

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



BEACON FALLS CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Monthly Meeting Minutes
November 2, 2015
(Draft Copy-Subject to Revision)

1. Call to Order/ Pledge of Allegiance

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

Commissioners present: Secretary Sophie Zyla, Lori Paradis Brant, Ruth Burritt, Bonnie Chevarella, Michael Opuszynski (arrived at 6:52)

Commissioners absent: Tanya Gutierro

Others present: Ashleigh Doherty

2. Approval of Minutes – October 5, 2015

Motion to accept the October 5, 2015 meeting minutes: **Brant/Zyla**; all aye.

B. Chevarella abstained as she was not at the October 5, 2015 meeting.

3. Correspondence -

- 13 October 2015 Board of Selectman memo appointing Bonnie Chevarella to fill the vacancy left by the resignation of Mike Bouchard
- DEEP Fall 2015 newsletter
- Fall 2015 CACIWC Habitat newsletter
- Nov-Dec 2015 Audubon magazine

4. Comments from the Public

Chair D. Betkoski welcomed Ashleigh Doherty who has expressed an interest in joining the Conservation Commission.

A. Doherty shared that she is an attorney in Bridgeport and enjoys volunteering. She moved to Beacon Falls 2 years ago.

The commissioners present introduced themselves.

ACTION: D. Betkoski will send a note to First Selectman C. Bielik recommending that Ashleigh Doherty be appointed to the Conservation Commission after she submits her Letter of Intent.

5. Membership Update -

- Vacancy Update - D. Betkoski noted she submitted a vacancy ad to Citizen's News on 10/24 and it was posted to town website on 10/28/15
- Letters of Intent - D. Betkoski reminded that members will need submit their Letters of Intent requesting to remain on the Conservation Commission to the Board of Selectmen
- the Board of Selectman memo appointed Bonnie Chevarella to fill the vacancy left by the resignation of Mike Bouchard
- D. Betkoski noted that T. Gutierro was undecided about remaining on the Conservation Commission.
- S. Zyla stated she will be submitting her resignation from the Conservation Commission in 2016.
- Chair position transition - Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary - need interim appointments

D. Betkoski gave an overview of duties for each position (Chair runs meeting, reviews minutes, creates meeting agendas; Vice Chair is the back up for the Chair; Secretary handles correspondence as required plus other duties as delegated by the Chair and Vice Chair) and referenced the town ordinance governing the Conservation Commission.

D. Betkoski called for nominations for these positions.

B. Chevarella nominated L. Brant to fill the Chair position

Discussion:

L. Brant initially declined the Chair position

D. Betkoski suggested delegating more actions to lessen the responsibilities of the Chair position. She asked L. Brant to consider being the Chair in the interim and to delegate as many tasks as possible and reevaluate in January when regular elections occur.

After reconsidering, L. Brant agreed to accept the nomination for Chairperson

B. Chevarella nominated L. Brant to fill the Chairperson position of the Conservation Commission, 2nd by S. Zyla; all aye.

D. Betkoski called for nominations from the floor to fill the Vice Chairperson position. B. Chevarella agreed to fill this position

L. Brant nominated B. Chevarella to fill the Vice Chairperson position of the Conservation Commission, 2nd by R. Burritt; all aye.

Sophie Zyla agreed to stay on as Secretary of the Conservation Commission for a few more months and will send a Letter of Intent to First Selectman C. Bielik requesting to remain on the Conservation Commission.

D. Betkoski suggested the commissioners continue to recruit other potential members.

- Conflict of Interest statement - received forms and ordinance from Karen Wilson R. Burritt, B. Chevarella, S. Zyla, and L. Paradis Brant signed the Conflict of Interest statement as required by the Code of Ethics ordinance and Clerk M. Melville will deliver the signed forms to town admin, Karen Wilson.
- CACIWC Conference and workshops November 14
S. Zyla and T. Gutierro will attend

6. Budget

- Variance Report - 1 July - 30 Nov 2015

D. Betkoski reviewed the Conservation Commission's 3 budget line items: clerk fees, land acquisition (which is held in a separate savings account), and expenses used for promotional and marketing items and other operational expenses.

ACTION: D. Betkoski noted an error under the clerk line item that a payment was made to Marla Scirpo and will contact Erin Schwarz in the finance office about the mistake.

D. Betkoski noted that a draft budget will probably be due to Board of Selectmen in January.

7. Land Use Committee Report -

M. Opuszynski reported there was no quorum at the October meeting.

On Thursday November 5 at 3 and 7 p.m. at the firehouse there will be two presentation and informational sessions on the fuel cell energy plant.

He reported that the CT Siting Council was still reviewing the proposal and will decide if the project can move forward. If approved, it will go to the next level of state approval involving other agencies.

The following is information from their website:

http://www.ct.gov/csc/ical/eventDetail_page.asp?date_ID=C9C9CFDCC83CDCAC8

"The hearing will be on a petition from Beacon Falls Energy Park, LLC for a declaratory ruling that no Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need is required for the proposed construction, operation, and maintenance of a 63.3 Megawatt AC fuel cell facility located on Lopus Road, Beacon Falls, CT.

"The 3:00 p.m. hearing session will provide the petitioner, parties, and intervenors an opportunity to cross-examine positions. The 7:00 p.m. hearing session will be reserved for the public to make brief statements into the record. Cross-examination of parties and intervenors will resume, if necessary, after all statements have been heard.

"The Council will conduct a public field review of the proposed site on Thursday November 5, 2015, beginning at 2:00 p.m."

8. Open Space Management

- Open Space Preservation Fund - Ordinance Update - action completed
This was submitted to the Board of Selectmen for approval at a future public hearing.
- Open Space Deeds - Status Report - no update

D. Betkoski invited Amy Paterson, Executive Director, CT Land Conservation Council to attend the December 7 meeting. She also emailed invitations to the Board of Selectmen and other town boards and committees. A. Paterson will give a presentation on land use and easements.

ACTIONS:

R. Burritt will coordinate refreshments.

S. Zyla will bring coffee pots and get paper goods.

D. Betkoski will speak to A. Patterson to get further information.

- Open Space Inventory & Future Planning - Subcommittee Report - NTR

9. Subcommittee Reports

- Land Use (Diane Betkoski) NTR
- Recognition and Grants (Diane Betkoski & Ruth Burritt) NTR
- Open Space Inventory (Mike Opuszynski) NTR
- Natural Resource Inventory (Sophie Zyla) NTR

- Website (Sophie Zyla & Ruth Burritt) under construction
- Outreach Activities (Lori Brant)

November 15 America Recycles Day

"I Pledge" button to be posted on the Conservation Commission website

ACTION: L. Brant will draft a press release and share with other members for feedback before submitting it to Citizen's News for publication.

ACTION: R. Burritt will post the November 15 America Recycles Day info on the Conservation Commission Facebook page.

February - BF Loves its Trails will be the next outreach activity.

S. Zyla noted Audubon does not have movie rights to Lorax.

10. Payment of Invoices -

- Clerical invoice –
Motion to accept Clerk Martha Melville's invoice requesting payment of \$72.50 for the November 2, 2015 meeting and associated administrative work and pay the bill as submitted: Opuszynski/Chevarella; all aye.

11. Announcements/Adjournment

The next regular monthly meeting will be held on Monday, December 7, 2015 at 6:30 p.m. in the Town Hall Assembly Room.

D. Betkoski noted that this was her last Conservation Commission meeting since joining in 2006. She expressed her thanks to everyone involved with the commission and appreciated the time she has served.

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:16 PM: Chevarella/Opuszynski; all aye.

Respectfully submitted,

Martha Melville
 Clerk

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