

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



BEACON FALLS CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Regular Monthly Meeting
March 4, 2013
MINUTES
(Draft Copy-Subject to Revision)

1. Call to Order

Chairman Diane Betkoski called the meeting to order at 6:32 PM.

Commissioners present: Mike Bouchard, Noralie D'Amico, Jeff Kean

Commissioner present via Skype: Chris Wilemski

Commissioners absent: Tanya Gutierro, Michael Opuszynski

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Approval of Minutes – January 2013 & February 2013

Motion to accept the February 4, 2013 meeting minutes: **Bouchard/D'Amico**; all aye.

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 April 1, 2013 meeting.

4. Correspondence

- Brochure from the CT Land Conservation Council for the 2013 conference on Saturday March 23 at Wesleyan University; D. Betkoski has info if anyone is interested in attending
 - financial spreadsheet "Budget Status Report Conservation" as of 1/30/13
 - Winter 2013 CT DEEP newsletter
 - Aquarion Water Company Environmental Champion 2013 Awards material, soliciting environmental projects for recognition and a \$2,500 grant, nominations are due May 8. See Aquarionwater.com link for award for more info
- Discussion:*
- M. Bouchard suggested nominating Rich Minnick for his work on Toby's Pond, he will look into it.*
- D. Betkoski suggested the Boy Scouts for the storm management program.*
- Naugatuck Valley Audubon Society newsletter includes article on stinkology, fragrances of the fields and forests

- Letter from Sophie Zyla on her study of amphibians and reptiles at Matthies park and possibly Lantern Ridge (her letter was passed along from Rich Minnick)
- May 4 RiverFest booth application form

5. Membership Update

- Code of Ethics documents – Tanya Gutierro needs to submit her signed document.
- Follow up re CT Land Conservation Council – D. Betkoski requested a check for \$50 for membership renewal.

6. 2013-14 Operating Budget

D. Betkoski emailed a draft version to commissioners for comments and a finalized budget was submitted to the Board of Selectmen which addressed potential outreach events, continuing education, professional developments, signage work at Lantern Ridge, and a new budget line for land acquisition fund.

M. Bouchard inquired about how the Conservation Commission would get feedback on budget proposal.

C. Wilemski asked who would be in charge of the land acquisition fund: the Board of Selectmen or the Conservation Commission. D. Betkoski noted that unused funds at the end of the budget year would be transferred to a different account and not carried over in the budget from year to year.

D. Betkoski stressed the importance of keeping Board of Selectmen informed of the Conservation Commission goals and objectives and accomplishments.

7. Open Space Management

- Lantern Ridge Project Schedule

The roadmap spreadsheet to open Lantern Ridge for use was reviewed.

Boundaries need to be marked, work to resume in April weather permitted, and completed by June 2013. Work to be completed by volunteers: the commissioners, Rich Minnick, and any other volunteers (student & adult).

Invasive Plant species: Japanese Slit grass infestation: commission recommended controlling it by limiting vehicular access, control the invasives in the parking area, by being proactive with early detection and rapid response to scattered invasive plants with removal by roots not cutting.

Install signage at designated points on the property depicting and describing invasive plants, work w/property owners bordering the property, establish routine maintenance, and installing boot brushes at trailheads. Completion date: summer 2013

C. Wilemski suggested keeping the fire marshal informed when barriers are put in, if an emergency rescue was ever needed.

D. Betkoski will add another category of emergency response access.

Signage POC Rich Minnick for costs and ordering; similar signs were installed by volunteers at Toby's Pond.

Hiking & Biking trails: J. Kean suggested a warning sign at the parcel's entrance to hike at your own risk.

M. Bouchard suggested having double sided signs on property lines "Entering Lantern Ridge" on one side, "Entering Private Property" on the other.

J. Kean suggested painting trees for additional boundary marking where there aren't boundary markers/posts.

Camping: no open fires allowed, any fire would have to have fire marshal approval.

N. D'Amico questioned if camping is allowed on town property.

It was suggested that Lantern Ridge be open from dawn to dusk like other town properties, no overnight camping allowed.

Pets – specify the owner's clean up after their dogs.

Education: inform users to visit the Conservation Commission web site to see the types of forestry, rock, plants and species found on this property rather than signage at those spots.

C. Wilemski suggested having a sign sponsor program, pay for the sign, get your name on the bottom of the sign.

ACTION: D. Betkoski will incorporate changes noted above and distribute to the commissioners for review. Dates to finish marking will be scheduled at the April 1 meeting. Goal is to have an opening event at Lantern Ridge for hiking and a possible sponsored tour in the fall of 2013.

- Follow up re: Identifying and funding future open space properties - tabled

8. Land Use Committee Update – Noralie D'Amico

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

D. Betkoski distributed the Conservation Commission ordinance; topic tabled until all commissioners receive copies. To be discussed at a future meeting.

9. Outreach Planning for 2013

- Conservation Commission Website – C. Wilemski has updated the web site and has asked for the commissioners to let him know if there was any outdated information on that needed to be removed. He also requested any high resolution open space photos to post.
- Earth Day is April 22 – Naugatuck River clean up April 13
Recycling: D. Betkoski suggested communication through a letter or article in the newspaper highlighting the Conservation Commission and directing people to the web site for resources and to emphasize the importance of recycling ink cartridges, fluorescent lights, batteries, also generalize what their goals are, and reiterate what the First Selectman stated about saving town money when paying for trash removal versus getting paid for recycling waste.

ACTION: D. Betkoski will draft a letter to the editor/article highlighting the Conservation Commission and share with all the commissioners for their review.

ACTION: C. Wilemski will check with Bob Bradley about publicity for the river clean up and offer to post the information on the Conservation Commission web site.

ACTION: J. Kean will check on hazardous waste recycling date and relay the information for posting on the web site.

- Kayak/Duck Race: May 4:

D. Betkoski reserved the informational display boards of invasive plants from UCONN for the Conservation Commission booth.

C. Wilemski suggested getting an emerald ash borer representative or literature about it available at the RiverFest.

ACTION: D. Betkoski will contact Logan Senack for an entomologist to participate in this event and M. Bouchard will contact her.

Motion to reserve a booth for the Conservation Commission and pay the \$25 fee, if required, for the May 4, 2013 RiverFest event: Bouchard/Kean; all aye.

10. Natural Resource Inventory –

- Speaker from NEMO (Mike Deitz) for Natural Inventory resource
D. Betkoski contacted Mike Dietz who in turn asked Chet Arnold to follow up. He and Diane have been exchanging voice messages and will request his visit for the commission's June 3 meeting.

ACTION: D. Betkoski will invite Chet Arnold from UCONN to the June 3 Conservation Commission meeting.

ACTION: N. D'Amico will follow up with Sophie Zyla about the species checklist for Lantern Ridge.

11. Payment of Invoice

Motion to accept Clerk Martha Melville's invoice requesting payment of \$80.00 for the February 4, 2013 meeting and associated administrative work and pay the bill as submitted: Bouchard/D'Amico; all aye.

12. Announcements/Adjournment

The next meeting will be held on Monday, April 1, 2013 at 6:30 p.m.

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 PM: Bouchard/D'Amico; all aye.

Respectfully submitted,

Martha Melville
Clerk

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