

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



BEACON FALLS CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Special Monthly Meeting Minutes
September 8, 2014
(Draft Copy-Subject to Revision)

1. Call to Order/ Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Diane Betkoski called the meeting to order at 6:38 PM.

Commissioners present: Sophie Zyla, Michael Opuszynski, Mike Bouchard

Commissioner absent: Jeff Kean, Secretary Tanya Gutierro

2. Moment of Silence for Chris Wilemski

Chairman D. Betkoski suggested forming a Conservation Commission team in honor of Chris Wilemski for the October 18 run/walk sponsored by Griffin Hospital for cancer. She handed out brochures for this event.

D. Betkoski sent flowers on behalf of the Conservation Commission.

3. Approval of Minutes – June 2, July 7 and August 4, 2014 -

Motion to accept the June 2, 2014 meeting minutes: Opuszynski/Zyla; all aye.

Due to lack of quorum of commissioners the July 7 and August 4, 2014 meeting minutes could not be approved and were tabled.

4. Correspondence

- Communication with P&Z Chair re application update
In the memo from Attorney Byrne, item #5, he recommended that the P&Z application forms be updated to include the Conservation Commission in the process. D. Betkoski contacted P&Z Chairman, Joe Fitzpatrick who stated that he and the commission would be working on updating the application process to include these recommendations.
- Communication to BOS re Open Space Deeds and Clarification
D. Betkoski sent updated pages of the Open Space inventory indicating which parcels had deeds and the locations of those records. She shared this information with First Selectman Chris Bielik and notified him about the properties that did not have paperwork. Some properties were not deeded to the Conservation Commission nor

did they mention being preserved in perpetuity. C. Bielik will look into this and ask the town attorney for an economical and legal way to change the deeds to indicate the property was given in perpetuity for conservation.

M. Opuszynski commented that all properties need to be identified and suggested asking the Naugatuck Valley COG for an updated map,

- 18 Westview Road. Mesa Excavation & Paving, Inc.
D. Betkoski received an email from the office manager at Mesa Excavation & Paving indicated that it has a small piece of property (.6842 acres) at the Watch Hill Development that they would like to donate to the Town of Beacon Falls.

M. Bouchard talked with Peggy regarding this small parcel near the Bethany border on West View Road they wish to donate.

M. Bouchard recused himself from discussion because he is an adjacent land owner.

D. Betkoski questioned what benefit this land would be to the town as it's inaccessible. She reiterated the Conservation Commission goal for this year is to formulate a plan for open space and not garner more disjointed land parcels at this time.

M. Opuszynski suggested defining what the minimal cost of accepting any piece of land would be. He stated the mission of the Conservation Commission is to preserve land in Beacon Falls but what is the cost to the town. It would be loss of tax revenue and the property may already be protected if it's considered wet lands.

M. Bouchard indicated the West View Road property is wooded and part brook, land locked, and a tentative 20' easement is indicated on a map but this needed to be verified. Pervious maps of that road stated the parcel in question is open space.

S. Zyla commented that open space shouldn't require any maintenance other than to check it once or twice a year to be sure no one is using the land by building on it or taking the wood. She suggested this parcel could be used as a refuge for animals during hunting season. She agreed that the Conservation Commission would need more information about any cost associated with accepting this property.

D. Betkoski noted some conservation advantages to accepting this parcel. However, she noted a down side of the costs would be the town losing tax dollars. She questioned who would be responsible for costs to survey the property and re-filing the deed. She commented there is some confusion of maps and there needs to be more research into the history to find out which map is valid.

D. Betkoski summarized the West View Road deeds which need to be checked for clarification:

18 West View Rd (lot 10) and parcel B

24 West View Rd, (lot 33)

20 West View Rd (lot 11) to check for easement info

22 West View Rd (lot 32) to check for easement info

ACTION: D. Betkoski asked S. Zyla to request the above deeds from Town Clerk Len Greene and D. Betkoski will contact Peggy at Mesa Excavation & Paving via email to explain that the Conservation Commission is still researching this parcel for potential donation to the town.

- Habitat Newsletter
- DEEP summer newsletter

4. Comments from the Public - none

5. Membership Update -

- Registrations due for October 7 symposium at UCONN - S. Zyla has registered to attend. She will share information from the workshops.
- Registration for CAWAIC annual meeting November 15 in Wallingford
D. Betkoski noted that membership dues will be due. The Conservation Commission paid the dues last year for both the CC and I&W Commissions. She asked M. Opuszynski to check with J. Smith to ask if I&W will handle the check request for this year's dues payment for both commissions.

She asked if any of the commissioners were interested in attending the annual meeting.

ACTION: M. Opuszynski will ask I&W to pay for the CAWAIC dues this year.

7. Budget Update

- Communication with Denise Weik in the town finance office/general ledger for 7/1/13 - 6/30/14
D. Betkoski met with Denise Weik to discuss an error in the 2013-2014 Conservation Commission budget. It showed being \$1,500 over budget. A Southwest Conservation District membership expense was charged to the Conservation Commission rather than from another department.

D. Betkoski noted that on the last bank statement, some fee was charged and the balance was less than \$500, the original deposit for the Land Acquisition Fund.

ACTION: D. Betkoski will check on the bank account balance.

- Month to date report

8. Land Use Committee

- Conservation Commission Representative Appointments per 8/27/14 Board of Selectmen memo advising that Mike Bouchard was appointed the primary Conservation Commission representative and Mike Opuszynski as the alternate.

Rich Minnick requested agenda items for the September 24 meeting. D. Betkoski noted that Attorney Byrne listed potential Land Use Committee agenda items in his memo to include updating the application process.

D. Betkoski opened the discussion for what other items should go on agenda.

M. Opuszynski suggested Tiverton, if there would be any land offering, and having an update on the project.

D. Betkoski noted that the Conservation Commission would like to suggest wording for the deed (open space for conservation in perpetuity) and to have consistent language in the deeds. She also noted that any properties deeded to the Conservation Commission should have boundaries marked.

D. Betkoski has marked up the ordinances based on suggestions from Attorney Byrne's letter: to use consistent language in ordinances, budget and bank account and to create flow chart for the process of accepting property. #5&6 application form and flow chart

D. Betkoski also suggested getting an update on creating flow chart and application form.

9. Open Space Management

- Open Space Listing updated - with deed information
- Open Space Inventory & Future Planning - a plan is needed to start taking advantage of grants

M. Opuszynski suggested forming a subcommittee to go through the old open space plans. He offered to coordinate meeting.

ACTION: M. Opuszynski will email suggested dates to members for this workshop.

The Conservation Commission Clerk will post agenda for this workshop.

- Ordinance Review -

D. Betkoski will incorporate suggestions from Attorney Byrne's letter and bring it to the October meeting.

10. Outreach Activities

- M. Opuszynski stated the Girl Scouts plan to have another clean up day at Lantern Ridge in October .

Conservation Commission web site - D. Betkoski noted that someone will need to take over its maintenance. She added that a new member will need to be recruited to take Chris Wilemski's place, ideally someone with a technical background to manage the web site.

11. Payment of Invoices -

- Clerical invoice –

Motion to accept Clerk Martha Melville's invoice requesting payment of \$72.50 for the August 4, 2014 meeting and associated administrative work and pay the bill as submitted: Bouchard/Opuszynski; all aye.

- Seminar Registration - S. Zyla has already paid; no expenses submitted.
- Flowers for funeral - Diane \$86.10 to be reimbursed, Mike B/Zyla; all aye.

Motion to reimburse Diane Betkoski \$86.10 for flowers for Chris Wilemski's funeral: Bouchard/Zyla; all aye.

12. Announcements/Adjournment

M. Opuszynski shared I&W updates:

a parcel on West Road was divided into 5 lots, there was a Public Hearing for questions about control of water flow off the hill and if the existing storm drains were adequate. The Public Hearing got a continuation since all questions were not answered, it will be held on Wednesday September 10

There is a plan to put in a large detention pond to capture the majority of flow and to slow down the water.

Discussion about a beaver dam in Bethany. When the dam is blown up it causes muddy water to come into Beacon Falls and bring silt to ponds along route 42.

A log cabin is being built on the parcel on Cold Spring Road where a house burned.

The next meeting will be held on Monday, October 6, 2014 at 6:30 p.m.

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:53 PM: Opuszynski/Bouchard; all aye.

Respectfully submitted,

Martha Melville
Clerk

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