

**Conservation Commission**  
**MINUTES**

**REGULAR MEETING OF DECEMBER 11, 2008**

**Present**

Sheila Stoane  
Michael Ennis  
Katchen Coley  
Ellen Lukens  
Eric Mosher  
Steven Ladd  
Karen Swartz  
Jane Brawerman  
Kate Miller

**Absent**

David O'Brien  
Howard Reid  
James Fortuna  
Nancy Newman  
Len Tunderman

**Other**

Michiel Wackers, staff

A. Call to Order

Chairperson Sheila Stoane called the meeting to order at 7:13 pm in Room 208.

B. Roll Call

The roll was called and a quorum was determined

C. Public Forum

None

D. Minutes

Sheila Stoane called for Committee to review minutes. Michael Ennis moved to approve minutes with some corrections. Eric Mosher seconded the motion. .

Jane Brawerman stated the following should be corrected. The City's application to Rockfall Foundation Grants have the trail guide request at \$1,900 and not \$5,000 as reported at the previous meeting. Under Trail signs, the spelling of Shelia Stoane's name should be corrected.

Shelia Stoane calls for vote. The minutes were approved unanimously with Karen Swartz and Ellen Lukens abstaining.

E. Old Business

1. Public Relations  
Conservation Corner

Michael Ennis report that the recent Conservation Corner article in the Chronicle somehow had the title transcribed in Greek. It was a printing error.

Kate Miller article recently published an article in the Middletown Press and Middletown Eye.

Karen Swartz volunteered to write the January article. The Commission discussed possible article topics. Kate Miller suggested tax credit and deduction opportunities related to green types of expenditures. Kate Miller noted that John Hall of the Jonah Center has information on these opportunities.

Michael Ennis noted that the deadline for the January Chronicle is December 19, 2008.

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Karen Swartz stated the time constraint and suggested writing a February article. Shelia Stoane suggested a letterboxing article to coincide with Trails Day, the first weekend in June (May Chronicle article) or Earth Day which is the last week of April (April Chronicle article).

### Public Relations

Michiel Wackers commented on the blog to assist the commission conduct business and allow the public to stay up to date on Conservation Commission issues. Jane Brawerman suggesting POCD text wikipage should be restricted to Conservation Commission members. Kate Miller suggesting that it should be made available to the public. Consensus of the Commission was to restrict the POCD wikipage so that only Conservation Commission member can make text changes.

### 2. Open Space Status

Michiel Wackers reported that there was no significant change to the status of the open space acquisitions. All were waiting on response from the DEP on the grant applications. The Commission discussed issues with the Merriam Property proposed acquisition. Katchen Coley reported that the acquisition process was now down to negotiating a price. Ellen Lukens stated that this was not a done deal.

### 3. POCD

Shelia Stoane asked Eric Mosher if he spoke to Bill Warner about growth. The Conservation Commission discussed the confusion about current open space properties versus eligible open space properties? Micahel Ennis asked if all farm parcels are included in the proposed POCD open space map? Eric Mosher believed that most farm properties are included. Jane Brawerman wanted to have the Commission make proposed changes to wikipage. Kate Miller commented on the choppiness of POCD, since so many people have submitted additions that have been included. Jane Brawerman requested that the public comments be posted to the blog.

Kate Miller suggest the following three improvements for the POCD:

- 1) Having a 1990 document and an amendment makes document unusable. Should be only one POCD.
- 2) There should be a list of documents that currently existing or that are needed. This is to ensure that the document links and is compatible with other proposed policy documents. Appendix should be constantly updated with new documents.

Jane Brawerman believed that there is interest in having a new plan. Ellen Lukens reported that Catherine Johnson is point person of the subcommittee that will deal with revising the current proposed text. Jane Brawerman asked who decided on having two documents, a 1990 plan and a 2008 amendment? Staff replied that the Planning and Zoning Commission was comfortable with the old plan, but was required to update it by law. Instead of starting from scratch they opted for an amendment. Shelia Stoane will call Catherine Johnson to discuss her plans for the subcommittee. Kate Miller asked if the goal is for the P&Z to use a document to guide decisions would the Commission not want a simple documents.

Ellen Lukens motioned that Conservation Commission suggest that POCD should be one document only and that Planning and Zoning Commission and Planning staff produce a single document for accessibility and utility. The motion was seconded by Kate Miller. The motion was approved with Michael Ennis abstaining.

K. Swartz stated that the Commission should write a letter to the Planning and Zoning Commission. Ellen Lukens asked that copy be sent to the Mayor.

Shelia Stoane asked who is going to write this letter? Kate Miller said the Commission could email amongst themselves. Shelia Stoane added that it should be sent to Barbara Plum and Catherine Johnson.

Eric Mosher added that there should be one map in the document dedicated to open space.

Kate Miller stated that each chapter should have same format which would include Status, Goals & strategies.

#### 4. Trail Guide Update

Michiel Wackers updated that the funds were being approved for expenditure. The Commission would now need to bring discussion ways to move forward with the trail guide update.

#### 5. Landscaping Guidelines

Michiel Wackers updated the Commission on the landscaping guidelines and asked for their review. Proposed amendment was posted to the Blog.

#### 6. Rockfall Foundation Grants

Item was discussed earlier.

#### F. New Business

Michiel Wacker reminded the Committee that an election is required to be held in January. Shelia Stoane suggested revising the bylaws in January to allow email votes and then holding the elections in February.

#### G. Reports

##### 1. Farm Viability Study

Michiel Wackers reported that the final report is online at [middletownplanning.com](http://middletownplanning.com)

##### 2. Army Base Reserve Center

Conservation Commission asked if there would be a January decision. Michiel Wackers replied that he did not know when there would be a decision since the timeframe has been different each time the City has asked this question. The Commission discussed the recent actions by the CT Attorney General Richard Blumenthal on the Boardman Lane property.

##### 3. Trail Signs

Conservation Commission discussed the trail sign logo. Commission suggested that CT should be added after Middletown.

Kate Miller stated she would go Rebecca Oliveras at O2 Design for products needed: 1) a letterboxing stamp, 2) digital version to go on the blog. She reported that the City Sign department at Public Works can only make simple signs of out of wood.

Shelia Stoane stated that the City needs signs for all open space properties.

##### 4. CVH

Michiel Wackers reported that the title search had been completed by the State on the CVH properties. The next step would be to get the State to do a survey of the properties.

Katchen Coley DEP lobbyist reported that no additional survey needed. The Commission decided that there should be a meeting with Gail Hamm to determine next steps.

##### 5. Letterboxing

Shelia Stoane reported a revised letterboxing kick off. Possibly for April 1, 2009, April 8, 2009, or April 25, 2009. An article and press release would need to be done.

H. Correspondence  
None

#### I. Member Forum

Ellen Lukens reported that Commission members should be looking into proposed pipeline? 12" pipe and pressure. Will it service?

S. Ladd – describes possible

Kate Miller state that the City should close on the Merrrian property as quickly as possible. The Commission requested an update on remaining bond funds.

Kate Miller asked that the Mayor approach Middlefield about acquiring their half of the Merrian property

J. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 9:15 pm was moved by Ellen Lukens and seconded by Karen Swartz. Approved unanimously.