

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



BEACON FALLS CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Regular Monthly Meeting Minutes
May 6, 2013
(Draft Copy-Subject to Revision)

1. Call to Order

Chairman Diane Betkoski called the meeting to order at 6:35 PM.

Commissioners present: Noralie D'Amico, Mike Bouchard, Chris Wilemski, Michael Opuszynski, Jeff Kean (departed at 7:53)

Commissioner absent: Tanya Gutierro

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Approval of Minutes – April 2013

Motion to accept the April 1, 2013 meeting minutes: Bouchard /Opuszynski; all aye.

4. Correspondence

- CT Land Conservation Council membership fee acknowledgement
- letter from Byrne & Byrne LLC of Farmington re legality of commissioners' responsibility; advised to follow town guidelines
- Spring 2013 DEEP newsletter
- May-June 2013 Audubon magazine
- Winter 2012 CACIWC newsletter

5. Membership Update

- Code of Ethics documents – T. Gutierro absent, no update on her code of ethics document

6. 2013-2014 budget

Review of budgeted monies spent in March & April 2013:

.com domain = \$48.80

Recycling logo magnets = \$493.00

Current request for the 2013-2014 budget is \$1298 for clerk, operating budget \$2000 plus \$500 to establish land acquisition fund. This is in line with POCD and Conservation Commission goals.

Chairman Diane Betkoski expressed her thanks to Selectman Chris Bielik for speaking on behalf of the Conservation Commission budget at the BOF/BOS budget workshops.

C. Wilemski agreed with establishing a land acquisition fund even with a small amount.

Current 2012-2013 budget balance is \$2,695.70.

7. Open Space Management

- Lantern Ridge Project –Rich Minnick emailed an update about the Town of Seymour’s efforts to restrict ATVs access to Lantern Ridge from the Seymour side. R. Minnick suggested the Conservation Commission send a thank you to Eric Swift, of Seymour Public Works Department – tabled until commission investigates actual activity on parcel.
- D. Betkoski suggested the commissioners check out current activity on the parcel and set a date to complete boundary marking

ACTION: The Commissioners will finalize marking boundaries and install posts at Lantern Ridge on Saturday morning June 8. Also prepare a brush pile for town pick up and decide where to place signage.

- Discussion of signage needs and cost –

D. Betkoski shared photos of the signs used at Toby’s Pond with standard town colors used for signage there. She presented proposed wording for Lantern Ridge signs: welcome (36” x 18”), no parking, rules, Lantern Ridge entrance sign, parking. Posts would be purchased from Oxford Hardware.

M. Bouchard suggested buying duplicate signs to have in case of vandalism.

Signs to purchase for Lantern Ridge:

- 12x18 welcome to Lantern Ridge (2) with town logo and per order of Town of Beacon Falls
- 36x18 welcome/general information and rules sign with new URL (1)
- Parking area sign with arrows to put where boulders are (2)
- No parking sign with arrows by grassy strip (2)
- Trail sign to show the starting and decision points (10)
- Parking lot/Exit sign to direct to the exit with up arrow (2)
- Lantern Ridge motorized vehicles and hunting prohibited sign (3) for Hockanum side and Seymour side

Total 21 small signs x \$35 = \$735, 1 large sign \$75

4x4x8 pressure treated posts (6)

Some signs can be posted on trees, the rest on wood posts.

ACTION: J. Kean will discuss an emergency plan with Beacon Hose so they can create a plan for emergency access to Lantern Ridge.

ACTION: N. D'Amico will check at Oxford Hardware for cost of wood posts, hardware and concrete and write up the purchase order.

ACTION: D. Betkoski will summarize the signage list and coordinate the order with Rich Minnick.

Motion to purchase signage listed above and necessary materials to include hardware, posts, concrete and other supplies for installation using an expenditure of up to \$1,200 from the Conservation Commission current budget:

Opuszynski/Bouchard; all aye.

- Review of management plan

Chairman D. Betkoski asked the commissioners to consider the anticipated needs of marketing the opening of Lantern Ridge in the Fall of 2013 (flyers for outreach, Citizen's News notices)

Education: potential purchase of reference books to keep in the BFPL for both adults and children.

8. Land Use Committee - April 24, 2013 meeting

Mike Bouchard and Diane Betkoski attended the April 24 Land Use committee meeting. Various boards and commissions were represented. It was explained that the focus of this newly restructure group would be a "welcome wagon" for developers considering projects in Beacon Falls before they went through formal channels for approval and committed money on plans and surveys. This committee would conduct a preliminary hearing for proposed development to identify any potential conflicts early in the process.

The Land Use Committee is looking for representation from the Conservation Commission.

D. Betkoski commented that her preference would be to act as an advisor to these plans, rather than be a standing member of the committee.

M. Opuszynski asked for clarification of the Conservation Commission's focus, if it is concerned about conserving the environment or conserving the small town of Beacon Falls.

D. Betkoski responded that the Conservation Commission focuses on natural resource inventory, open space, preservation of the rural character of the town and conservation.

The function of the Land Use Committee has been modified through changes in the town ordinance.

After discussion, it was decided that a Conservation Commission representative will attend Land Use Committee meetings on an as needed basis when a project requires their attention. The Conservation Commission would like to receive the Land Use meeting minutes.

M. Opuszynski asked what the charter for the Land Use Committee is.

D. Betkoski responded that at the April 24 meeting, each commission/board representative gave an update on their commission/board which had already been reported in their respective minutes. She commented that this information was duplicative.

ACTION: D. Betkoski will invite Rich Minnick to the June 3 Conservation Commission meeting to clarify the Conservation Commission's role and request an explanation of the Land Use Committee charter and how the ordinance changes affected it.

8. Outreach Planning for 2013

- Conservation Commission Website – updating links and Duck Race info
N. D'Amico suggested posting information about how long things take to decompose.
- Citizen's News Editorial in recognition of Earth Day was published April 19, 2013

ACTION: D. Betkoski will submit an article to the Citizen's News announcing guest speaker Chet Arnold for the June 3 meeting.

C. Wilemski suggested inviting a Citizen's News reporter to join the commissioners at Lantern Ridge in June for a walk around the property when the boundary marking work is done.

D. Betkoski suggested taking pictures at Lantern Ridge for posting on beaconfallsconservation.com.

- Downtown Clean up – Conducted on April 13. D. Betkoski expressed her thanks to M. Bouchard and his daughter for helping. M. Bouchard expressed his thanks to D. and B. Betkoski for also helping with the clean up.

- Kayak/Duck Race event – D. Betkoski expressed her thanks to N. D’Amico for manning the Conservation Commission booth. They handed out many recycling magnets with the new web site URL.

9. Natural Resource Inventory

- Speaker from UCONN-NEMO -- Chet Arnold is confirmed to speak at the June 3 meeting.

ACTION: D. Betkoski will send an article to C. Wilemski to post on the web site and to Citizen’s News. She will also invite Rich Minnick to the June 3 meeting.

10. Payment of Invoice

Motion to accept Clerk Martha Melville’s invoice requesting payment of \$68.75 for the April 1, 2013 meeting and associated administrative work and pay the bill as submitted: Opuszynski/D’Amico; all aye.

11. Announcements/Adjournment

The next meeting will be held on Monday, June 3, 2013 at 6:30 p.m.

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:46 PM: D’Amico/Opuszynski; all aye.

Respectfully submitted,

Martha Melville
Clerk

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