

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



**BEACON FALLS CONSERVATION COMMISSION**  
**Special Monthly Meeting Minutes**  
**September 9, 2013**  
**(Draft Copy-Subject to Revision)**

**1. Call to Order**

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

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

Commissioners absent: Chris Wilemski, Michael Opuszynski, Jeff Kean

**2. Pledge of Allegiance**

**3. Approval of Minutes – August 5, 2013 - tabled**

Due to lack of quorum of commissioners who attended the August 5, 2013 meeting, those meeting minutes could not be approved and will be tabled until the October 7, 2013 meeting.

Chairman D. Betkoski requested to observe a moment of silence for Joe Mylan, former Conservation Commission member.

**4. Correspondence**

- CACIWC renewal fee notice, D. Betkoski will request the payment to renew membership for a year for both the Beacon Falls Conservation Commission and Inland Wetlands (the two commissions share this expense) be taken from the Conservation Commission budget.
- First Selectman memo dated 8/8/13 re Purchasing Policy and Procedures, all POs must be approved prior to purchases. Attached copies of 2 previous memos on the same subject from 3/28/13 and 1/4/12 plus the policy was attached.
- 7 copies of CACIWC Summer 2013 The Habitat newsletters
- DEEP Summer 2013 newsletter
- Sep-Oct Audubon magazine
- UCONN CLEAR newsletter
- Town Clerk memo dated 9/4/13 re a reminder of FOI laws and postings of minutes and agendas
- D. Betkoski shared a recent newspaper article about bamboo and the new state law that goes into effect on October 1, 2013 to stop its spreading as it is considered an

invasive species. She asked if there are any rules or ordinances in Beacon Falls for the planting and subsequent control of bamboo or if any other board or commission would be involved. There was a consensus that the Conservation Commission should take the lead to educate the public about it.

**ACTION:** D. Betkoski will give article to Chris Wilemski to post on the web site.

- D. Betkoski shared another recent newspaper article about the US Army Corps of Engineers signing agreement to conserve and restore more local wetlands throughout the state.
- D. Betkoski sent a sympathy card to Joe Mylan's his wife on behalf of the Conservation Commission.

## **5. Membership Update**

- Code of Ethics documents – Tanya Gutierro will contact Karen Wilson again for form. D. Betkoski suggested that she email her request for the required form. N. D'Amico asked if the Town Clerk's office would also have them.

## **6. 2013-2014 Budget**

The budget status report as of 8/29/13 (showed a \$500 balance in the Land Acquisition line) no expenses used in the operating budget yet.

## **7. Land Use Committee**

- Received correspondence from Rich Minnick; FYI regarding Beacon Falls Inland Wetlands & watercourse commission will be removed from the approval process of storm water management.

## **8. Open Space Management**

- Review of Current Open Space Maps – the current inventory on posted on the Conservation Commission web site; maps are in the filing cabinet in the assembly room.

- Identify land parcels in Beacon Falls for future open space land purchases and land

Members viewed the current map dated 2008 and identified Lantern Ridge (94.6 acres), Smith Farms (4.15 acres), Industrial Park (39.1 acres), Oakwood Estates on Blackberry Hill (4.35 acres), West Wind Estates (3.5 acres) Haley Ridge (3.65 acres), Woodridge Estates II (.53 acre), Highland Estates (Rice Lane Ext. no size noted), Eagle Ridge (now Gobblers Ridge – no size noted) parcels on the map as compared to the inventory list.

*Discussion: What is next step for the Conservation Commission?*

*M. Bouchard asked if the Town Clerk would have a list of open space once property was developed.*

*D. Betkoski noted the important when managing open space is have an accurate listing of what is town open space. She also commented that it was premature for the Conservation Commission to recommend desirable parcels of land without a plan in place or an accurate list of what already exists.*

- Gobblers Ridge

- Update on research & evaluation of property

M. Bouchard commented that it would be difficult to do anything different with this project than what had been done in the past. He looked at the state statute of 10% of land or cash of 10% of appraised value of the land that developers are required to donate to the town. He felt that it was too late to change anything with this parcel. He suggested that if there were any changes to the current open space policy we should seek counsel.

**ACTION:** D. Betkoski will contact First Selectman Smith to discuss changing this past practice allow the Conservation Commission to accept funds in lieu of land to build up the land acquisition fund

- Experience from other conservation commissions

M. Bouchard contacted Bruce Loomis from the Bethany Conservation Commission who shared his experience and knowledge of surrounding towns dealing with this issue.

D. Betkoski noted that any change to this practice should be with future development projects. The Conservation Commission needs to seek legal counsel about the open space ordinance; and must develop a plan which identifies desirable parcels of property. Past donated parcels have not always been useful and may not fit into an open space plan. She noted the need for support from the Board of Selectmen and clarification from the town's legal counsel before moving forward to ask perspective developers for better pieces of land or the cash equivalent.

- Lantern Ridge Project

- Site Visit and Signage Installation on 8/24 – D. Betkoski expressed her thanks to those who helped in this effort, especially thanks to Selectman David D'Amico as he also hauled the rest of the supplies needed, the poles, the concrete, shovels, etc. and even a water tank so we would have available water for the concrete along with his tractor and post hole driller and he spent the morning assisting us in the entire sign installation.

- Additional work to be performed – more trail signs need to go on trees

- Opening Date and Festivities – tentatively set for Saturday October 19. Just prior to opening, the area would need to be tidied up and trim weeds. The gate will be taken down.

**ACTION:** D. Betkoski will email the Board of Selectmen asking if that would be a good date.

**ACTION:** D. Betkoski will invite: Rich Minnick, previous commissioners, Elaine Sych, state & local reps, members from other boards and commissions, Town of Seymour employees Eric Swift and Craig Stevens, and Citizen’s News reporter for media coverage.

Refreshments: depending on the time of day: coffee/cider & donuts or cider & pizza; prefer to give the business to local merchants

- Communication Plan – put notice in Citizen’s News with a background article. It was suggested using the sign in front of fire house and if Jeff Kean could check on its availability. Giveaways: CC magnets & compasses

## **9. Outreach Planning**

- Website update – from Chris Wilemski via email:  
“Pictures of Lantern Ridge were updated since the last meeting. If anyone has more, I’ll be happy to add them.”

## **10. Payment of Invoice**

Motion to accept Clerk Martha Melville’s invoice requesting payment of \$72.50 for the August 5, 2013 meeting and associated administrative work and pay the bill as submitted: Bouchard/D’Amico; all aye.

## **11. Announcements/Adjournment**

The next meeting will be held on Monday, October 7, 2013 at 6:30 p.m.

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:45 PM: D’Amico/Bouchard; all aye.

Respectfully submitted,

Martha Melville  
Clerk

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