

Town of Stonington Conservation Commission
Minutes of a Regular Meeting held on March 25, 2013
Police Station Community Meeting Room, 173 South Broad Street, Pawcatuck, CT

1. Call to order: Called to order by Chairman Stanton Simm at 7:05 p.m. Commission members also in attendance were Stuart Cole, Ben Baldwin, Jim Friedlander and Walter Grant. Members Tim Bell, Sheila Lyons, 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

3b. Mystic River Dam Committee – Not discussed

3c. Discussion of Stonington's 200 Greatest Roadside Trees – Not discussed

3d. Discussion of Open Space and Conservation Easement Transfers for Ongoing and Past Subdivisions – Copps Brook Property language needs investigation; Town-held conservation easements discussed.

3e. Discussion of 2014 Plan of Conservation and Development – Chairman Simm went through the Conservation Commission's submission to the POCD Subcommittee on 3/18/2013. Walter Grant said that Glenn Chalder of Planimetrics had been hired as a facilitator. Recharge areas within commercial developments are reportedly a new focus, per POCD Subcommittee member John Prue.

3f. Discussion of Updates to 2007 Open Space Plan – Chairman Simm went through the Conservation Commission's minutes of 2/25/2013 and changes were suggested for the Parcel Rating Sheet. A brief write up on a property's acquisition will be written by the following: Crowley I & II by Ben Baldwin, Hoffman Evergreen Preserve by Rick Newton (once the transfer takes place), Fusina conservation easement by Stuart Cole, and Thomas Miner Preserve by Stanton Simm.

3g. Discussion of a "Right to Farm" regulation – Not discussed

3h. Discussion of municipal care of trees – Funds are or should be requested

3i. Discussion of public access restrictions at Town-owned open space located at 23 Bittersweet Way, Assessor's Map 124, Block 2, Lot 15E – First Selectman Haberek was going to speak with the adjoining owner. It was noted that the property and its access should be marked. Carlene Donnarummo suggested that the Spellman Park sewer interceptor road should be maintained to allow access between the park and the neighborhoods to the east. It has been flooded. **MOTION:** The Conservation Commission should write to the WPCA and request that the road be maintained for pedestrians (Cole, Grant). Passed unanimously.

3j. Discussion of draft updates to the Town's Subdivision Regulations. – Waiting for Town Planner at next meeting.

3k. Discussion of proposed CT Community Conservation and Redevelopment Act (Proposed House Bill #6312) – Walter Grant said that the bill was referred to the Joint Committee on Environment and appears to have died there. This bill suggested a real estate conveyance tax for the purpose of funding local environmental, public health and economic development project. Some felt that sewers would get all of any funds. Ben Baldwin said that Rick Newton had sent him an article how towns in Massachusetts had voted to establish a tax surcharge for preserving open space and we should investigate funding mechanisms.

3l. Any Other Old Business

4. Open Space Parcels

4a. Discussion of parcels for preservation – 1) Ben Baldwin distributed an updated open space list on 3/18/2013 and said that Rick Newton had helped him with further additions. 2) Stuart Cole asked about the new assessment for the 34-acre Coogan Farm and wondered how the sale price had been set. Ben Baldwin said that the Town's online GIS does not yet reflect the Coogan subdivision. 3) The Schools' plan for a new bus depot on the Jerry Browne Road land received from State DOT with the restriction that it be used for transportation purposes. This plan had been proposed as an intermodal transportation center and is used by Valenti Auto Mall at no cost. 4) Conservation Commission members have questions about the 15,000-sq. ft. retail building rumored to be sited at Sea Research Foundation's overflow parking lot on Maritime Drive. The Conservation Commission expects to review any proposed zone change from M-1.

5. New Business

5a. Stonington Land Trust – Chairman Simm said that Bob Dewire, Niall Doherty and others are conducting a wildlife study at SLT's Thomas Miner Preserve. They are looking for a herpetologist and have found a high percentage of 'listed' species and a near the site where a New England Cottontail rabbit was found. MOTION: We authorize Bob Dewire to represent the Conservation Commission in regard to the study at the Thomas Miner Preserve and adjacent lands (Friedlander, Cole). Passed unanimously

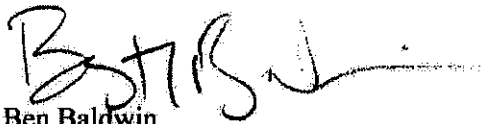
5b. Allocation of Funds – Chairman Simm said that we have been close to being late in the past and want to allocate these funds before the end of the year. MOTION: \$1,700 to Naturescapes for the Spellman Park and Barn Island field trips, \$700 for buses for those field trips, \$75 for CACIWCC, and \$150 for programs at DPNC (Cole, Friedlander). Passed unanimously. Chairman Simm recused himself from the following item and stepped down. Stuart Cole took over as chairman of the meeting. MOTION: Funds are allocated as follows: \$250 to Avalonia Land Conservancy and \$500 to Stonington Land Trust (Friedlander, Grant). Ben Baldwin why the number was larger for one land trust and it was explained that the SLT is town-centered while ALC is active in several towns. Passed unanimously. Stanton Simm did not vote and returned to serve as Chairman. It was noted that the Conservation Commission will spend and encumber more over the remaining months of the fiscal year.

7. Review of minutes

The minutes of 2/25/2013 were approved as amended (Cole, Friedlander). Passed unanimously.
The minutes of 1/28/2013 were approved as distributed (Cole, Friedlander). Passed unanimously.
The minutes of 3/18/2013 were approved as distributed (Cole, Friedlander). Passed unanimously.

8. Adjournment – Motion to adjourn (Cole). Approved at 10:07 pm.

Minutes submitted by



Ben Baldwin
Secretary, Town of Stonington Conservation Commission

Approved on 5/20/2013