

Town of Stonington Conservation Commission
Minutes of a Regular Meeting held on May 21, 2007
Stonington Police Station Meeting Room, 173 South Broad Street, Pawcatuck, CT

1. Call to order: Called to order by Chairman Simm at 6:19 PM. Commission members also in attendance were Cole, Herbst, Lyons, Bell and Baldwin. Swenarton and Dewire were absent. Town planner Brynes and members of the public were present.

2. Review of Town Developments and Proposals.

2b. PZ0719SD Aborn D. Smith – *Application for a 5-lot subdivision of an approximate 2 acre parcel. Property located at 1 Johnson Street, Pawcatuck. Assessor's Map 14 Block 8 Lot 7. Zone RA-15.* A site walk was held on April 24, 2007 at which Herbst, Bell, Lyons were present. Applicant is requesting to pay a fee in lieu of open space, but the choice is the Conservation Commission's. This is a non-sewered area and the design adds septic systems in a known ledgy area. Carlene Donnarummo said that blasting is a concern and asked that a stone wall on the north side of the existing Burdick Lane emergency access path and trees be preserved. Ledge is the most important environmental area on the site. **1st MOTION:** In consideration of the geologic character of the property vis-à-vis drainage issues and the fact that it is a non-sewered area the Conservation Commission recommends a minimum 15% open space set-aside rather than a fee in lieu of open space. We recommend that the open space be set aside at the west or high end of the plot encompassing the ledge (Cole, Herbst). Passed unanimously. **2nd MOTION:** We strongly recommend that the sidewalk be constructed on the south side of Burdick Lane to avoid disturbing the historic stone wall, mature trees and to avoid blasting ledge (Herbst, Cole). Passed unanimously.

2d. Any pending applications and new preliminary proposals. None.

MOTION: Move to **Old Business** item 4b (Cole, Baldwin). Passed unanimously.

4b. Mystic River Dam Committee. No progress reported.

4c. Discussion on grant and matching funds for trails program. Town Planner Brynes distributed a copy of the grant application and schematic trail map dating from 2003. Cole stated that he preferred to see a riverside route used as much as possible which was the recommendation of a 1980s plan. A riverside route between the bascule bridge and Old Mystic would justify this plan's upgrade of Coogan Boulevard. **MOTION:** The Conservation Commission recommends that staff resources be allocated to this project and that a route along the Mystic River be included (Cole, Lyons). Passed unanimously. Conservation Commission would also like to know the time restraints on the use of the grant monies.

MOTION: Move to Old Business item 4g (Cole, Baldwin). Passed unanimously.

4g. Discussion on Stonington's 200 Greatest Roadside Trees. Chairman Simm proposed this as a joint project with the Stonington Garden Club to prevent destruction of historic trees within the public right-of-way. Public input on nominees will be welcomed. Simm asked Commission members to compile lists of trees for inclusion.

New Business item **5a. Discussion on Freedom of Information Act Meeting on 6/4/07.** Everyone is invited. Mystic Middle School at 6PM.

5b. Election of Secretary. Herbst is now a full member of the Commission and Dewire is alternate. **MOTION:** Baldwin is nominated as secretary (Cole, Lyons). Passed unanimously. **MOTION:** Herbst is nominated as assistant secretary (Cole, Lyons). Passed unanimously.

5c. Discussion on Admiral's Cove Public Access. Town Planner Brynes to send information on status. Application for work in the water has been made to DEP.

5d. Discussion on status of vernal pools and vernal pool regulations and **5e. Discussion on status of red maple swamp at MacQuade's Market.** Highway Department to be contacted regarding management plan, if any, for town property on Clara Drive near McQuade's; tree cutting had been observed there. Separate vernal pool management regulation is needed. Concern was expressed for the pools on Jerry Browne Road.

5f. Discussion on joint program with David Kozak of CTDEP for land acquisition. Discussed the possibility of open space acquisition along Palmer Neck Road near Barn Island WMA. Parcel was identified as part of Kozak's Coastal Land Assessment Methodology (CLAM) project.

5g. Discussion on 2007–2008 Budget and expenses for 2006-2007 (deadline June 15, 2007). No change from the prior year.

2005-2006 budget:	
Naturescapes - Barn Island and Spellman Park Field Trips	\$1,700.00
First Student Buses for Field Trips	\$600.00
Connecticut Land Conservation Council (membership)	\$100.00
TNC Borderlands Project membership and Barn Island addition acquisition	\$200.00
Avalonia Land Conservancy	\$250.00
Connecticut College Arboretum	\$50.00
CACIWC	\$60.00
Wood Pawcatuck Watershed Association	\$100.00
Stonington Land Trust	\$500.00
Stonington Historical Society Library (facilities for document preservation)	\$125.00
TPL on-going professional services for land acquisition	\$500.00
Turned back to Town	\$0.00
	\$4,185.00

MOTION: Approve the budget expenditures as listed with a \$35 overbalance dependent upon final bussing bills (Cole, Bell). Passed unanimously.

5h. Discussion of attached housing proposal on Mary Hall and Greenhaven Rds. Assessor's Map 7, Block 1, Lot 44 (no application submitted). The Commission discussed the 4/26 Economic Development Commission-sponsored meeting on the Cherenzia proposal. Baldwin told the Commission of EDC Chairman Blunt White's request that the Conservation Commission continue its comment until an application has been filed before discussing in any formal way. A letter from Raymond F Cherenzia described the status of the proposal and asked that item 5h be deleted from the agenda.

5i. Route 1 Study Meeting on 5/30. Members discussed how water access was lost in Old Mystic, but that the State will back up the Conservation Commission on preserving customary use at the two Wequetequock marinas.

5j. Open Space Preservation Forum. Chairman Simm proposed that the Conservation Commission and Diana Urban cosponsor a forum on open space preservation at Stonington High School, inviting: Westerly Conservation Commission, CT Departments of Agriculture and Environmental Protection, Stonington Land Trust, Avalonia Land Conservancy, Westerly Land Trust, Groton Open Space Association.

5k. Poirier Act. Cole and Simm to talk with staff about getting expert input on correcting legislation.

5l. Meeting with Westerly Conservation Commission on 5/8. Bell reported that the meeting went well; they are concerned about protecting water resources; suggested meeting quarterly.

3. Open Space Committee

3a. Open space plan update – discussion on parcels for preservation. Discussed as item **3b**.

3b. Discussion on parcels for preservation in Pawcatuck – Ben. Herbst said that Alicia Betty of TPL said that she usually has a formal request from the Board of Selectmen, Conservation Commission and Board of Finance at this stage. Commission to go ahead on acquiring Mr. Verzillo's Burdick Lane properties. Herbst and Dora Hill to contact the Board of Finance to get on their June agenda while Betty pins down Mr. Verzillo on an asking price. Herbst to order an appraisal. Betty still negotiating with the Walshes; an application for matching funds can now be made including a house that is to be separated out on a separate lot. Farm in Mystic is now more complicated as there are more family members involved, some of whom wish to develop as a way of cashing out.

3c. Discussion on possible referendum for open space bonding. Discussed as part of item **3b**.

6. Review of April 23, 2007 meeting minutes. MOTION: Approve as distributed with minor corrections submitted by Herbst (Cole, Bell). Passed unanimously.

7. Adjournment. Motion to Adjourn (Baldwin). Meeting adjourned at 11:05 PM.

Submitted by Ben Baldwin, Secretary. Approved as modified at a regular meeting on June 25, 2005.