



# TOWN OF ROXBURY CONNECTICUT

Conservation Commission

29 North Street • P.O. Box 203 • Roxbury, CT 06783-0203

## ROXBURY CONSERVATION COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MARCH 14, 2018 MINUTES

### CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:58 p.m.

Members Present: Chairman Ron Faanes PhD, Co-Chairman Gary Steinman, Secretary Cathy Masi, Trudy Swenson, Timothy Flanagan (A) and Kim Cartwright (A)

Members Absent: Russ Pribanic (A)

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion to approve the minutes of the February 14<sup>th</sup> meeting was made by Gary Steinman and seconded by Kim Cartwright. The minutes were unanimously approved by those present at that meeting.

### GUESTS

Albert Pokrywka, Head of the Transfer Station, Jennifer Heaton-Jones, Executive Director of the Housatonic Resources Recovery Authority, Jessyka Patterson of the Sustainable CT Committee.

### PUBLIC COMMENT & CORRESPONDENCE

Gary Steinman has submitted a grant application for \$5,000 to the Environmental Professionals' Organization of Connecticut to acquire a solar-powered aeration system to keep the Town Pond clear, once it has been cleaned by the Roxbury Land Trust, and to restore its usability as a swimming facility. Acquisition cost is \$4,000 and installation is \$1,000.

### REPORTS & PRESENTATIONS

#### Discussion on Recycling

Jennifer Heaton-Jones gave a comprehensive presentation on the current situation of recycling and how the economics of re-selling the recycled materials has affected the manner in which materials are re-purposed. For materials to be sold, the quality/purity of the product must fall within strict parameters otherwise purchasers are not interested. Achieved 'purity' in the final product to be sold affects value.

Items such as cardboard, office paper and newsprint are currently in demand as long as these materials do not have other materials mixed in. Tim Flanagan added that some manufacturing plants do not accept trees anymore and only want to work with the recycled material as it is cheaper to process. The goal is to reclaim 60% of waste by 2024 (in actuality 87.5% of waste is recyclable). Plastic bags are a real problem but ways to recycle effectively have been initialized. Manufacturers such as Trexx want the bag material.

The key to good recycling is public education. Having programs in the elementary schools is a good place to start. Jennifer said some communities include a recycling handout in the tax bills. It was suggested that updated recycling practices "what's in – what's out" flyers be included in the Rec/Senior Center newsletters as well as on the Town website.

Every public garbage can is required to have an adjacent recycling container. Unfunded mandates from the state will be forthcoming.

Because of economic pressures, single-stream recycling has replaced much of the more expensive sort-by-item practices invested in previously.

Barbara Henry is the official Recyclable Coordinator and she has enlisted the aid of Jessyka Patterson.

Albert Pokrywka stated that the town is losing money in the recycling program as it costs more to transport it out than sale funds bring in.

Tim Flanagan said recycling is an economic mess right now and it has to do with the purchasers of the material. It costs more to recycle than is received in selling the processed material. China and Viet Nam have been the major buyers of our recycled materials, but China has changed its way of doing business with much having to do with their desired perceived world status.

The town recycling contract expires in 2022.

Jennifer Heaton-Jones can be contacted at Jen@HRRRA.org.

Producers responsibility in packaging: Some newly manufactured items, such as mattresses and paint, have fees built-in to the sales price to cover the cost of recycling the materials. There is talk of furthering such stewardship programs specific to the recycling dilemma.

Bottom line: recycling is driven by economics which leaves no choice but to conform.

#### Commission Summaries

Nothing applicable to the interests of the Conservation Commission.

#### **OLD BUSINESS**

##### Sustainability Program

Jessyka Patterson voiced that Roxbury is well on its way to becoming a Bronze and quite possibly a Silver award recipient. Roxbury, explained Kim Cartwright, is already doing many of the suggested actions. The CT Sustainability Program is a recognition and awareness plan to encourage towns to 'do the right thing'. The next meeting is March 24<sup>th</sup> at Town Hall.

##### Town Wants to Know

The March 11<sup>th</sup> program at the Minor Memorial Library, "A Healthy Lawn and A Healthy Aquifer" presented by Carol Haskins was well attended and considered quite successful. Carol demonstrated that many lawn problems such as withering, weeds and grubs can be eradicated or lessened simply by cutting grass to a height of 3 ½" to 4". Sensible and moderate use of chemicals properly applied at the correct time of year will not be as prone to run-off. Adjusting the lawn mindset to 'green' rather than perfect and allowing natural diversity in the lawn goes a long way in helping the environment.

Jessyka Patterson suggested Tips be included in the eBlasts, one tip for recycling and one tip for healthy lawns, keeping them short and sweet. Gary Steinman proposed the Dear Crabby column be revived to broadcast these tips.

Tick Spraying: Jessyka Patterson said a few neighbors she knows joined forces to share in the cost of having their yards sprayed with cedar oil. Trudy Swenson will contact the Citizens Co-op to see if they are interested in a cost-effective spraying program.

##### Joey's Trail

Trudy Swenson reported the Trail will be officially opened on CT Trails Day, June 2<sup>nd</sup> with a rain date of June 3<sup>rd</sup>. The Land Trust has a competing activity scheduled and Trudy was contacted to work out a solution. The Trail dedication time will now be 2:00 PM and the Land Trust staffers will direct their attendees to the Joey's Trail ceremony.

Ron Faanes has been in contact with Earth Tones for help with the naturalistic plantings to be done along the trail.

##### Blight Ordinance

Ron Faanes stated that much of the proposed ordinance is compatible with the CT Sustainability Program. The name is now leaning towards Suggestions for an "Environmental Health, Safety, Welfare and Preservation of Property Values Ordinance" with the emphasis on the environment. A rough draft was circulated among members

and discussed. The proposal tone is one of working with property owners to correct situations cooperatively and working out reasonable and feasible solutions. In cases where toxins are being released into the environment, the action plan is stronger. A re-draft of the proposal will be circulated to members and Friends of the Conservation Commission for discussion at the next meeting.

Budget

Tabled

The Clean Energy Task Force

Tabled

Co-Housing Article

The article from the New York Time regarding multi-generational housing that Trudy Swenson discovered can be accessed at <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/20/business/cohousing-communities.html>

Trudy shared that Rock Corner is a new co-housing community in North Haven which is one of several successful communities of this nature.

Conservation Conference

Ron Faanes, Gary Steinman and Kim Cartwright will be attending the conference in Middletown on March 17<sup>th</sup>.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**PUBLIC ACCESS TV**

Spectrum Charter will make available the apparatus if the Commission would like to pursue creating a program.

**GUEST COMMENT**

Jessyka Patterson asked if well water testing was going to be done again. Gary Steinman said the Commission will have Hydro Technologies of New Milford supply water sampling kits which will be offered at a discounted fee at the Tractor Parade this year. Additional tests can be performed at the same time, pricing will be available. Ron Faanes will again gather completed water samples which owners can drop off at the town hall and Ron will deliver them to the lab, however, it is important to note these samples are time sensitive.

**NEXT MEETING DATE**

The next meeting is scheduled for April 11, 2018 at 7:00 PM.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 9:42 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

*Cathy Masi*

Cathy Masi, Secretary

*The above minutes are not official until approved by the Commission members at the next meeting*