

Town of Stonington Conservation Commission
Minutes of a Regular Meeting held on July 26, 2010
Police Station Community Meeting Room, 173 South Broad Street, Pawcatuck, CT

1. Call to order: Called to order by Chairman Stanton Simm at 7:10 p.m. Commission members also in attendance were Ben Baldwin, Tim Bell, Sheila Lyons, Stuart Cole and Walter Grant. Members Jennifer Herbst and Bob Dewire were absent. Town Planner Keith Brynes and members of the public were present.

2. Review of Town Developments and Proposals

2a. PZ1013ZC Mystic Hill (Ted Ladwig) - Zoning Map Amendment for multiple applicants/properties from RH-10 & RA-20 to RA-15, for parcels located on Mystic Hill & Mistuxet Ave., Mystic, CT. Assessor's Map 162 Block 2 Lots 9A-9P, Map 162 Block 2 Lot 10, & Map 162 Block 2 Lot 11. Zones RH-10 & RA-20. Town Planner Brynes distributed maps of the parcels. There was discussion regarding the identity of the applicants, a number of homeowners, as there is apparently no homeowners' association. The applicant is requesting a zone map change to RA-15 (not RM-15) to allow for a larger Floor Area Ratio.

MOTION: We have no objection to the zone change of developed lots to RA-15, but we request that the Department of Planning look into the status of the Mystic Hill subdivision open space to determine why it has been dedicated, contact the owner, Mr. O'Keefe, and resolve the issue of why the property hasn't been properly transferred to the entities specified on the original development approval (Denison Pequotsepos or Avalonia) (Cole, Bell). Passed unanimously.

MOTION: Move to item 5a. (Baldwin, Bell). Passed unanimously.

5a. Stonington High School Ground Water Research Study Group Findings

Teresa Thornton of the University of Maine introduced the study conducted by 11th and 12th graders at the high school with environmental studies teacher Alisa Whitman. Student Chase Springborn presented the findings after distribution of PowerPoint presentation notes. Students tested for contaminants and other qualities of their home well water. Information on the study is available at <http://www.umaine.edu/waterresearch/outreach/getwet/index.htm>. Chairman Simm spoke about the lack of oversight of drinking water quality and Cole said that there is a lack of baseline studies.

MOTION: to Move to item 2b. (Cole, Bell). Passed unanimously.

2b. Any pending applications and new preliminary proposals. Brynes said that both the regulation amendment (PZ1003RA Town of Stonington (PZC)--Zoning Regulations Text Amendments) and Grandview Farm subdivision lot line adjustments (PZ1011SD Pequot Development Associates, LLC - Re-subdivision Application) were approved. The growth management concept and the idea of "ground truth" as part of the comprehensive plan were both left in the regulations.

3. Open Space Parcels

3a. Discussion of parcels for preservation. Baldwin listed open space parcels presently on the market - the Coogan Farm, Sea Research properties on Maritime Drive, and the Pfizer Farm. The status of the Admiral Cove easement was discussed. The town is looking at putting a lien on the remaining lot. Baldwin was concerned that a barn facing Pequot Trail was demolished; it was on the Little Pond Farm dedicated farmland property. Dave Kozak of DEP had called Simm and Baldwin, looking to determine how our \$100,000 commitment toward the acquisition of the 15.9-acre Crowley property will be made. The Stonington Land Trust and Avalonia Land Conservancy are also contributing. **MOTION:** To contribute \$100,000 toward the purchase from the land acquisition account (Cole, Bell). Baldwin recused himself. Passed unanimously. The open space account has a balance of \$273,253. There is about

\$100,000 in a second account which was identified as the source of funds for this contribution. Cole departed.

4. Old Business

4a. Mystic River Dam Committee. Bell said that no activity can take place at the dam until the Route 184 bridge is replaced just downstream and that water flow continues to be low.

4b. Discussion of Stonington's 200 Greatest Roadside Trees.

- Bell gave Baldwin an inventory of a number of trees.
- Baldwin said that the proposed Town Hall parking lot expansion threatens the Peter Thacher memorial tree.
- Baldwin noted seeing dead trees along Route 2 at the Pawcatuck Farms shopping center.

4c. Discussion of alternative energy regulations. Lyons attended the meeting/hearing on Aquarion's proposed rate increase on June 10th. It appears that large users of water pay a discounted rate and users of little water pay a higher rate and have a relatively high minimum charge. This rate scale does not appear to encourage conservation of this important resource. She said that the meeting was more of a hearing with State commissioners receiving comments and there was no discussion. There will be 10 hearings throughout the state of which 5 will allow comments. The average water cost is proposed to increase to \$89 per quarter. Lyons asked about the status of the Noyes Avenue well which was apparently contaminated by the gas company property on Canal Street to the north. Simm stated his concern about cyanide contaminating the Pfizer Farm on Taugwonk Road and the fact the DEP only got involved once it had been notified by Pfizer. Contamination of the Westerly water system in about 1990 by the Hendel's gasoline station on Liberty Street was also discussed.

4d. Discussion of alternative energy regulations. Cole and Simm to review in preparation for the next meeting.

5. New Business

5b. The PZC is holding a workshop for public input on signage at 7:30 pm on August 3rd at Pine Point.

5c. The proposed land swap was discussed. The possibility of using the conservation subdivision regulation as part of an affordable/senior housing development was explored. Other proposed sites for senior housing have been the land behind the Pawcatuck post office, a wetland, and Moss Park, dedicated open space.

5d. It was noted that Cole, Simm and Baldwin's current terms end on 7/31/2010.

5e. Correspondence:

- Connecticut Association of Conservation and Inland Wetlands Commissions (CACIWCC) Summer 2010 newsletter, *The Habitat*.
- A thank you letter from the Connecticut Land Conservation Council.
- Invoice from Naturescapes for school trips.
- OLISP Notice of Tentative Determination Application #201003378-MG for 55 Church Street, Stonington.
- DPNC invoice marked paid from the Finance Department.

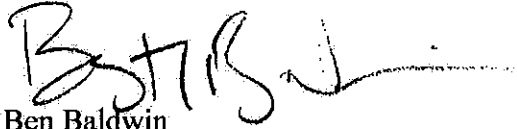
5f. Lyons said that no money has been set aside for the 2014 POCD and that Director of Planning Bill Haase suggested that some action items from the 2004 POCD not be included in the 2014 plan (such as the Taugwonk Road rezoning - because that issue has been voted upon and decided in the negative).

6. Review of June 28, 2010 draft minutes.

MOTION: To review at next meeting (Lyons, Bell). Passed unanimously.

7. Adjournment - Motion to adjourn (Lyons). Approved at 10:25 p.m.

Minutes submitted by

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ben Baldwin', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Ben Baldwin
Secretary, Town of Stonington Conservation Commission

Approved at a regular meeting on 8/23/2010.