

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



BEACON FALLS CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Regular Monthly Meeting Minutes
June 3, 2013
(Draft Copy-Subject to Revision)

1. Call to Order

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

Commissioners present: Noralie D'Amico, Mike Bouchard, Chris Wilemski, Michael Opuszynski, Tanya Gutierro

Commissioner absent: Jeff Kean

Others present: Chet Arnold, Rich Minnick and 3 members of the public

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Approval of Minutes – May 2013

Motion to accept the May 6, 2013 meeting minutes: Bouchard/D'Amico; all aye. *Tanya Gutierro abstained as she was not at the May 6, 2013 meeting.*

Chairman Diane Betkoski introduced and welcomed guest speaker, Chet Arnold, to talk about the Natural Resource Inventory.

4. Natural Resource Inventory Guest Speaker Chet Arnold, UCONN, Land use

Education and Research (CLEAR) Topic: "Tools and Techniques to Assist Local Conservation Initiatives -getting a handle on natural resource conservation and open space planning at the local level" See Clear.uconn.edu for additional information.

Mr. Arnold explained that before not much data such as maps were available, however now there's almost too much information, mostly online, but this information is needed for open space planning.

He discussed several CLEAR Tools for Open Space planning.

Research – using remote sensing to track changes in CT's landscapes; Tools & Tracking: GPS; Outreach – educating land use decision makers and other about protecting natural resources

He commented that the Conservation Commission acts as advocates for land preservation.

The web site has a variety of town maps from the Changing Landscape project using 6 readings of satellite data starting from 1985 to study land cover (forest, wetland, developed). Some statistics of note: State of CT has 55% forest (includes trees not in forest), developed = 946 sq miles, turf = 384 sq miles

Beacon Falls in 2006 had 65% forest 18% developed 5% turf/grass 2% water.

He showed maps specific to Beacon Falls, but recommended using local data when available as it would be more accurate than what the state has.

Open Space Planning – CLEAR tools at cteco.uconn.edu were created in collaboration with DEEP.

Aerial photo viewer, map catalog, advanced viewer, basic open space planning, (base map, natural resources water & habitat, cultural & historical area, existing open space) are other online tools available.

Mr. Arnold suggested using Google Earth as a Planning Tool for towns to identify potential open space to acquire.

CT Land Use Academy: mainly for P&Z commissions as well as for Inland Wetland and Conservation Commissions offer educational programs on: legal requirements, map reading, roles & responsibilities. Classes to be held in the fall and will be announced.

C. Wilemski requested a copy of his presentation to post to the Conservation Commission web site.

5. Correspondence

- budget status report
- 22 May 2013 memo from Karen Wilson re: New Ordinance - Ordinance Establishing Citation Procedures and Fines for Violations of the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Regulations effective 6/6/13 plus replacement pages for Section 13 for ordinance binder
- Copies of POs processed for signage and materials
- 1 May 2013 memo from First Selectman Smith re Work on Town owned properties requiring building permits hiring of contractors to work on town owned properties

6. Membership Update

- Code of Ethics documents – T. Gutierro: will contact Karen Wilson re her code of ethics document
- Summer meeting schedule: No July meeting, meet next on August 5, 2013

7. Land Use Committee

- Rich Minnick – Purpose and Role of the Conservation Commission

Mr. Minnick reviewed the revised Land Use Committee Ordinance and explained the Conservation Commission's role in supporting this Committee's goals.

Land use/open space/parks committee purpose: to know what other commissions are doing, to hear from developers before they do too much planning, and to give the developers non-binding guidance. This group would give the developer the chance to talk to all the commission representatives at once before proceeding with plans. This would provide an open forum and exchange of ideas from representatives with area expertise.

R. Minnick suggested the Conservation Commission recommend one member to be appointed to the Land Use Committee by the First Selectman and have one alternate.

D. Betkoski pointed out that information on the commissions' activities including updates on projects are reported in their minutes.

There are no required meetings, would only meet when there are topics, to get everyone to talk to each other. He suggested meeting at least once a year.

- Review of Revised Ordinance – the old one stated that the committee had one member from each commission; the new ordinance also includes a representative from wastewater treatment, and the public is invited.

M. Opuszynski commented that this would be a good avenue for the Conservation Commission to voice any concerns. This topic will be further discussed at the August 5 meeting.

M. Opuszynski suggested discussing mapping at a meeting to do a fly over using Google Earth as suggested by Chet Arnold to see about piecing together current and future open space parcels in Beacon Falls.

D. Betkoski suggested digesting what Mr. Arnold presented and use the mapping project as a workshop at a future Conservation Commission meeting.

8. Open Space Management

- Lantern Ridge Project – signage purchased

N. D'Amico will pick up posts and materials from Oxford Hardware.

On Saturday June 8 at 8 AM commissioners available will meet at Lantern Ridge to make a general walk around for orientation and install the remaining posts and markers.

Another date to install signage and clean up brush will be set at the August meeting as well as a date in September for the parcel to be open to the public.

J. Kean via phone notified N. D'Amico that the Lantern Ridge gate was approved by the fire marshal when the parking lot was installed.

9. Outreach Planning

- CC Website – D. Betkoski expressed kudos to C. Wilemski for keeping the web site up to date.

Charlie Edwards: Presented a proposal for a new development to connect Haley Ridge to Fairfield Place. If approved, he would donate a 5 acre parcel with a vernal pool to the town. His proposed subdivision is approximately 50 acres for 32 homes.

D. Betkoski asked if a study was done to identify this as a vernal pool.

C. Edwards noted that it was identified in his first proposal as Eagle Ridge.

D. Betkoski thanked him for his presentation.

R. Minnick questioned how much traffic a walking trail would cause.

M. Bouchard noted that this proposed development was discussed at another meeting and that having access to the downtown would be good economically.

- Citizen's News article
- Book purchases for BFPL – D. Betkoski reviewed the list proposed suggested by Library Director Marsha Durley.

Motion to purchase the following books:

The Nature Principle: Reconnecting with Life in a Virtual Age by Richard Louv

The Naturescaping Workbook: A Step-by-Step Guide for Bringing Nature to Your Backyard by Beth O'Donnell Young

The Edible Front Yard: The Mow-Less, Grow-More Plan for a Beautiful, Bountiful Garden by Ivette Soler

Attracting Native Pollinators" The Xercies Society Guide, Protecting North America's Bee's and Butterflies by The Xerces Society

The Naturally Clean Home: 150 Super-Easy Herbal Formulas for Green Cleaning by Karyn Siegel-Maier

The Nature Connection: An Outdoor Workbook for Kids, Families, and Classrooms by Claire Walker Leslie
using an expenditure from the Conservation Commission current budget, include a book plate in each stated “Provided by the Beacon Falls Conservation Commission” and house in the BFPL for circulation: Opuszynski /Gutierro; all aye.

10. Payment of Invoice

Motion to accept Clerk Martha Melville’s invoice requesting payment of \$80.00 for the May 6, 2013 meeting and associated administrative work and pay the bill as submitted: Bouchard/ Opuszynski; all aye.

11. Announcements/Adjournment

The July 1, 2013 meeting is cancelled. The next meeting will be held on Monday, August 5, 2013 at 6:30 p.m.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Martha Melville
Clerk

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