



**DRAFT MINUTES**  
*Brookfield Conservation Commission*  
**Brookfield Town Hall Room 119**  
**December 4, 2013**  
**6:00 pm**

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** A. Dew called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM and established a quorum of members:  
**Present:** Alice Dew, Chair; Ryan Blessey, Vice Chair; Stephanie Landis, Secretary/Treasurer; Jeffrey Bronn; Marj Carmody; Mac Dew  
**Absent:** M. Murphy  
**Also Present:** Patrick Conlon; Jacqueline Salame; Elizabeth DeLambert; Bob Brown; Kim Yates; Emily Cole Prescott, Recording Secretary
2. **MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING: 11/06/13** – M. Carmody asked that the spelling of the name “Stuart” be corrected from “Stewart” to “Stuart”. **M. Carmody made a motion to approve the minutes as corrected. S. Landis seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.**
3. **GUESTS AND PUBLIC COMMENT:** Please see agenda item 7.a.
4. **CORRESPONDENCE:**
  - a. Letter from T. ODell of the Connecticut Land Conservation Council dated 11/08/13 – The Commission acknowledged receipt of the letter.

*The Commission moved to discussion of current project reports.*

6. **CURRENT PROJECT REPORTS:**
  - The Nature Center – S. Landis – There was no report.
  - Happy Landings – J. Bronn – A. Dew stated that she has been in touch with J. Bronn, who has informed her that the haybales are still at the site. Billy Stuart Jr. has told R. Blessey that he will be removing them within the next week. A. Dew also noted that the plexiglass is broken at the kiosk, so she has asked F. Lollie to remove the broken glass at the kiosk. A. Dew mentioned that perhaps the Commission should consider only putting out laminated information at this kiosk.

*R. Blessey entered the meeting room at 6:05 PM.*

- Burr Farm – M. Carmody – M. Carmody stated that she is working on the sign placement for this property.

**M. Carmody moved that the Commission discuss item 7.a., meeting to review draft of structural assessment and plan of the Gurski Homestead. R. Blessey seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.**

**7. OLD BUSINESS:**

a. Meeting to review draft of structural assessment and plan for Gurski Homestead – *P. Conlon of Conlon Engineering was present.* Mr. Conlon stated that the fieldwork was done in October and November, in which five or six investigative outings were completed. Mr. Conlon stated that at this point he is working on repair concepts.

*M. Dew entered the meeting room at 6:10 PM.*

Mr. Conlon noted that there are five outbuildings, one barn and one house on site that were part of this review.

*J. Bronn entered the meeting room at 6:12 PM.*

Mr. Conlon reported that to date, the drawings of the site and existing conditions of each building have been done. Mr. Conlon noted that he may make another visit to the barn before finishing the repair concepts. Mr. Conlon distributed a set of plans which included a site plan and plans of the buildings. (Please see a list of plans at the end of this discussion.) Mr. Conlon informed the Commission that this report will form the basis of all of the finalized drawings. He mentioned that there are some notes on the plans for each of the buildings.

Upon inquiry of repair plan status from M. Dew, Mr. Conlon stated that repair of historic buildings is best planned slowly and deliberately. Mr. Conlon stated some of the buildings are not salvageable in his opinion. He stated that the corncrib is not really salvageable, as there is no foundation but concrete-blocks, and even the building itself is slanting. Mr. Conlon noted that it was somewhat amazing that all of these buildings remained after Hurricane Sandy. Mr. Conlon also mentioned that these buildings are not to code.

Mr. Conlon stated that he will be drafting a final scope of work. Mr. Conlon noted that with the exception of the house and the barn, all of the buildings would need to be put on foundations. He recommended that the framing of the buildings be strengthened.

R. Blessey asked Mr. Conlon when he will have the final submission ready, and Mr. Conlon noted that he will have this information ready by December 31<sup>st</sup>.

M. Dew asked Mr. Conlon if he has any ideas about how to reconcile building to code with historic building renovation. Mr. Conlon noted that this is a bit tricky as repairs are usually to be done according to code. Mr. Conlon stated that with the extent of the work that is required, he is not sure if there would be some requirement to bring the project up to current building code.

R. Blessey suggested some of the buildings may be used as actual buildings while other buildings on site may be used for display, not for occupancy, depending on the Commission's plan for the site. R. Blessey mentioned that different buildings – some used for show but others

used for people to enter and exit – may have different construction requirements. Mr. Conlon responded that this is a question for the building official. Mr. Conlon asked the Commission which buildings it would consider possibly using for show rather than for workable space. R. Blessey responded that the Commission may consider using buildings 1, 3, 5, and 6 as static displays. He noted that the farmhouse and building four in the future may be used as storage. Mr. Conlon stated that building 1 is salvageable. Mr. Conlon mentioned that although Building 3 may be used as static display, what is currently on site still needs to be re-done. Mr. Conlon stated that measurements have been taken of this building, and he will include the elevations and dimensions on the plans to facilitate with any re-build processes. Mr. Conlon stated that he also has notes about how much of each building may be able to be re-used.

Mr. Conlon stated that the farmhouse is in structurally fair condition. He stated that there is a rafter in the roof that is broken due to either damage or overload. Mr. Conlon stated that framing around the chimney also needs to be re-worked. He did not notice any other structural conditions in need of repair throughout the house. Mr. Conlon mentioned that there has been some shoring in the basement.

R. Blessey stated that the water is coming from the ground up, and when the footing drain elevations were shot the footing drains are not below the foundation floor, as they should be. He stated that the water comes through the basement. R. Blessey stated that the burner was completely under water last weekend. R. Blessey stated that the foundation part of the house needs work. Mr. Conlon noted that there is a pronounced dip in the middle of the floor, which was not jacked into position when other repair work had previously been done. He stated that the plaster walls need to be repaired. Mr. Conlon stated that all of the floor finishes are bad, although some of the hard wood may possibly be saved. Mr. Conlon stated that siding and window treatments need to be replaced, and the windows need to be re-glazed. He also noted that the chimney needs to be re-pointed. Mr. Conlon stated that there is currently two layers of siding on the house. R. Blessey asked Mr. Conlon if there is a reason not to re-side the house now; he also asked if jacking the floor would cause any issues with the siding. Mr. Conlon responded that typically all of this renovation work should be coordinated and done around the same time for this type of project. Mr. Conlon noted that if siding is done before interior renovations have been completed, the Commission may uncover a structural defect not apparent at this time which may require the new siding to be removed in order to complete the repair. M. Dew stated that the siding should be stripped down to studs, plywood installed, and the re-siding be coordinated to be done at one time. Mr. Conlon noted that it is probable that the sill plate could be rotted. J. Salame and M. Dew discussed the siding repairs. Mr. Conlon mentioned that a heat trace should be considered for the house so that there is not as much snow accumulation and water into the windows.

R. Blessey stated that the Commission should have a long-term plan for the property, so that it can start to have an idea of how the buildings should be restored. R. Blessey also stated that he is unsure of any State requirements from the State Historic Preservation Commission.

A. Dew asked Mr. Conlon about the condition of the barn. Mr. Conlon responded that there was some shoring work done in the barn within the last few years. Mr. Conlon stated that the entire ground floor has been shored, and much of the shoring extends to the roof. He stated that the

shoring does not seem as though it was intended to be permanent, and it is cabled. J. Salame noted that there was shoring that was to be temporary until the next phase of the project was completed. Mr. Conlon stated that the condition of the barn is precarious. He stated that much of the roof was replaced at the same time as the shoring. Much of the roofing is stable and in good condition. The gable and the sidewalls are rotted, although the extent to which is not calculable. Mr. Conlon stated that he was not comfortable in the barn for his own safety. The shoring supports are in some cases rotted-out logs. Mr. Conlon shared his visual observations with the Commission. Mr. Conlon stated that the barn is constructed of post and beam framing, which was common of the era. A loft elevation should be installed for stabilization, to brace the gable end walls. Mr. Conlon stated that the barn framing, whether the barn is used or a replica ornament, needs to support its own weight and brace the foundation wall. There is an irrational load path. From a structural point of view, the scope of work does not change much for buildings to be used and buildings to be used as display pieces. The floor framing is not salvageable and is rotted. Mr. Conlon estimates that on average there is an 80% section loss. Mr. Conlon stated that he is questioning how much of those logs of the floor framing are salvageable and sees no value of the Commission's retaining them, even as an ornament. Mr. Conlon explained that there will come a time when this framing will not be able to support its own weight. Mr. Conlon reported that at least 60% of the siding should be replaced. From his observation, the timbers are no longer holding nails. R. Blessey asked Mr. Conlon about the condition of the foundation. The stone foundation on the house side is not sitting in the correct place according to R. Blessey, who stated that there is no connection in that framing on that wall. He believes that the foundation is a foot or eighteen inches away from where it needs to be to support the barn. A. Dew asked about the front section of the barn that is detached, and P. Conlon stated that this area is debris, and he is not sure what can be done with it. He agreed that this area is a real hazard.

J. Salame stated that the other argument to keep the footprint is to re-construct that section in the future on the same footprint. R. Blessey stated that to leave this portion standing is a liability, but the State has mandated that that area be preserved. J. Salame stated that there are photos which can show the dimensions for any re-build projects.

R. Blessey stated that the next step is for the Commission to have a planning meeting.

Mr. Conlon stated that the existing foundations should be elevated at least six inches above the ground for resistance to rot.

*J. Bronn left the meeting at 6:50 PM.*

The Commission thanked Mr. Conlon for his report. The Commission also thanked the State Historic Preservation Office and the Brookfield Historic District Commission for their support with this project.

List of Plans prepared by Conlon Engineering LLC submitted for discussion of agenda item 7.a:

- Sheet SK-1 – Site Plan dated 12/04/13
- Sheet SK-2 – Building #1 (Shed) Plan dated 12/04/13
- Sheet SK-3 – Building #3 (Corn Crib) Plan dated 12/04/13
- Sheet SK-4 – Building #5 (Shed) Plan dated 12/04/13

- Sheet SK-5 – Building #6 (Privy) Plan dated 12/04/13
- Sheet SK-6 – Barn Floor and Low Roof Framing Plan dated 12/04/13
- Sheet SK-7 – Barn Girt and Low Roof Framing Plan dated 12/04/13
- Sheet SK-8 – Barn Roof Framing Plan dated 12/04/13

*The Commission moved back to discussion of Current Project Reports.*

- Burr Farm – M. Dew stated that he has looked at the cistern. At one side it looks like there is a loop for a cable and the other side there are just studs.
- Williams/Gurski Open Space – J. Bronn, M. Dew – There was no report.
- 18 Junction Road – S. Landis, M. Dew – A. Dew noted that all of the residences are paying their rents.
- Gurski Homestead - M. Murphy, R. Blessey, A. Dew – A. Dew stated that she has informed the Commission of the water leaking into the basement. A. Dew asked if R. Blessey has been out to check the pump. A. Dew stated that K. Yates has made swags and wreaths, which she and M. Dew will be out to put up. They will check the basement and the pump at that time.
- Eriksen Farm Open Space –M. Carmody, M. Dew – M. Dew stated that the roof is done. A. Dew stated that the work for the roof and a previously installed sign has been inspected by the Building Department today. M. Dew stated that he has spoken with P. Robb, who will be removing the co-ax cable that runs through a broken basement window. P. Robb will also be repairing some of the siding.

*The Commission moved back to discussion of the Gurski Homestead.*

- Gurski Homestead – R. Blessey stated that the Commission had spent approximately \$12,000 on the boiler, and it has since been submerged in water. He stated that the boiler is probably not usable at this point. M. Dew asked if there was any insurance on the boiler. R. Blessey stated that he is unsure if there was insurance. M. Dew suggested that the insurance company be contacted as soon as possible to determine if it is possible for the Conservation Commission to file a claim. M. Dew stated that the no repair work should be done in the basement until the necessary work to stop the flooding has been completed.

*The Commission moved back to discussion of Eriksen Farm.*

- Eriksen Farm – M. Carmody stated that she has asked Jason Sivo to clean the brush out of the fence line. Jason stated that if he takes the brush out of the fence, it will probably fall down. M. Dew stated that he would remove the current fence and replace it with a new fence. A. Dew suggested that M. Dew and M. Carmody meet with Jason at the site to discuss the fence repair/replacement.
- Deer Management – M. Dew – There was no report.

## **7. OLD BUSINESS:**

- b. Open Space Opportunity: 4 Murphy’s Lane – A. Dew noted that the Board of Selectmen discussed having an appraisal done of the property at one of their previous meetings.

**8. NEW BUSINESS:**

a. 2014 Conservation Commission Meeting Schedule – A. Dew asked if the Commission would consider moving the regular meeting times back to the 7:00 PM time, rather than the current 6:00 PM time. **M. Dew made a motion to move the meeting time to the first Wednesday of the month at 7:00 PM. M. Carmody seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.**

*The Commission moved back to Treasurer's Report.*

**5. TREASURER'S REPORT:** S. Landis reported the amount in the budget. A. Dew stated that there is no amount remaining in the budget. A. Dew and S. Landis reviewed the recently paid bills.

**9. ADJOURNMENT: M. Carmody made a motion to adjourn at 7:13 PM. A. Dew seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.**

\*\*\*\*Please contact Stephanie Landis: 203-775-4545 if you cannot attend the Meeting\*\*\*\*

**\*\*Next regular meeting scheduled for January 8, 2014\*\***