

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



BEACON FALLS CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Monthly Meeting Minutes
March 7, 2016
(Draft Copy-Subject to Revision)

1. Call to Order/ Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Lori Paradis Brant called the meeting to order at 6:41 PM.

Commissioners present: Vice Chair Bonnie Chevarella, Ashleigh Doherty, Ruth Burritt

Commissioners absent: Secretary Sophie Zyla, Mike Opuszynski, Tanya Gutierro

Others present: Don Ferretti, Park & Rec; Dave Bodnar, Keith Bodnar, Mark Crowley Sr., Mark Crowley, Jr. from Boy Scout Troop 138

Chair Lori Paradis Brant welcomed the representatives from Boy Scout Troop 138 and suggested the agenda be rearranged to accommodate their Eagle Scout project proposal presentations.

Motion to rearrange the agenda to accommodate the Eagle Scout project proposal presentations: **Chevarella/Doherty**; all aye.

Chair Lori Paradis Brant suggested rearranging the agenda to accommodate announcements at this time. She announced that she notified the First Selectman that she will step down from the Conservation Commission due to her work and family obligations effective on April 5, 2016. Vice Chair Bonnie Chevarella agreed to handle the administrative duties to prepare for the April meeting (reviewing March minutes, following up on any actions and coordinating the April meeting agenda).

Mark Crowley, Jr. from Boy Scout Troop 138 provided handouts describing his Eagle Scout project proposal to cut a trail about a half mile long through the Lantern Ridge parcel and install a sign kiosk about the land and its wildlife in the parking lot. He requested a walk through with one of the Conservation commissioners to confirm the location of the trail. He added that he also plans to blaze the existing trail. He would begin this project in late April or early May.

Discussion and questions ensued about why he chose this project, because it is close to where he lives and he enjoys the open space. He was asked why cut a new trail and explained that he would like to open up the property for other views. How was the length of 1/2 mile determined? He felt that was a good length for this type of terrain.

L. Brant congratulated him on working on this project and was happy there is interest in

the town open space. She noted resources available on trail cutting and maintenance which encourages a standardization of trails in the state and will share with the Scouts.

M. Crowley described the sign kiosk which would be permanent, made out of wood and cemented into ground and accessible for posting updated information. He requested the Conservation Commission consider funding the cost of the kiosk.

L. Brant noted that permits may need to be required and for M. Crowley to check with the town for the new trail and sign kiosk.

Keith Bodnar from Boy Scout Troop 138 provided handouts describing his Eagle Scout project proposal to improve the existing trail at Lantern Ridge by marking, widening and clearing it and identify what is private and public property along the trail. He also wants to cut a new 1/2 mile trail and mark it similar to the Appalachian Trail. He expects to start on project in spring, depending on weather.

Discussion and questions ensued if trash cans would be installed; further discussion pointed out those may be an obstacle for wildlife. It was suggested using the "carry in, carry out" philosophy and eliminate an need for trash cans as well as "leave only foot prints, take only photographs". Potential trails were mapped out but they need a commissioner to do a walk through to approve the locations. Creating a loop trail was also suggested. After these projects are completed, it was suggested to celebrate them by including them on CT Trails day, the weekend of June 4 & 5.

Motion to move forward on Mark Crowley's Eagle Scout project as submitted with a follow up to be presented at the Conservation Commission April 4 meeting with more details: Doherty/Burritt; all aye.

Motion to move forward on Keith Bodnar's Eagle Scout project as submitted with a follow up to be presented at the Conservation Commission April 4 meeting with more details: Chevarella/Doherty; all aye.

L. Brant suggested that M. Opuszynski would be the ideal liaison for the walk through of Lantern Ridge with the Boy Scouts given his history and knowledge of the parcel.

ACTION: M. Crowley and K. Bodnar will check into any permits and/or permissions needed from the Town of Beacon Falls required for their proposed Eagle Scout projects.

2. Approval of Minutes – February 1, 2016

The February 1, 2016 meeting minutes were reviewed.

Motion to approve the February 1, 2016 meeting minutes as presented: Brant/Doherty; all aye.

3. Correspondence -

- March-April 2016 Audubon issue

- Aquarion Water's 2016 Environmental Champions Awards package, deadline May 4th, posted on the town website:
http://beaconfalls-ct.org/pages/beaconfallsct_news/023172BF-000F8513
- 2016 CT Land Conservation Conference Sat. March 19 at Wesleyan University
<http://ctconservation.org/2016-conference>
- CACIWC Habitat Winter 2016 newsletter

4. Comments from the Public

Don Ferretti, 31 Brockton Court, commented that his daughter made the kiosk at Matthies Park and he offered to help the scouts with their project.

5. Eagle Scout Candidates

Mark Crowley, Jr. and Keith Bodnar of Troop 138 presented proposals as above.

6. Task List

A. 2016 Goals - L. Brant reviewed the list originally presented at the September 2016 meeting.

7. Land Use Committee Report - Update

R. Burritt reported there was no quorum at the February 3 meeting but did challenge the representatives from the other commissions to the cardboard regatta.

L. Brant suggested submitting a letter to the Citizen's News editor in June challenging to the other Beacon Falls Town boards and commissions to compete in the cardboard regatta on July 9.

ACTION: A. Doherty will draft a letter challenging the other Beacon Falls Town boards and commissions, including Selectmen, to compete in the cardboard regatta on July 9 and B. Chevarella will review.

8. Subcommittee Reports

A. Land Use (Ruth Burritt) - met February 3

B. Recognition and Grants (Ruth Burritt)

C. Open Space Inventory (Mike Opuszynski) via email
- starting to develop a subcommittee to work on Open Space plan to properly map and identify Open Space and any potential connection

A. Doherty agreed to be on the Open Space Plan subcommittee.

L. Brant noted that Rich Minnick agreed to be part of this subcommittee.

D. Natural Resource Inventory (Sophie Zyla)

- E. Website/Facebook (Sophie Zyla & Ruth Burritt)
 - still need some bios to post
 - D. Betkoski gave R. Burritt a CD of pictures and passed it on to A. Doherty who will start organizing them.

ACTION: B. Chevarella will contact First Selectman Chris Bielik about Virtual Town Hall training to maintain the Conservation Commission website.

- F. Outreach Activities (Lori Paradis Brant)

L. Brant submitted a Beacon Falls Loves its Trails press release to Citizen's News on Monday February 8. but it wasn't published.

9. Payment of Invoices -

Clerical invoice –

Motion to accept Clerk Martha Melville's invoice requesting payment of \$68.75 for the March 7, 2016 meeting and associated administrative work and pay the bill as submitted: Chevarella/Doherty; all aye.

Budget worksheet: L. Brant noted a \$2,300 balance in the Conservation Commission 2015-2016 budget.

B. Chevarella asked about providing possible funding for the Eagle Scout projects.

L. Brant requested the commissioners review the BFPL circulation stats and consider what, if anything, to consider purchasing for the library and to wait until the May meeting to decide after funding any costs for the Scout projects.

10. Announcements

The next regular monthly meeting will be held on Monday, April 4, 2016 at 6:30 p.m. in the Town Hall Assembly Room.

12. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:10 PM: Chevarella/Doherty; all aye.

Respectfully submitted,

Martha Melville
Clerk

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