

East Hampton Conservation Commission
Regular Meeting
February 12, 2009
Town Hall Meeting Room
Unapproved Minutes

1. **Call to Order:** Chairman Zawisza called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

Present: Chairman Peter Zawisza, Members Patience Anderson, Duncan McNeill, Mark Niosi, and Allen Petell.

Not Present: Members Peter Bergan and Michael Brogan.

The Chairman welcomed new member Mark Niosi to the Commission.

2. **Communications, Liaison Reports, Committee Reports and Public Comments:**

Communications: The Lake Pocotopaug Fishery Summary has been included in this evening's package for the Commissioner's review.

Mr. Petell reported that he spoke with Ruth Plummer, Parks and Recreation Director, about his thoughts on the educational signage on the Airline Trail. She liked the idea but was concerned about money. Mr. Petell has been researching means of raising the necessary funds for this project.

Liaison Reports:

Mr. Petell reported that Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Agency (IWWA) did not meet due to the weather.

Mr. McNeill reported that the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board minutes are available online and in the Town Clerk's Office. Chairman Zawisza discussed the Sears Park master plan with the director of Parks and Recreation. They agreed that the two commissions will work collaboratively on further plans for Town conservation, parks, and recreation area projects.

Chairman Zawisza distributed two memos from Town Manager, Jeff O'Keefe. He summarized the memos. The Conservation Commission and Lake Pocotopaug Commission will be combined. Mr. O'Keefe stressed to Chairman Zawisza that no one will lose their seat. The two commissions currently have 14 members. The plan is to combine the membership and allow attrition to eliminate the extra seats. The Commission discussed the state statute and the charge of the Commissions and redundant responsibilities. *Attachment 1*

Ms. Anderson reported that she attended the Lake Pocotopaug Commission (LPC) meeting of January 15. Tom Wells of the LPC presented his draft Lake Management Plan. He is working with Bob Hart, former Chairman of the LPC, on this plan. It was a very good presentation. The LPC has been invited to participate in Old Home Day and a lake fair. She suggested that the Conservation Commission participate in these projects with them. The minutes for this meeting are available online and in the Town Clerk's Office for viewing.

Ms. Anderson reported that she was unable to attend the Board of Finance meeting; however, the minutes are available online and in the Town Clerk's Office for viewing.

Mr. Zawisza reported that Council Member, John Tuttle, discussed the Green Power Initiative in Town. They will be applying for a \$50,000 grant to do a wind study at Memorial School to provide power to the school. Two areas in Town have been identified as possible sites, one being Memorial School. The other site is the top of Clark Hill Road.

Public Comments:

George Coshow, 26 Shipyard Road, suggested that the Peach Farm property at the top of Peach Farm Road would be another area worth investigating for a wind study.

3. Acceptance of Minutes of January 8, 2009:

A. January 8, 2009 Regular Meeting: *Mr. Zawisza moved to accept the minutes of the January 8, 2009 meeting. Ms. Anderson seconded the motion*

Ms. Anderson requested that the minutes be amended to read that the reason she could not report on the recent LPC meeting was that she had not attended the meeting, not that the meeting was not held.

The motion was amended by the maker and seconder.

The amended motion carried unanimously. The minutes of the January 8, 2009 regular meeting were approved as amended.

4. Review: None.

5. Old Business:

A. Inventory/Index of Open Spaces: Presentation by Emily Wilson, The NEMO Program, CLEAR, UCONN:

Emily Wilson reported that she was in touch with the DEP-GIS department about East Hampton's plans for open space mapping. She was referred to a division of DEP responsible for protected open space. Both groups are already aware that East Hampton has contracted with Applied Geographics and is waiting for a parcel level on GIS. They have also been in touch with Donna Ralston, Assessor, who is spearheading the Town's GIS project. When the parcel level is available, the State will be able to provide seasonal staff that will come to East Hampton and work with the Town to collect information on open space easements from the land records. This is a process which is going on across the state. The methodology has been accepted and is available. Certain types of open space are not mapped by the State, such as baseball fields. Mapping of this type of area would be the Town's responsibility in the task.

Daphne Schaub, recording secretary, reported that she spoke with Ms. Ralston about the GIS project and learned that Phase 1 of the GIS master plan was about to be completed. Both Ms. Ralston and Jeff Jylkka, Finance Director,

believe GIS, Phase 1 will be running by March 1. Phase 2 is about to begin. The fee that Applied Geographics will charge for the Open Space Mapping will be \$3,500. It appears that all the different aspects of this project are coming together at the same time. The parcel level is complete and is being tested on beta version.

Sue Weintraub requested that UCONN offer some guidance regarding recommended procedures for municipalities to manage oversight of the system. She also discussed working with the Town Manager to ensure that temporary oversight be in place to ensure that the correct information is being filtered to the appropriate people.

- B. Development Review Checklist:** Chairman Zawisza discussed the Commission's desire to follow-up on their request that the Planning & Zoning Commission (PZC) consider the Development Review Checklist they created last year. A copy of the Checklist and the letter to the PZC Chairman was distributed to all the members. Mr. Zawisza reported that he had reviewed the Checklist with the Town Manager, who believes that it could be used with the Design Review Board (DRB). Mr. O'Keefe also advised him that this Commission should proceed as usual until the Commissions merge.

Chairman Zawisza would like to send a letter to the chairmen of the PZC, IWWA, and DRB, as well as Jim Carey and Jeff O'Keefe with a copy of the Checklist requesting that it become a part of the landuse application process.

- C. Fee In Lieu of Open Space Proposal:** Chairman Zawisza discussed the Commission's desire to follow-up on their request that the PZC consider a policy were by fees would be accepted by the Town, to be held in a specifically designated account, for developments were open space options would not directly benefit the Town in regard to present or future open space holdings.

Ms. Anderson distributed a draft letter for bringing this initiative to the attention of the PZC. She explained that she referred to the Connecticut Handbook of Conservation Commissions and explained its recommendations for approaching commissions. The Commission discussed other area towns which have adopted this policy.

The Chairman requested staff to contact Jim Gibbons of NEMO and invite him to come to a Conservation Commission meeting and make a presentation on this topic.

6. New Business:

- A. Open Space Preservation:** Presentation by George Coshow

George Coshow was present to discuss some thoughts he has had about the need and methodology to encourage farmland in East Hampton. He explained 150 years ago, or more, East Hampton was known as an orchard town; however, there are very little active farms in Town now. He is interested in developing a plan to help the Town actively encourage farming endeavors and discourage landholders from selling off property to developers. It is his

assumption that East Hampton in general would like to resist residential development and would be interested in helping the farmland in the area to be functioning farms. The U.S. government and State legislature are interested in investing in agricultural preservation. Mr. Coshow discussed methods of encourage this with the Commission. *Attachment 2*

B. Discussion: Functional Assessment of Boards and Commissions

The Chairman and Commissioners discussed that this item had been addressed earlier in the meeting under Communications. They further discussed the implementation plan

7. **Adjournment:** *Ms. Anderson moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Petell seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*
The meeting adjourned at 8:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Daphne Schaub
Recording Secretary