

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Minutes

November 14, 1991

PRESENT

R. Klattenberg
J. Brawerman
E. Kelsey
M. Giamei
A. Siniscalchi
D. Goff
C. Harris
K. Coley
L. Tundermann (7:55)

ABSENT

E. Patton
G. Russo
C. Peterson
J. Chace

ALSO PRESENT

L. Romano
E. Roberts
C. Wilcox, Staff

The meeting was called to order at 7:14 p.m. by Chairman R. Klattenberg in Room B-20 of the Municipal Building. Alternate D. Goff was seated as a regular member.

Minutes

August 8, 1991 - M. Giamei and C. Wilcox will get together to compile these minutes. Corrections were made to the September 12, 1991 minutes and upon a motion by C. Harris, seconded by M. Giamei, they were accepted as corrected. All voted in favor except M. Giamei, E. Kelsey and D. Goff who abstained. The Commission tabled action on the special minutes of September 23, 1991, and minutes of October 17, 1991 were not available.

Officer's and Committee Reports

1. A. Siniscalchi, vice chairman, reported on information from DEP and DOHS about rates and incidences of rabies in the State. Discussion ensued about various types of wildlife and the need for inoculation. He also announced that there will be DEP Public Hearings on Water Quality Standards in Middletown, and an Aquifer Protection Workshop on November 18th in Haddam.

R. Klattenberg, chairman, reported on the review process for the Environmental Manager which had been narrowed to five people. Bill Baron had selected two of the five and the selection was now in the Mayor's office. He further reported that he and A. Siniscalchi had a meeting scheduled with the Mayor on November 22nd to discuss global issues from open space, to the role of TPL, to vacancies on the Commission. He presented C. Harris with a framed letter of commendation from CACIWC. He also ordered 15 copies of the FOI wallet size "crib sheet" and asked that staff start a "scrap book" of publicity articles. He noted that Bill Warner had notified the Commission that the December 11th Planning & Zoning meeting would include a workshop to review subdivision regulations and heights of buildings on Main Street.

(L. Tundermann arrives 7:55 p.m.)

2. Natural Resources Inventory: J. Brawerman reported that Geoff Colegrove of Midstate wished to meet on Monday, November 25th and that the project would be beginning in January.
3. City Commission's Liaison Committee: L. Tundermann reported no applications to Planning & Zoning and no report from his Committee.
4. Open Space Preservation Committee: A. Siniscalchi thanked all concerned on Phase I of the acquisition; declared the celebration on November 2nd "inspiring"; is looking for new committee members; and will be meeting on October 29th and November 6th on Phase II. They are waiting to find out what the new MDC/EDC Committee will be; and suggested a workshop with Professor Tondro for the "Fees in Lieu" ordinance. Discussion ensued on Matching Funds for the open space from the Natural Heritage Trust Fund to the Farmland Preservation Program. DEP is encouraging applications but will not necessarily fund towns which can purchase on their own. Feldspar property was mentioned as a possible purchase. Further discussion ensued on short and long-term management plans; and the need for a special meeting with other groups to solicit ideas (Nature Conservancy, Land Trust, TPL, DEP, Rockfall, etc.). Staff inquired whether or not there would be an opportunity to bid out these plans.
5. Lamentation Mountain Tri-Town Project: R. Klattenberg reported that the working group was considering Draft #3 of the goals, Bill Warner had drafted an outline for the whole plan, and that the wish was to have the final report incorporated in the POD of each town. Next meeting is December 9th for another working session (chairpeople and staff). He pointed out a letter was forthcoming from Jim Gibbons to Commissioner Tim Keeney of DEP asking for the services of Les Meyerhoff.

~~Meyer~~ Mehrhoff

Old Business

1. Aquifer Protection Program: no report
2. Pesticide Applications: no report
3. T. Tondro Workshops: After discussion of several issues, it was the consensus to focus a workshop in January or early February on the "Fees in Lieu" ordinance and to invite both Jim Reynolds and Bill Warner to attend. The Commissioners were interested in several other issues and were asked to submit their list(s) either to the Chairman or the Municipal Development Office. R. Klattenberg noted there may be a special meeting on this sometime after January 13th (regular meeting is January 9th).

4. Route 9 Erosion: C. Harris spoke to Doug Cooper (DEP) who followed up with a letter to DOT noting this is an engineering problem not likely to be solved too quickly. He further, moved that R. Klattenberg, as Chairman, write to Doug Cooper about this issue. Motion was seconded by K. Coley and voted unanimously.

New Business

From 8:58 to 9:50, J. Brawerman conducted an exercise in order to ascertain some of Middletown's unique natural ^{and cultural} features through an open discussion by the Commissioners. Some of the items mentioned were: early roads; jurassic ridge system; Hartford pike milestones; waterfalls; shunpikes/tollgates; dams; the Connecticut River; Wilcox Island; trolley lines; silvermine, "Eastern Fault"; Feldspar; aquifers; beech groves; ravines; fish fossils; granite quarries; clay pit/brickyards; pingo potholes; glacial deposits; hiking trails; eastern newt and spotted turtles; quartz crystals; reservoirs; "underground railroad" sites; hanging rock; "Leatherman" sites; old railroad beds; etc.

Correspondence

Memo from Leon Vinci requesting that the Environmental Manager (and its related Commissions) be located in the Health Department: After a lively discussion of just which department should house the manager, IWWA, Conservation and Urban Forestry and strong sentiment that these functions should not get buried in the other workings of a large department, the Commission realized the need for autonomy on one hand and the need for an established department with its clerical staff and pipeline to the Council on the other. They were not happy with the prospects of the Environmental Manager going into either the Health Department or the Water Department. A motion was made by E. Kelsey, seconded by A. Siniscalchi to recommend that the Environmental Manager go into the Health Department and to endorse the memo of L. Vinci in this matter. Motion was defeated 7-1 with one abstention (all opposed except E. Kelsey in favor and A. Siniscalchi abstaining). After more discussion, a motion was made by K. Coley and seconded by M. Giamei to have the Chairman write to the Mayor about the Commission's reaction to L. Vinci's memo indicating the importance it places on having the environmental manager's position be autonomous and of equal stature with other department heads; and his own willingness to discuss this item in the near future. Motion passed with all in favor except A. Siniscalchi, who abstained.

Public Forum

None wished to speak

Member Forum

E. Kelsey expressed approval of the new Agenda format and asked that materials handed out at meetings be mailed to those who were absent. She then commended the Commission and the Open Space Committee for the genuine quality of their efforts in the acquisition process of open space. She admitted having had serious reservations about the issues involved; but came to the conclusion that the Commission acted honestly and sincerely and regretted any difficulties she may have induced. R. Klattenberg thanked her; and K. Coley looked forward to her future input as an "open space expert". K. Coley had three items: 1) she mentioned that the Essex Jazz festival might be looking for a new site in the County; 2) she urged the Chairman, in discussion with the Mayor, to ascertain how many times a person may be absent before they are dropped; and, 3) to encourage Commissioner Keeney to get the National Heritage Trust Fund monies freed up, and to write letters of thanks to the Governor and Commissioner (Keeney) for supporting Land Acquisition.

Upon a motion by E. Kelsey, seconded by L. Tundermann and voted unanimously, meeting adjourned at 10:45 p.m.

Cynthia G. Wilcox
Cynthia G. Wilcox

CGW/lmk

ACCEPTED ON: 12/12