

Town of Stonington Conservation Commission
Minutes of a Regular Meeting held on October 28, 2013
Police Station Community Meeting Room, 173 South Broad Street, Pawcatuck, CT

1. Call to order: Called to order by Chairman Stanton Simm at 7:00 p.m. Commission members also in attendance were Walter Grant, Tim Bell, and Sheila Lyons. Stuart Cole and Ben Baldwin arrived at 7:05 p.m. Members Jim Friedlander and Bob Dewire were absent. Town Planner Keith Brynes, First Selectman Ed Haberek and members of the public were present.

2. Review of Town Developments and Proposals

2a. Discussion of proposal to develop Town owned 14 acre "Moss Park" open space property off Field St. and adjacent Town owned 10 acre property off S. Broad St. as elderly housing. Assessor's Map 14, Block 2, Lot 1 & 9A, S. Broad St., Pawcatuck. First Selectman Ed Haberek distributed copies of "Getting Where You Want to Go: Connecting and Preserving Our Communities With Better Transportation" (available at <http://www.conservationeducation.org/transportation-guide.html>) to members of the Commission. Haberek described the affordable senior housing proposal for Moss Park and adjacent Town land behind the Pawcatuck post office, referring to a posted concept layout showing 100 units. He said that Moss Park does not appear suitable, but that a change of use will still have to be obtained from the court to change it from recreation to open space. The idea of transferring the two parcels to a land trust was discussed. Haberek said the Campbell Grain building (27 West Broad Street) appears to be more suitable location, but the site will have additional costs. The site behind the Mystic Middle School was also referenced – the developer did not go forward due to the opposition being expressed. Several residents asked questions about the process, plans and the paper streets. Haberek said that "we will keep it as it is" in reference to Moss Park. Ben Baldwin mentioned that the Recreation Commission manages the park, at least occasionally. Chairman Simm said that the Commission will work with the First Selectman to permanently preserve the properties through transfer to a land trust. The discussion ended at 7:50 pm and many members of the audience departed.

2b. Jameson Way Property Management Co. – Preliminary discussion regarding potential Special Use Permit application for a commercial greenhouse / processing of agricultural products in the DB-5 Zone. Property located at Jameson Ct., Pawcatuck (off Palmer St.). Assessor's Map 4, Block 6, Lots 1, 1A, 1B, 1C, 1D, 1E, 1F, 13, 13A, 13B, 13C, 13D & 13E. Put on hold by request of the applicant. To be reviewed next month.

2c. PZ1313RA Town of Stonington PZC - Regulation Amendment application to permit the keeping of hens as an accessory to Residential Uses. Town Planner Brynes distributed a memo dated 9/27/2013 and outlined the changes staff have suggested to the earlier application. MOTION: To support the changes outlined in the memo with the exception that the minimum lot size should be reduced to 10,000 sq. ft. from 20,000 sq. ft. (Stuart Cole, Tim Bell). Passed with Baldwin, Cole, Simm, Bell and Lyons in favor and Grant against.

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

3. Old Business

3a. Mystic River Dam Committee – Tim Bell said that the recently announced removal proposal for the Hyde Pond Dam on Whitford Brook at a cost of \$551,250 from DOI FWS was surprising and welcome. Baldwin said that the White Rock dam on the Pawcatuck River, apparently that of Griswold Textile at the end of Alice Court, is also proposed for removal.

3b. Discussion of Stonington's 200 Greatest Roadside Trees – Ben Baldwin said that there were no additions to the online tree list at

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1jnh9nPveVQ-FpG_4dwI7lhHQUD8aZCFJ1DC4oSx0ZMg/viewform.

3c. Discussion of Open Space and Conservation Easement Transfers for Ongoing and Past Subdivisions. Rick Newton said that the Mystic Hill subdivision set aside (18.05-acre 162-2-9) and one on Wolf Neck Road (1.53-acre 140-2-1C) had transferred to Avalonia.

3d. Discussion of 2014 Plan of Conservation and Development – Walter Grant said that input on the latest draft of the open space section should be submitted ASAP and that the Agriculture section will also be reviewed soon.

3e. Discussion of Updates to 2007 Open Space Plan – Chairman Simm said that the Commission should devote much of the next meeting to the update.

3f. Installing signs on Town open space properties. Ben Baldwin said he had put up a second marker at the Vargas Pond property access point and had decided against posting one at Town land on Crestwood

Lane and Meadow Road (7-1-44E) due to the lack of suitable trees near the entry. He mentioned seeing an ATV in use and a hunting tree stand on the property. He gave one to departing DPW Director Joe Bragaw for 23 Bittersweet Way.

3g. Any Other Old Business. Rick Newton asked about a Commission annual report. Ben Baldwin said he would work on one for the prior year.

4. Open Space Parcels

4a. Discussion of parcels for preservation – Chairman Simm said that Donald Walsh had contacted him regarding his Anguilla Brook Road property and that he would like to sell it or a portion along the brook containing the ponds. Till Bell said that he would be meeting with Mr. Hartunian about his Palmer Neck Road property. Ben Baldwin said that the September 2013 DEEP “Open Space Report to the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee and State Bond Commission” described the State’s acquisition of a 23.94-acre easement over the 34-acre property and that the 23.94 acres might be the portion of the property to describe as open space with the balance containing buildings, etc. Baldwin mentioned that the Town’s Capital Improvement Program meeting will be held at 10 a.m. on 10/31/2013 in Town Hall and that land acquisition qualifies. **MOTION:** That Sheila Lyons represent the Commission at the CIP meeting in regard to obtaining funding toward an open space acquisition, particularly of the Walsh property (Stuart Cole, Tim Bell). Passed unanimously.

5. New Business

5a. State open space grants. The new round has a due date of 1/31/2014 for applications.

5b. Electromagnetic Radiation. Sheila Lyons attended the presentation titled “Cell Phones & WiFi – Are Children, Fetuses and Fertility at Risk?” on 6/28/2013 at the LaGrua Center. She said that this appears to be something we, as the Conservation Commission, should be concerned about and she will investigate further.

5c. New England Cottontails. Chairman Simm said that a population hot spot has been found in the Stonington uplands, especially at the Nichols property east of Stonington Land Trust’s Miner Preserve. This might bring additional funding toward study, habitat acquisition and restoration. Rick Newton said that Avalonia had recently undertaken habitat restoration work at the Callahan Preserve.

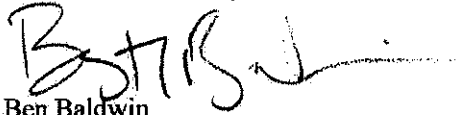
5d. Hurricane Sandy Coastal Resiliency Competitive Grant Program. Rick Newton mentioned this \$100 million DOI program, The Nature Conservancy’s “Coastal Resilience 2.0” website (<http://coastalresilience.org/>) and that Stonington needs to plan for climate change.

6. Review of minutes

The minutes of 9/23/2013 were approved as submitted (Tim Bell, Walter Grant). Passed unanimously.

7. Adjournment – Motion to adjourn (Cole). Made at 9:12 p.m.

Minutes submitted by



Ben Baldwin

Secretary, Town of Stonington Conservation Commission

Approved on January 27, 2014.