

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



BEACON FALLS CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Regular Monthly Meeting
February 4, 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, Jeff Kean, Chris Wilemski, Michael Opuszynski

Absent: Tanya Gutierro

Others present: Guest speaker, Logan Senack, CT Invasive Plant Coordinator, UCONN College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Dept. of Plant Science & Landscape Architecture

2. Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman D. Betkoski requested to reorder the agenda to have guest speaker Logan Senack's presentation first. Motion to reorder the meeting agenda to have guest speaker Logan Senack's presentation first: Bouchard/D'Amico; all aye.

Mr. Senack was invited to speak at this meeting on invasive plant species to get this information out to Beacon Falls residents.

Topics Mr. Senack covered included:

- There are good plants, such as cardinal flower, native milkweed, are good for wildlife.
- The invasive, problematic plants are a minority, about of 10% of all non-native plants that have no benefit to other plants or animals.
- Non-native plants mean they appeared after Colonization, while native plants were here before the Colonists arrived.
- Invasive plants do harm to economics, environment or to human health and can be spread by birds and animals
- Multiflora rose has been spotted along highways
- Japanese knotweed is difficult to get rid of and it displaces other plants
- Burning bush/winged euonymus – takes over where other low plants would be, it has high levels of seeding, interferes with seedling regeneration making it too shaded for the younger seedlings to survive.

- Mile-a-minute vine – at this time, it exists in towns surrounding Beacon Falls but it has not yet been found in Beacon Falls. It is an annual vine, with triangular leaves and small barbs on stems. Mr. Senack brought a sample plant to show. This vine can grow up to 6” per day under optimum conditions. It has been in CT for 15 years.
- Kudzu – perennial, usually prevalent in the South, it has been spotted in Greenwich & Branford and other towns along the CT coast. Currently it is being monitored and controlled.
- Phragmites – a tall grass which grows to 10-15’, it is salt tolerant, grows in marshes, and provides no food source for insects or animals.

Mr. Senack provided informational handouts for the commissions including:

- A list of 9 specific criteria for invasive plants to be classified as such, per state law
- The CT Invasive Plant List: plants that are banned by state law, which cannot be sold, purchased, planted, moved, transplanted, cultivated, imported, or distributed and is punishable by fines.
- UCONN Mile-a-minute Vine informational card with more information at www.hort.uconn.edu/mam
- Guidelines for Disposal of Terrestrial Invasive Plants
- Guidelines for Disposal of Aquatic Invasive Plants. It is recommended to remove any vegetation from boats before transporting it.

Mr. Senack’s suggestions to the Conservation Commission:

- Make a plan before you act on invasive species
- Inventory the site first to see what’s there, and set goals for any removal
- Offer a native plant exchange program: replacing invasive plants with native plants
- Education: identify the invasive plants (UCONN has information display boards to loan)
- Additional information is available at www.cipwg.uconn.edu
- Provide advice on how to dispose of invasive plants. For example, the Asiatic bittersweet vine wraps around branches and strangles trees. In late summer/fall, cut the vine, leave in tree, immediately put herbicide on the stump so it will penetrate the root system.
- Use smart phone applications such as Eddmaps: from the University of GA (a suite of apps for invasive species) and IPANE – Invasive Plant Atlas for New England.

3. Approval of Minutes – December 2012 & January 2013

Motion to accept the December 3, 2012 meeting minutes: **Bouchard/Kean**; all aye.
Michael Opuszynski abstained as he was not a commissioner at the December 3, 2012 meeting.

Due to lack of quorum of commissioners who attended the January 7, 2013 meeting, those meeting minutes could not be approved and will be tabled until the March 4, 2013 meeting.

4. Correspondence

- Audubon magazine – Jan/Feb 2013 issue
- Information from the CT Bar Association about 2013's Land Use Seminar on CT Land Use law, to be held on Saturday March 16 at Wesleyan University which will include a review of municipal land use. D. Betkoski shared the brochure with the commissioners and asked them to contact her if they are interested in attending.
- January 16 Board of Selectmen memo acknowledging Eric Moraniec's resignation from the Conservation Commission
- January 16 Board of Selectmen memo appointing Michael Opuszynski to the Conservation Commission replacing Eric Moraniec. D. Betkoski welcomed and congratulated Michael Opuszynski on his becoming a commissioner.
- Land Conservation Council letter, asking if we'd like to participate in the council, membership is \$50, D. Betkoski recommended the Conservation Commission join. The Land Conservation Council will sponsor a seminar on "Can Open Space be Permanently Preserved?" Saturday March 23 at Wesleyan University. D. Betkoski asked the commissioners to contact her if they are interested in attending.
- CT Forest & Park Association information on towns wishing to register for CT Trail Days, to be held stateside on Saturday June 1 and Sunday June 2. They require that admission must be free to the public. It will be a weekend of events, including walks or trail runs, biking, etc. as part of National Trails Day. N. D'Amico suggested keeping it in mind for 2014 with an event at the Lantern Ridge parcel. D. Betkoski suggested promoting the event using Matthies Park as a potential Beacon Falls location for CT Trail Days this year. N. Damico suggested passing it on to Jeremy Rodrigo; perhaps he will get involved with the EDC.

ACTION: Mike Bouchard will call Rich Minnick to see if Toby's Pond was considered as an event for CT Trail Days.

5. Membership Update

- Welcome to Michael Opuszynski
- Code of Ethics documents – Tanya Gutierro needs to submit her signed document. Chris Wilemski has signed his document. Michael Opuszynski signed his document and will give it to Karen Wilson.
- Education – Guest Speaker Update – Logan Senack – CT Invasive Plant Coordinator (see above) J. Kean suggested posting copies of these documents on a bulletin board in the town hall.
- Remote Meeting Attendance – Skype – would use via laptop, M. Opuszynski questioned if there would be any legal issues involved. J. Kean stated that if you have everyone on the Conservation Commission's permission, it should be alright. It would be duly noted in the meeting minutes if any member participated remotely.
- Follow up re CT Land Conservation Council

6. Annual Report and 2013 G&O – Review and Approval

The 2012 Annual report was reviewed.

Motion to accept the Conservation Commission 2012 Annual Report:
Bouchard/Opuszynski; all aye.

ACTION: C. Wilemski will post the 2012 Annual Report on the Conservation Commission web site. He commented that he has access to web site but was still learning. D. Betkoski thanked him for taking on maintenance for the Conservation Commission's web site.

2013 Goals & Objectives Review and Approval
The commissioners reviewed the draft version.

- D. Betkoski added item #7 update Conservation Commission ordinance
- J. Kean recommended switching goal numbers 1 & 2, placing finishing Lantern Ridge as #1
- M. Opuzynski added to #5 agreements with land owners for potential use for trails

ACTION: D. Betkoski will follow up on how to phrase budgeted money for land purchases and inquire how it can be funded.

M. Opuzynski suggested adding a goal of historical conservation, D. Betkoski noted that it is covered in the 10 year plan. N. D'Amico commented that this topic might fall under purview of the Historical Society.

Motion to accept the Conservation Commission 2013 goals with the above changes:
D'Amico/Bouchard; all aye.

7. Open Space Management

- Follow up re: Identifying and funding future open space properties
- Lantern Ridge Project Schedule

D. Betkoski referenced the Lantern Ridge report and the need to secure boundaries and list invasive species.

Due to the late hour, this topic was tabled until the March 4 meeting when it will be put at the top of the agenda.

ACTION: D. Betkoski will email the Lantern Ridge report to commissioners to ensure that everyone has a current copy.

8. Land Use Committee Update – Noralie D'Amico

- Plan of Conservation & Development Report: Special meeting 1/23/12
D. Betkoski noted that the Land Use Committee has been disbanded as their work is done. Rich Minnick will continue to monitor activity until the document is finalized.

- Land Ordinance: M. Opuzsynski talked with Rich Minnick about changing the Conservation Commission ordinance so that any application for land use would be required to be presented to Conservation Commission before going before other town boards. Presently, the Inland Wetlands Commission accepts an application, hears a presentation, the members discuss the application and request any additional information.

C. Wilemski commented that because the Conservation Commission members are so new, people may perceive it as an obstacle. The commission needs to build some credibility before it could approve or deny any applications. The Conservation Commission per state statute can only provide recommendations.

Topic tabled – list reviewing applications for land use as a future Conservation Commission goal under goal #7 Update Conservation Commission Ordinance.

9. Outreach Planning for 2013

- Conservation Commission Website – in process of updating
- 2013 Goals

Earth Day is April 22:

M. Opuzsynski suggested a walk/clean up along the river; battery collection for recycling; offer an educational display or handouts.

ACTION: J. Kean will ask Bob Bradley if any river cleanup activities are planned.

ACTION: M. Opuzsynski will contact the Beacon Falls public works about any upcoming recycling events.

ACTION: D. Betkoski will contact DEEP about arranging for an assorted display and sale of environmental and conservation related items such as books, games, puzzles and more.

Kayak/Duck Race: May 4:

N. D'Amico suggested using the UCONN invasive species display boards and requesting informational brochures handouts to give away. She also suggested that the Conservation Commission table be set close to the senior center so that the invasive plant species along this area can be identified and referenced.

10. Natural Resource Inventory –

- Speaker from NEMO (Mike Deitz) for Natural Inventory resource has been contacted and may attend the April or May meeting.

11. Payment of Invoice

Motion to accept Clerk Martha Melville's invoice requesting payment of \$80.00 for the January 7, 2013 meeting and associated administrative work and pay the bill as submitted: Opuszynski/D'Amico; all aye.

12. Announcements/Adjournment

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

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 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