

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



**BEACON FALLS CONSERVATION COMMISSION**  
**Monthly Meeting Minutes**  
**July 11, 2016**  
**(Draft Copy-Subject to Revision)**

**1. Call to Order/ Pledge of Allegiance**

Chair pro tem Bonnie Chevarella called the meeting to order at 6:05 PM in the Beacon Falls Selectmen's Conference Room.

Commissioners present: Chair pro tem Bonnie Chevarella, Secretary pro tem Ashleigh Doherty, Ruth Burritt, Mike Opuszynski

Commissioners absent: Tanya Gutierro, Dave Farley

Others present: Beacon Falls Open Space Land Use Steward Rich Minnick

**2. Announcements**

No meeting in August.

B. Chevarella added agenda item C. Discussion to Change Meeting Dates under New Business

**3. Comments from the Public -**

Rich Minnick, 147 Cedar Lane: reported on the work he did at Lantern Ridge using Pasture Pro Herbicide for weed and brush control. He noted that this product is recommended for areas near ponds; it is safe around animals and doesn't harm grasses. He further added how to apply it, where to purchase this product (at farm equipment retailers); it is most effective when the weeds are about one and a half feet tall; it should be applied 3 times a year. This herbicide should not be applied when rain is expected or if it's windy. Ideally, treatment should be done in the early spring.

R. Minnick shared his thoughts about outdoor furnaces and pointed out that other towns were able to pass restrictions as a zoning regulation versus an ordinance. He suggested contacting the COG for advice and how to implement regulations.

**4. Approval of Minutes – June 2016**

The members present who were at the June 6, 2016 meeting reviewed them and deemed them correct.

**5. Correspondence - none**

## **6. Old Business: Committee Reports**

### A. Membership and Officers

- elections in September
- one vacancy on commission

### B. Land Use (Ruth Burritt) - next meeting is July 27

### C. Recognition and Grants (Ruth Burritt) - NTR

### D. Open Space Inventory (Mike Opuszynski) - NTR

### E. Natural Resource Inventory – document to identify which open space parcels need an inventory to list fauna, flora and animals

R. Minnick added that there's a 63 page document for King's Mark which is posted on the Conservation Commission webpage.

### F. Website/Facebook (Ruth Burritt & Ashleigh Doherty) - need bios

R. Burritt posted pictures of Girl Scouts at the cardboard regatta at Matthies Park on the Facebook page.

### G. Outreach Activities

#### 1) Report on Cardboard Boat Regatta: July 9

Report of a lot of fun that day, there were 7 boats this year, considered good participation.

#### 2) Publicity

Next Conservation Commission event is America Recycles Day on November 15

R. Burritt offered to print more recycling informational stickers for recycling bins. She had them available at the Duck Race. She will post a notice on Facebook and make them available at the library and pharmacy.

## **7. New Business**

### A. Outdoor Wood Furnaces - Dangers to Health from Outdoor Wood Furnaces

Chair pro tem B. Chevarella provided handouts to the commissioners about these outside sheds which burn a lot of wood.

R. Minnick suggested the Conservation Commission do some research on regulations regarding outdoor wood furnaces and make suggestions to the Board of Selectmen.

Outdoor wood furnaces will be discussed further at the September meeting.

M. Opuszynski offered to get information from the Council of Governments on what has been done in the area on regulations for outdoor wood furnaces.

B. Japanese Knotweed - at Lantern Ridge

R. Minnick noted that there was minimal knotweed at Lantern Ridge but that bittersweet was more pervasive as well as poison ivy and sumac.

Chair pro tem B. Chevarella reported that she talked about a maintenance program for invasive species for all town properties with First Selectman Bielik and Public Works Foreman R. Pruzinsky

M. Opuszynski commented that there was no plan in place to transfer open space to Park & Rec nor which parcels need maintenance schedule. He suggested for now any maintenance should be accomplished by volunteers but as the town acquires more open space there may be a need for a maintenance program to be outsourced.

R. Burritt commented that as commissioners they are expected to volunteer to perform any maintenance needed at the town open space parcels.

M. Opuszynski noted he drafted a maintenance schedule for Lantern Ridge and that other sites will remain in their natural state and not have any maintenance. He has worked with the Girl Scouts to keep the trails clean but no weed control has been done on a regular basis.

R. Minnick noted that the only town open space parcel under the responsibility of the Conservation Commission is Lantern Ridge.

M. Opuszynski noted that the only maintenance required now would be for Lantern Ridge, however once deeds are straightened out, there may be more parcels to add to the maintenance list. He agreed with continuing having volunteers do any maintained required but there may be a time in the future after more open space parcels are acquired, it would be beyond the scope of volunteers doing it all.

C. Discussion to Change Meeting Dates

A concern was raised about Monday holidays impacting the Conservation Commission regular meeting schedule. To avoid a conflict with the Board of Selectmen monthly meeting, a discussion ensued about changing the meeting night rather than pushing it back by one week. The clerk noted the town hall assembly room was available on the first and third Wednesday of the month. B. Chevarella suggested changing the meeting night to the first Thursday of the month. R. Burritt stated she could not attend meetings on Wednesday nights and M. Opuszynski stated he was not available on Thursday nights.

It was decided to keep the regular meeting night on the first Monday of the month except when a holiday falls on that night. When that is the case, the meeting will be the next night, on a Tuesday.

Motion to change the September Conservation Commission meeting to Tuesday September 6, 2016 at 6:30 PM in the Town Hall Assembly Room: **Opuszynski/Doherty**; all aye.

**8. Payment of Invoices -**

A. Clerical invoice –

Motion to accept Clerk Martha Melville’s invoice requesting payment of \$46.25 for the July 11, 2016 meeting and associated administrative work and pay the bill as submitted: **Opuszynski/Burritt**; all aye.

B. Eagle Scout projects

Discussion that the Eagle Scout projects approved for funding at the April meeting are not being done.

R. Burritt will follow up with Keith Bodnar and Mark Crowley; while she has invited them to the Conservation Commission meetings, she has had no response.

R. Minnick provided an update of River Bend which is under Park & Rec control, at M. Opuszynski request. There is access to River Bend Park through Marilyn & Nancy Avenues. A \$100,000 grant made this park possible. This park was expanded by acquiring adjacent properties through forgiving back taxes or purchasing them outright. He noted that maintenance will be a problem and a call for bids has gone out.

**9. Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:04 PM: **Opuszynski/Burritt**; all aye.

The next monthly meeting will be a Special Meeting held on Tuesday, September 6, 2016 (due to Labor Day) in the Town Hall Assembly Room.

Respectfully submitted,

Martha Melville  
Clerk

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