

Town of Stonington Conservation Commission
Minutes of a Regular Meeting held on September 24, 2012
Police Station Community Meeting Room, 173 South Broad Street, Pawcatuck, CT

1. Call to order: Called to order by Chairman Stanton Simm at 7:28 p.m. Commission members also in attendance were Tim Bell, Sheila Lyons, Stuart Cole, Ben Baldwin and Walter Grant. Members Jim Friedlander, Bob Dewire and Town Planner Keith Brynes were absent. Members of the public were present.

2. Review of Town Developments and Proposals

2a. *Any pending applications and new preliminary proposals.* None.

3. Old Business

3a. Mystic River Dam Committee – Sheila Lyons distributed pictures of Whitford/Hyde Pond and the text of a public information sign that states that the Town of Groton owns the dam. She and Tim Bell accessed the dam across private property at the end of Hyde Pound Court, a cul-de-sac in Groton, on 8/27/2012. Bell said that a large algal mat was observed. Lyons said she would like to observe the former Rutan dam. Stuart Cole said that the State was requesting work be done at Silvia's Pond's two dams.

3b. Discussion of Stonington's 200 Greatest Roadside Trees – Ben Baldwin said that he would compile the list for Lou DiCesare of the Highway Department, but that the list needs more submissions.

3c. Discussion of Progress on Plan of Conservation and Development's Open Space Plan – Sheila Lyons said that the 2004 POCD Implementation Committee has been disbanded and showed a 2001 list of open space parcels. Possible open space to be acquired was discussed. MOTION: The Conservation Commission recommends to the Town of Stonington, Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance the acquisition of the Lattizori Perkins Farm property for multiuse fields in conjunction with Mystic Little League (Cole, Lyons). Passed unanimously.

3d. Discussion of Open Space and Conservation Easement Transfers for Ongoing and Past Subdivisions – Rick Newton said that the *Mystic Hill subdivision's* open space owned by Mr. O'Keefe still hasn't transferred as the parties are waiting on the attorneys.

Crescent Club - Chairman Simm and Cole to walk on 9/25/2012 at 12 noon for the Stonington Land Trust. 64 units planned on 58.9 acres. 9 acres of open space have transferred to the town and are expected to be transferred to another entity to hold permanently. 16 acres of open space must transfer for Phase II.
Toll Brothers - Engineering of drainage was wrong in proposed open space which has delayed transfer.
Admiral Cove - Waiting to hear status from Town Planner Keith Brynes. Apparently proper bonding was not done.

3e. Discussion of 2014 Plan of Conservation and Development – Walter Grant said that the meeting is held on the first Monday of the month and they have a \$10,000 budget. They interviewed a UConn professor to conduct the update, but made no decision on hiring. The Conservation Commission's action items from the 2004 Plan were discussed. Chairman Simm proposed a Wequetequock Historic Conservation Zone to protect this area which once had 144+ condo units proposed. The map of collected views was distributed by Ben Baldwin. Rick Newton noted the Coastal Area Management reviews include influence on coastal viewsheds as criteria. Rick Newton suggested that the POCD include financing. Chairman Simm noted that the Town once contributed \$100,000 per year to an acquisition fund and that in 1989 a transfer tax of 2% to be used for open space acquisition was proposed by what is now the Land Conservation Council of Connecticut. The effort was unsuccessful and it was noted that Nantucket has a 2% transfer tax while Block Island also has one. The protection of water resources was discussed. Annual treeplanting was also proposed.

3f. Discussion of a "Right to Farm" regulation – No language was received. It was noted that it had been given to the PZC, that farming should be permitted everywhere, and perhaps this is an item for the 2014 POCD.

3g. Discussion of municipal care of trees – It was noted that the two-storm panel had suggested State funding to municipalities for roadside tree care, but that there are no specifics yet. Chairman Simm said that the Conservation Commission had planted 15 trees on Moss Street, jumpstarting treeplanting along

that street, 3 saltwater-resistant maples at the Valenti property on the north side of East Main Street at the Mystic River (removing State-planted Russian olive). Several were also planted further east on East Main Street: a copper beech at the doctor's office near the Civil War Memorial, another at Chucky's Mobil and one that was later removed for a ramp at the Post Office.

3h. Any Other Old Business – None

4. Open Space Parcels

4a. Discussion of parcels for preservation. Chairman Simm said that the Stonington Land Trust continues to negotiate with the Davis family regarding their unencumbered parcels on Greenhaven Road and Osbrook Point. Chairman Simm and Cole were to walk the open space at the Crescent Club development proposed by Cherenzia & Associates between Meadow Road, Crestwood Lane and Sunset Avenue, south of Mary Hall Road and east of Greenhaven Roads.

5. New Business

5a. Correspondence:

- Notice from the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association that we are members through 5/31/2013.
- Eastern Connecticut Conservation District's *Outlook* newsletter for Summer 2012.
- Avalonia Land Conservancy's *Avalonia Trails* newsletter for Fall 2012

5b. Ben Baldwin mentioned the upcoming Town meeting on 10/9/2012 regarding removal of the reverter clause from the Indian and Colonial Research Center's (ICRC) deed. The property was once the 5th District Voting Hall before being given by the town.

5c. Ben Baldwin noted the Economic Development Commission is holding a meeting about the expansion of uses permitted in the M-1 zone on 9/27/2012.

5d. Ben Baldwin said the Board of Selectmen is reviving the town's K-12 School Building Committee and considering expanding West Vine Street School to accommodate students from West Broad Street School. He believes that the mostly open 44-acre WVSS property should be dedicated as open space. Others were concerned with the possible closing of WBSS. MOTION: Ben Baldwin is to write a letter to the K-12 Building Committee to express opinions on the preservation of Stonington's school buildings and land.

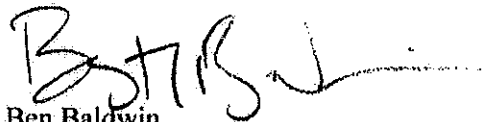
5e. Rick Newton wrote an op-ed piece that was printed in the Mystic River Press on 9/19/2012 regarding bonding for athletic fields and while not bonding for open space acquisition. Ben Baldwin forwarded a copy to the Commission via email along with Rick's letter to the Board of Selectmen requesting that open space acquisition be added to the field and road bond.

6. Review of Minutes

MOTION : Approve the minutes for August 27, 2012 as distributed (Bell, Cole). Passed unanimously.

7. Adjournment - Motion to adjourn (Bell). Approved at 9:56 p.m.

Minutes submitted by



Ben Baldwin

Secretary, Town of Stonington Conservation Commission