

Beacon Falls Conservation Commission
10 Maple Ave.
Beacon Falls, CT 06403



BEACON FALLS CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Regular Monthly Meeting
January 7, 2013
MINUTES
(Draft Copy-Subject to Revision)

1. Call to Order

Chairman Diane Betkoski called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

Commissioners present: Mike Bouchard, Noralie D'Amico, Tanya Gutierro

Absent: Chris Wilemski, Jeff Kean, Eric Moraneic

Others present: Michael Opuszynski, 132 Back Rimmon Rd, member of Inland Wetlands who has been named liaison between the two commissions.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Approval of Minutes – December 2012

Due to lack of quorum of commissioners who attended the December meeting, those meeting minutes could not be approved and will be tabled until the February 4, 2013 meeting.

4. Correspondence

- Audubon Society membership info
- Letter from the CT Land Conservation Council asking for support to enroll as a member, individual cost is \$50. Diane Betkoski will review and report at the February meeting.
- Chairman Diane Betkoski emailed Eric Moraneic about his meeting attendance, but has received no response. She will call him and ask if he wishes to continue to remain on the Conservation Commission.

5. Membership Update

- Code of Ethics documents – Tanya Gutierro, Chris Wilemski and Eric Moraneic need to submit their signed documents.
- Re-organization – normally conducted annually in January

- Chairman Diane Betkoski called for nominations from the floor for the Chairman position. Motion to nominate Diane Betkoski to continue as Chairman; **D’Amico/Bouchard**; all aye.
- Chairman Diane Betkoski called for nominations from the floor for the Vice Chair position. Motion to nominate Noralie D’Amico to continue as Vice Chairman; **Bouchard/Gutierro**; all aye.
- Chairman Diane Betkoski called for nominations from the floor for the Secretary position. Motion to nominate Tanya Gutierro to continue as Secretary; **D’Amico/Bouchard**; all aye.

Tanya Gutierro reported that she cannot maintain the web site at this time. Diane Betkoski will ask Chris Wilemski if he can take over web site maintenance temporarily. Mike Bouchard volunteered to maintain the web site if Chris Wilemski is unable to.

- Membership Responsibilities – Chairman Diane Betkoski reminded commissioners of the importance of informing her or Clerk Martha Melville if they cannot attend a meeting to ensure there will be a quorum present otherwise the meeting may be cancelled.

6. Open Space Management

- Guest - Bruce Loomis, Chairman of the Bethany Conservation Commission

Diane Betkoski welcomed and introduced guest Bruce Loomis of the Bethany Conservation Commission (an advisory commission for P&Z and IW). At CACIWC’s conference in November, they had had discussion about a building project affecting both Bethany and Beacon Falls. B. Loomis asked what, if any, action Beacon Falls is taking. Chairman Betkoski responded nothing to her knowledge.

Discussion ensued about the property owned by John Woodward along the Bethany-Beacon Falls border. B Loomis showed a map of the property which is 82 acres in Bethany and approximately 75-80 acres in Beacon Falls, along Mesa Drive. The property has steep terrain. The land owner has showed several plans to the Bethany Inland Wetlands Commission to subdivide and build homes; obstacles include vernal pools and wetlands. Mr. Loomis stated that the plans have not passed the Wetland commission yet, and thus has not gone forward to Planning & Zoning for approval yet.

B. Loomis stated that the Beacon Falls part of the land parcel would have the same issues, and access problems.

B. Loomis shared Bethany’s current open space plan and conservation & development, including conservation policies, a priority list of open space to acquire and open space inventory.

D. Betkoski asked what characteristics they look for in open space: historical, agriculture, recreational, etc. on the Bethany town web site under P&Z

D. Betkoski asked if the Bethany Conservation Commission uses volunteers to maintain trails: Boy Scouts do help in Bethany.

B. Loomis recommended that the Beacon Falls Conservation Commission make a wish list of property desired, never knowing when they might become available. He suggested amending the plan of conservation and development to include a property wish list. He also mentioned that Bethany has funding set aside to purchase open space.

Chairman Betkoski thanked Mr. Loomis for all the ideas and agreed that it's important to keep communications open between Planning & Zoning, Inland Wetlands and Conservation Commissions. B. Loomis said they frequently conduct property walks on proposed developments and look to help identify parcels for potential open space.

Mike Opuszynski will bring these items up at the Inland Wetlands meeting, and encourage this important and ongoing communication.

- Lantern Ridge Project – 80% of the marking and boundaries are completed. A goal in 2013 is to complete the marking and put up signage. Noralie D'Amico added that Rich Minnick is still willing to help with this effort.

ACTION: D. Betkoski will bring the signage list and “to do” list for Lantern Ridge to the February 4 meeting.

Once the open space parcel is available to the public, it will initially be announced on the web site and perhaps at the May 4 RiverFest/Duck Race.

N. D'Amico suggested better defining the trails at Lantern Ridge.

7. Land Use Committee Update – Noralie D'Amico

- Plan of Conservation & Development Report: NTR
- Land Ordinance: NTR

8. Outreach Planning for 2013

- Conservation Commission Website – seeking a temporary replacement for Tanya Gutierro to maintain the web site.
- Education
 - Invasive Species – website info and speaker contact from UCONN, Logan Senack, CT Invasive Plant Coordinator, will be at the February 4 meeting (with the March meeting as a snow date).

ACTION: Post CT Invasive Plant List dated October 2012 to the CC web site.

Suggestion to have a speaker open to the public for a presentation to mark Earth Day in April, perhaps at Toby's Pond.

- Recycling Info & Events: No dates available for local hazmat recycling; used batteries can be recycled at the Town Garage on days the transfer station is open. This information also will eventually be put up on the website.
- Woodland HS Student initiative – Eric Moraneic
- Other Programs/Events
- Naugatuck Regional Greenway – no activity

9. Natural Resource Inventory –

- Speaker Update – NEMO – No response yet for discussion about the NRI process. The ERT for Lantern Ridge is an example of the NRI process.
ACTION: D. Betkoski will arrange for a speaker from NEMO.

10. Payment of Invoice

Motion to accept Clerk Martha Melville’s invoice requesting payment of \$57.50 for the December 6, 2012 meeting and associated administrative work and pay the bill as submitted: Bouchard/D’Amico; all aye.

11. Announcements/Adjournment

Chairman Betkoski is compiling a brief annual report and will email it to the commissioners requesting input before it is forwarded to the Board of Selectmen. The annual report will include a progress report on the commission’s 2012 goals and objectives and a budget report. It will also outline its 2013 plans with Education being its #1 priority. Once complete, this report will be posted on the web site.

May 4 RiverFest/Duck Race: the Conservation Commission will plan to have a booth to promote Beacon Falls open space and other conservation matters.

The next meeting will be held on Monday, February 4, 2013 at 6:30 p.m.

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:08 PM: D’Amico/Bouchard; all aye.

Respectfully submitted,

Martha Melville
Clerk

CC: Conservation Commission members
Board of Selectmen
Planning & Zoning Commission
Inland Wetlands Commission
Park & Rec Commission