

Town of Stonington Conservation Commission

Minutes of a Regular Meeting held on January 28, 2008
Stonington Police Station Meeting Room, 173 South Broad Street, Pawcatuck, CT

1. Call to order: Called to order by Chairman Simm at 6:10 PM. Commission members also in attendance were Bell, Cole, Herbst, Baldwin, and Swenarton. Dewire and Lyons were absent. Others in attendance included State Senator Maynard, State Representative Urban, First Selectman Haberek, Town Planner Brynes, Director Planning Haase, Brianne Casadei, Ethan Grimes, Tom Sanford, and Carlene Donnarummo.

MOTION: Move to item 5b (Swenarton, Bell). Passed unanimously.

5b. Discussion of Terra Firma Educational Farm, Al Harvey Road. Chairman Simm sent a letter to Sheryl Hack, executive director of Connecticut Landmarks, expressing the concern of the Commission about the financial burden falling upon Terra Firma Farm, an educational farm and tenant of Connecticut Landmarks, and inviting her to our meeting. Ms Hack's reply was distributed in which she said that she could not attend, but invited involvement. Rep. Urban said that she spoke with Hack and will meet with her soon. Members felt that the rent was substantial and is not being reinvested; that it should be nominal especially as a welcome center is being planned for construction. MOTION: The Commission will join Terra Firma Farm at the cultivator level of \$250 (Bell, Herbst). Passed unanimously.

MOTION: To move to item 5g (Bell, Baldwin). Passed unanimously.

5g. Discussion of Commission Honors Award. Whit Davis has served on both the Inland Wetlands and Conservation Commissions and is a worthy recipient of recognition for his service to the town. The exact way in which this recognition should be made (tree dedication), when (2nd week in May?) and where is to be discussed.

MOTION: Return to item 5b (Bell, Swenarton). Passed unanimously.

Property taxes were being paid by tenant, but 9/2005 law exempts organizations such as Terra Firma Farm. Reply letter to Connecticut Landmarks should include how the Conservation Commission was concerned about the property for years, applaud CL's acceptance of TFF, was aware of the will's requirements, hoped for an entity like TFF and we steered them to you and want to see them thrive, how we appreciate Ms. Hack's letter of 1/22/2008 and her willingness to work together.

MOTION: To move to item 5e (Baldwin, Herbst). Passed unanimously.

5e. Discussion of Mystic YMCA property. Tom Sanford of the Friends of the Mystic Branch, Inc. discussed how his group was formed in reaction to news that the Ocean YMCA was studying a plan which included the possible sale of the existing branch and construction of a new facility near I-95. His group wishes to formalize the protection of the donated open space which includes ball fields and Williams Beach. The vacant 22 acres was donated in 1948 and the building was constructed as the Mystic Community Center in 1983. Meeting of Y members to discuss this issue is upcoming.

Cole arrived at 7:40p.m. MOTION: To move to item 5a (Baldwin, Bell). Passed unanimously.

5a. Review of Open Space Development Regulations. Director of Planning Haase presented a proposed amendment to the Open Space Development (OSD) regulation. Members are to review and will discuss next month. Simm asked about the town treating single family homeowners differently from developers, a "homeowner's bill of rights." Step-by-step instructions for Planning Office procedures might help.

MOTION: To move to item 5f (Baldwin, Herbst). Passed unanimously.

5f. Discussion of waivers in land use regulations. Simm said that the need for supermajority vote to allow a waiver was asked of Town Attorney, but the real question is whether a waiver is allowed at all. Haase stated that waivers are part of the subdivision regulations, but are not included in zoning (requests go to ZBA). Commission will consult town attorney through First Selectman and Director of Planning Haase.

MOTION: To move to item 2a (Baldwin, Swenarton). Passed unanimously.

2. Review of Town Developments and Proposals:

2a. PZ0754SD Suzanne Medeiros - *Subdivision Application for a 2-lot subdivision of approximate 4.9± acre parcel. The subdivision proposes a lot line revision through the conveyance of 6,973± SF to Assessor's Map 35 Block 1 Lot 4A. Property located at 108 Greenhaven Rd., Pawcatuck. Assessor's Map 35 Block 1 Lot 4. Zone RA-40.* The Conservation Commission recommends fee in lieu of open space for this application.

2b. PZ0748POCD Town of Stonington (Route 1 Corridor Study) - *Plan of Conservation and Development Amendment for the adoption of the Route 1 Corridor Study.* To be discussed at a PZC meeting on March 3rd. Sewer discussion taken out, some objected to Wequetequock remaining as the main objective of the study. Some suggested that the town purchase the Watsky marina property.

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

3. Open Space Committee

3a. Discussion on parcels for preservation in Pawcatuck – Ben. Not discussed.

3b. Discussion on possible referendum for open space bonding. Not discussed.

4. Old Business

4a. Mystic River Dam Committee- No discussion.

4b. Discussion on recommended procedures for Town's acceptance of conservation easements and open space - no discussion.

4c. Discussion on Stonington's 200 Greatest Roadside Trees – Baldwin is to write to the tree warden to ask about an elm at 32 Willow Street that was marked for removal last fall. The Commission considers it one of Stonington's 200 Greatest Roadside Trees. Baldwin & Bell to complete West Main Street street tree survey in Pawcatuck.

4d. Discussion on Anguilla Brook Preserve Transfer – Issue has gone to the PZC.

4e. Discussion on PA-490 Open Space Preservation - no discussion.

5. New Business

5c. Discussion of Wheeler Road Conservation Easement. 23.43-acre Patel property needs conservation easement over rear as it was omitted in error. Brynes spoke with owner about the error of which he was unaware.

5d. Discussion of Land Preservation Forum at Stoneridge in March. Probably to be held in April.

6. Review of December 17, 2007 meeting minutes- Motion to accept as modified (Bell, Swenarton). Passed unanimously.

7. Adjournment - Motion to adjourn (Swenarton). Approved at 10:40 pm.

Submitted by Ben Baldwin, Secretary

Approved by the Conservation Commission at a regular meeting on February 25, 2008.