

Town of Stonington Conservation Commission
Minutes of a Regular Meeting held on February 27, 2012
Police Station Meeting Room, 173 South Broad Street, Pawcatuck, CT

1. Call to order: Chairman Stanton Simm called the meeting to order at 7:10 pm. In attendance were Stuart Cole, Ben Baldwin, Tim Bell, and Walter Grant. Jim Friedlander, Sheila Lyons and Bob Dewire were absent. Town Planner Keith Brynes and members of the public were present.

2. Review of Town Developments and Proposals:

2b. Consideration of Open Space Trails Associated with Approved Applications PZ1131SD & CAM Clara M. Coogan Trust - Subdivision and Coastal Area Management Review applications for a 2-lot subdivision. Property located at 162 Greenmanville Ave., Mystic. Assessor's Map 172 Block 2 Lot 5. Parcels included as part of proposed Open Space are Assessor's Map 163 Block 1 Lots 5A & 9. Zones RM-15, RA-20, & RA-40 and PZ1132SUP & CAM Clara M. Coogan Trust – Special Use Permit & Coastal Area Management Review applications for phased development of a 245-unit Congregate Living Facility on 18.02 acres to be created through subdivision of a ±52.07 acre parcel. Phase 1 proposes 125 units and Phase 2 proposes 120 units. Property located at 162 Greenmanville Ave., Mystic. Assessor's Map 172 Block 2 Lot 5. Zones RM-15 & RA-40. Town Planner Keith Brynes said that the PZC had approved the subdivision with an open space set aside and special permit last week. One stipulation was that the final plans should show trails and the Conservation Commission should be consulted. Reduced copies of the site plan with highlighted trail routes were shown. Maggie Jones of the Denison Pequotsepos Nature Center, the entity that will hold the open space set aside and a member of a group negotiating to acquire the 34-acre balance of the Coogan property, showed maps with current and potential trail routes through the subdivided properties. Attorney Susan Pochal represented the owner, Clara M. Coogan Trust.

MOTION: We are against requiring a through trail to Clara Drive from the open space by the owner of the development parcel (Brom Builders) and believe that trails to the open space parcel be left up to the organization that will hold the open space property (the DPNC). We are against a specific design of trails through the open space. Any trails between the open space parcel and the property to be developed should be decided by the two owners (Cole, Grant). Passed unanimously.

Chairman Simm noted that the Conservation Commission needs to discuss the issue of allowed uses in open space set asides with the PZC which has permitted a detention basin at this set aside property.

2a. Any pending applications and new preliminary proposals. Town Planner Keith Brynes said that none were in the pipeline, but the following were discussed:

- Spruce Meadows, a 44-unit affordable housing complex with a community building on 3 acres at 100-102 South Broad Street, had been proposed. Baldwin noted that this is adjacent to a large cedar swamp.
- Toll Brothers (former Meehan) – Brynes said that they have started on a second house. Chairman Simm asked about the status of the open space and Brynes said that it had not yet been transferred to the Stonington Land Trust due to a Memorandum of Understanding between Toll Bros. and the SLT regarding the placement of detention basins. Simm said the regulations still require the dedication of the open space before plans are recorded and the granting a C.O, no matter what MOUs may exist.
- Baldwin read a letter from Nancy D'Estang dated 2/2/2012 which complained about development along Route 27, Mystic's gateway, specifically at Toll Bros. and the childcare development at the Coogan Farm. Chairman Simm noted that the Toll Bros. property's 2003 approvals were appealed to court where the PZC approval was upheld. Brynes noted a cease and desist order had been placed on the property as Toll Bros. wasn't complying with the erosion and sedimentation (E&S) requirements, but has since been lifted. It was noted that the childcare development had been reviewed by the Architectural Design Review, Inland Wetlands and Watercourses, and Planning and Zoning Commissions. It was also noted that bituminous paving was probably required for this property due to the large amount of drop-off and pick-up traffic expected, including school busses. Baldwin will reply to D'Estang.

3. Open Space Parcels

3a. Discussion of parcels for preservation.

Chairman Simm said that this item would be covered under item 5a, Executive Session to Discuss Land Acquisition.

4. Old Business

4a. Mystic River Dam Committee. Bell reported good stream flow for winter on Whitford Brook at Route 184 and for Wequetequock Brook.

4b. Discussion of Stonington's 200 Greatest Roadside Trees. Bell gave Baldwin an article on recent storms: "Tree trimming will affect historic landscapes" from the Nov/Dec 2011 issue of *Connecticut Preservation News*. Simm noted that a huge elm had recently been removed on Wheeler Road.

4c. Discussion of Progress on Plan of Conservation and Development's Open Space Plan. Town Planner Brynes said that the PZC was still forming a steering committee. Chairman Simm said he hoped that Sheila Lyons of our Commission would participate.

4d. Discussion of Open Space and Conservation Easement Transfers for Ongoing Subdivisions. Baldwin asked about the status of the Tyrseck conservation easement and Brynes said there had been no activity. Town Planner Keith Brynes was asked to report on the status of open space and conservation easements for ongoing subdivisions at our next meeting.

4e. Any Other Old Business. None.

5. New Business

MOTION: To go to item 5b (Bell, Cole). Passed unanimously.

5b. Discussion of 2014 POCD Committee. Membership is being invited and Chairman Simm said the Conservation Commission will have a member.

5a. Executive Session to Discuss Land Acquisition. Baldwin mentioned large open space properties currently on the market: 1189 Pequot Trail (157 acres with 2 homes for \$1.95M), Mystic Aquarium lots on Maritime Drive (26 acres for \$2.9M), Orlando Property on Cove Road, Mistuxet Avenue and Deans Mill Road (35.75 acres with home for \$1.3M), 34 Anguilla Brook Road (32.6 acres with home for \$1.5M), and 381 New London Turnpike (56.36 acres with home for \$1.1M). Baldwin also said that a walk of the Watsky property should be scheduled.

MOTION: To go into executive session (Cole, Bell). Passed unanimously. The remaining members of the public departed. Properties proposed for acquisition as open space were discussed by all members present.

5c. Correspondence.

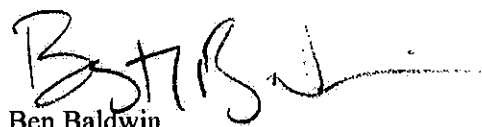
- Winter 2011 edition of CACWCC's *The Habitat* newsletter
- Winter 2011-2012 edition of Avalonia Land Conservancy's *Avalonia Trails* newsletter
- Fall 2011 edition of Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association's *Watershed* newsletter
- Connecticut Land Conservation Council letter requesting donation
- Postcard from Eastern CT RC&D and CACIWCC requesting completion of an online survey on greenways
- Aquarion Environmental Champion Award nomination form
- Letter from Nancy D'Estang (covered under item 2a)
- CT Audubon Society's *State of the Birds*
- Letter from FEMA re: Flood hazard map meeting on 1/17/2012

6. Review of November 28, 2011 draft minutes

MOTION: That the minutes be accepted as distributed (Cole, Bell). Passed unanimously.

7. Adjournment. Baldwin made a motion to adjourn at 9:30 pm.

Minutes approved at a
regular meeting on
3/26/2012



Ben Baldwin
Secretary, Town of Stonington Conservation Commission