

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



BEACON FALLS CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Monthly Meeting Minutes
June 1, 2015
(Draft Copy-Subject to Revision)

1. Call to Order/ Pledge of Allegiance

Chairperson Diane Betkoski called the meeting to order at 6:34 PM.

Commissioners present: Vice Chairman Mike Bouchard, Lori Paradis Brant, Ruth Burritt

Commissioner absent: Secretary Sophie Zyla, Michael Opuszynski, Tanya Gutierro

Others present: Bonnie Chevarella

2. Approval of Minutes – March 2, April 6, and May 4, 2015

The March 2, 2015 monthly meeting minutes were reviewed. The Chairman noted that no corrections were needed and M. Bouchard suggested the minutes be accepted as presented.

The April 6, 2015 monthly meeting minutes were reviewed. The Chairman noted that no corrections were needed and L. Brant suggested the minutes be accepted as presented.

The May 4, 2015 monthly meeting minutes were reviewed. The Chairman noted that no corrections were needed and M. Bouchard suggested the minutes be accepted as presented.

3. Correspondence -

- Spring 2015 DEEP newsletter
- First Selectman memo dated 27 May 2015, Halt on Discretionary Spending; effective 5/29/15 all purchases must be approved by the First Selectman

4. Comments from the Public -

Invited Guest - P&Z Chair, Kevin McDuffie - not available

ACTION: Chairperson D. Betkoski will confirm for a date with P&Z Chair, Kevin McDuffie to attend a future Conservation Commission meeting.

Chairperson D. Betkoski gave the background of this invitation for the benefit of people new to the Conservation Commission. Upon the recommendation of the town attorney in July 2014, the P&Z procedures need to be updated and include the Conservation

Commission with any new development projects in town and have the option of getting a financial donation from the developer in lieu of a parcel of open space.

5. Membership Update -

- Commission Vacancy - update Ruth Burritt accepted appointment

ACTION: M. Bouchard will have 3 keys made for the Conservation Commission filing cabinet in the town hall assembly room for the new members.

- CACIWC Dues - Discussion of renewing annual membership dues to include I&W. Chairperson D. Betkoski noted that for annual membership from July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2016 at the cost of \$110.00.

Motion to renew CACIWC annual membership dues at the cost of \$110.00 to include I&W: Bouchard/Brant; all aye.

Website discussion:

L. Brant suggested having a "Meet the Commissioners" section on the Conservation Commission website with a photo and short bio including why they are on the commission and add a brief personal note. Bios would be sent to D. Betkoski for review then to be forwarded to R. Burritt for posting to the website.

R. Burritt gave an update on the Conservation Commission website. She was able to get admin privileges but discovered the content belongs to the town and she cannot change.

Discussion about meetings this summer: July 6 & August 3 are the regular monthly Conservation Commission meetings scheduled.

D. Betkoski suggested the commissioners attend other meetings: I&W, Land Use, P&Z and/or attend a presentation of the fuel cell plant date TBD.

ACTION: M. Bouchard will email M. Opuszynski about the status of the next Land Use Committee meeting as the original June meeting date conflicted with WRHS graduation.

D. Betkoski noted that at the next regular monthly Conservation Commission meeting on July 6 a presentation of O&G fuel cell plant is scheduled.

ACTION: M. Bouchard will invite the Land Use Committee to attend the July 6 Conservation Commission meeting for the fuel cell plant presentation.

D. Betkoski announced that by general consensus it was agreed to cancel the August 3 regular monthly Conservation Commission meeting.

Discussion about term succession and all commissioners' terms currently are set to expire on the same day in November 2015.

ACTION: D. Betkoski will check if a new ordinance is in place for the Conservation Commission regarding member terms; she thought it was for a 3 year term.

6. Budget Update

- Variance Report thru April 30, below budget used
- Renaming Land Acquisition account to Open Space Preservation Fund
- Book purchase - D. Betkoski noted that in the spirit of promoting conservation education, the Conservation Commission has designated some of its approved budgeted funds for the Beacon Falls Public Library to purchase books on conservation.

Discussion:

B. Chevarella suggested giving away coloring books to children to incite interest in wildlife and conservation at a young age.

R. Burrirt suggested purchasing a pass to the Beardsley Zoo.

L. Brant asked what the circulation of the previously purchased books was to help with future decision making. She commented that she has experience with early literature involving nature. She also suggested partnering with the local schools and possibly donate books and/or attend as guest readers.

R. Burrirt suggested the Conservation Commission sponsor an essay contest to win a zoo pass.

B. Chevarella suggested having a coloring contest and put the entries into a calendar to sell.

D. Betkoski agreed with the interactive component and that it would be good for outreach activities.

D. Betkoski suggested the Conservation Commission could use some budgeted dollars to pay for a nature-related speaker for a program through our library.

Motion to make an annual donation of up to \$300 to the Beacon Falls Public Library for the purchase of books with a conservation and nature theme with the stipulation that a circulation report of books purchased with Conservation Commission dollars be

provided to the Conservation Commission at the end of the year: Bouchard/Burritt; all aye.

D. Betkoski requested a list of potential books to purchase from Library Director Sue Dowdell by June 15 to be forward to Lori Brant for review and final approval.

D. Betkoski will have the PO for this book purchase approved by June 30. She suggested as it has been done in the past, S. Dowdell will write up the PO using a Conservation Commission PO budget number.

ACTION: D. Betkoski will give First Selectman Chris Bielik a head's up that a PO will be in the works for a book purchase.

L. Brant suggested sponsoring speakers such as Tom Wessel. She will research and report at the September meeting.

D. Betkoski reported on the request to check on Land Acquisition terminology, she confirmed with First Selectman Bielik that the new budget line item is Open Space Preservation Fund. She also noted that \$1000 was approved in the FY 2015-16 Conservation Commission budget.

7. Land Use Committee Report -

M. Bouchard reported that the last meeting was poorly attended, R. Minnick presented maps and talked about the greenway proposal but plans are not yet finalized.

8. Open Space Management

- Open Space Preservation Fund - Ordinance Update - Status Report

D. Betkoski noted changes in reference to the Open Space Preservation Fund, a spelling error correction was made in the ordinance and passive activity (hiking, walking and not to be used for commercial purposes) was defined. Once approved by the Conservation Commission it will be forwarded to the Board of Selectmen for approval.

ACTION: D. Betkoski will email the current and proposed version with edits of the Open Space Preservation Fund Ordinance to the commissioners.

- Open Space Deeds - Status Report - no further action
Still seeking a way to legally update the deeds for open space to specify that they are for passive recreation and in perpetuity without incurring a high cost.
- Open Space Inventory & Future Planning - Subcommittee Report

9. Subcommittee Reports

- Land Use (Diane Betkoski & Mike Bouchard)
- Recognition and Grants (Diane Betkoski & Ruth Burritt)

R. Burritt reported she was working on building a data base and had input from L. Brant.
- Open Space Inventory (Mike Opuszynski) - no report
- Natural Resource Inventory (Sophie Zyla) - no report
- Website (Sophie Zyla & Ruth Burritt) - update noted above
- Outreach Activities
 - Riverfest/Duck Race - May 9 - L. Brant

D. Betkoski expressed her thanks to L. Brant for organizing the Conservation Commission table at the event and to M. Bouchard for his help with the set up and to T. Gutierro and B. Chevarella for working the booth that day.

L. Brant reported the recycle relay was well attended; all the back packs were given away. She has pictures and will forward to R. Burritt for posting to the CC website.

- Trails Day June 6 & 7 - Lori Brant
Sunday June 7 from 1030 to 1230 at Lantern Ridge
L. Brant submitted a press release to Citizen's News and a flyer to Region 16 schools. She has activity handouts for scavenger hunts and bird bingo and a sign in sheet which is also a release form.
D. Betkoski and T. Gutierro will be attend.
L. Brant will check with M. Opuszynski if the Girl Scouts will attend.

M. Bouchard asked if anyone knew the condition of Lantern Ridge; it was unknown at this time, may be muddy after recent rains.

L. Brant volunteered to create an outreach plan for the coming year and asked the best way to approach outreach activities; she suggested brainstorming at a meeting.

D. Betkoski suggested having some structure to the outreach plans.

R. Burritt commented that L. Brant has the experience in this area and asked what are the most successful activities.

L. Brant suggested sponsoring one outreach activity each season and for the September meeting she will present a draft idea of outreach activities.

Motion to reorder marketing promotional materials using the same as last year's purchase of back packs in quantity and cost: **Brant/Burritt**; all aye.

10. Payment of Invoices -

- Clerical invoice – Please note: to submit a complete clerk's bill before the close of the budget year, times for transcribing and posting June minutes were estimated.

Motion to accept Clerk Martha Melville's invoice requesting payment of \$122.50 for the May 4, and June 1, 2015 meetings and associated administrative work and pay the bill as submitted: **Bouchard/Brant**; all aye.

11. Announcements/Adjournment

The next meeting will be held on Monday, July 6, 2015 at 6:30 p.m.

The regular monthly meeting on Monday, August 3, 2015 is cancelled.

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:27 PM: **Bouchard/Burritt**; all aye.

Respectfully submitted,
Martha Melville
Clerk

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