lien on Merriam Tree Farm to see if we can purchase in the future was moved by Kate Miller and seconded by Katchen Coley. No discussion. Approved unanimously.

I. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 9:40 PM was moved by Jim Fortuna and seconded by Sheila Stoane. Approved unanimously.