

City of Torrington
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
October 13, 2009

1. Call to Order: 6:09pm in City Hall, Land Use Office, 59 Field Street, Torrington, CT.
2. Roll Call & Announcements:
 - a. Roll Call: Kevin Fitzgerald, Dave Waugh, Maurette Meyer, Chris Altman, Brian Reardon, Linda Beyus and Butch Klug. Also attending, staff person, Kim Barbieri.
 - b. Vote on Secretary: M. Meyer made a motion to nominate Linda Beyus for Secretary. Motion 2nd by D. Waugh. Motion passed unanimously. The Chairman shared a historical anecdote at this time.
Officers are: Chairman: Kevin Fitzgerald
Vice-Chair: Chris Altman
Treasurer: Maurette Meyer
Secretary: Linda Beyus
3. Minutes for Approval:
 - a. 9/8/09: C. Altman made a Motion to APPROVE the minutes. 2nd by L. Beyus. Vote unanimous with one abstention – D. Waugh
4. Treasurer's Report:
 - a. Report: Conservation Commission ending balance: \$1439.94
Open Space Account: \$44,966.79
5. Old Business:
 - a. Plan of Conservation Update – K. Barbieri reviewed the upcoming hearings and approvals needed to ratify the PoCD and encouraged all members to attend the last PZC hearing.
 - b. *'Attack of the Aliens'* meeting 9/30/09 recap – M. Meyer, B. Reardon and D. Waugh attended and discussed the meeting. The speakers were excellent and the information was easy to understand and use. All felt the attendance was poor at 25, but the speakers had been happy with the turnout. No municipal people attended from any of the 15 towns invited except Jerry Rollett from Torrington. K. Fitzgerald felt we shouldn't stop with meeting and has penned a letter to be sent out to local stores encouraging them to post information in their employees work areas about the various pests so employees could identify them if the beetles come in on pallets or other packing material.
6. New Business:
 - a. Commission Goals for 2010 – Discussion on actions proposed in PoCD, what do we want to work on? Each member went over their top three (sometimes more) issues they would like to address in the upcoming year(s). Some items elicited further discussion and will be incorporated in []'s from the Plan of Conservation & Development.
 - i. Chris Altman
 - 1) Encourage use of new energy in town and the use of low impact development techniques in planning and development.
 - 2) Additional clean up days
 - 3) Trail connections like Buttrick Road [There are many 'easy' trail connections that we could work on. Chris commented on how much positive buzz has been created over the new greenway]

- 4) Open Space Funding [Everyone agreed a new way of raising funds is greatly needed. Discussion centered on ways we could raise funds – by fees or other means. Unfortunately any areas that could have been used by raising fees the State have already increased those areas for their own use and are no longer options.]
- ii. Brian Reardon
 - 1) Communication with public about local resources [Discussion followed about having a regular column in the ‘Good News’ about Torrington or ads on Channel 5 to promote Torrington’s outdoor resources. Brian offered help creating a legend for the paper]
 - 2) 5.6 Protect additional farmland
 - 3) Expand local farm market and work with downtown development to find a permanent and expanded location. [Kim mentioned speaking with some of the people currently participating in the farmer’s market. They have specific needs for a location. Apparently no one from the Downtown Development Corp. has connected with them yet. We can see if we can facilitate a meeting.]
 - iii. Maurette Meyer
 - 1) Improve communications with public about resources and information – flyers, maps, signage etc. [Most people don’t know what Torrington already has to offer and we should do what we can to promote our outdoor areas as a place people want to visit.]
 - 2) Preservation of hills and ridgelines [Many members agreed that the ‘something special’ about Torrington was how the city was nestled into the valley with great views all around the town – and felt those ridgelines and views should be preserved.]
 - 3) Expand and provide access for Machuga Park – (Leoni property) [Kim did a quick summary for new members about Machuga Park and the Leoni property. We have an outstanding grant for \$42,900 from DEP to purchase the Leoni property – we needed \$100k plus our matching funds. We are still ~\$60k short. More discussion followed that we should try again to see if we can raise the money and/or lower the asking price. The property is still for sale and in an estate. Kim will bring more info to the next meeting.]
 - iv. Linda Beyus
 - 1) 5.5 & 5.6 Farmland and hayfield protection
 - 2) Inclusion of green space in built environments – pockets parks, neighborhood parks etc.
 - 3) Open space funding
 - 4) Regulatory changes to decrease minimum parking to try and minimize the ‘giant’ parking lot – include LID design measures and more substantial plantings [Kim reviewed the grant to write new Low Impact Design regulations that she and Jason Vincent of *Planimetrics* are beginning to work on. They should help address some of those concerns.]
 - 5) Regulation of light pollution [Most members didn’t know of these regulations and thought they were a great idea and that we could do better.]
 - v. Dave Waugh
 - 1) 4.4 Stream restoration
 - 2) Preservation of scenic views
 - 3) Preservation of ridgelines
 - vi. Butch Klug
 - 1) 5.5 & 5.6 haylot and farmland preservation
 - 2) 5.3 Provide greenway connections

- 3) 6.2 Preserve scenic views
- vii. Kevin Fitzgerald
 - 1) Open Space Funding
 - 2) 5.7 & 5.3 Greenway connections & expansion of Machuga
 - 3) Preserve unprotected open space i.e. Water Co. etc.
- viii. Kim Barbieri
 - 1) Greenways – linking areas [Kim reviewed a grant that we are still in the running for that would allow us to have professional assistance in creating a non-profit group to move the development of the greenways and trails in town and perhaps look at the trails system as a regional draw up and down the Naugatuck Valley. We have many opportunities here that just need to have some support from the public to move.]
 - 2) Naugatuck River restoration [Kim reviewed the ongoing dialog with the Army Corps regarding the flood project area and possible improvements to the plan that are pending Corps approval.]
 - 3) Open Space funding

K. Fitzgerald appreciated everyone’s input and is going to take the time between now and next meeting to boil these ideas down into a series of goals. K. Barbieri will assist and prepare next month’s agenda to reflect those goals.

7. Staff Report:

- a. Open Discussion; K. Fitzgerald discussed his idea to invite different people within the community or City staff to come and talk to the Commission about what they do and how we can support one another. Some ideas for speakers were: the mayor, Jerry Rollett to discuss street lights, leaf/yard waste removal and recycling, Brett Simmons, Ray Drew and Bill Baxter.
- b. K. Barbieri discussed the videos that were sent as public service announcement about ‘not moving firewood’ to help stop the spread of Asian Longhorn Beetles and Emerald Ash Borers. Members were interested in purchasing time on Channel 5 to promote this important message.
- c. L. Beyus reviewed an NPR report on toxins in the environment and the effects it has on other organisms.
- d. An idea was discussed, since we aren’t having formal meetings in the summer to plan field trips for members to see certain facilities or places first hand. Some ideas were trips to see potential greenway sites, a visit to the WPCA or visits to key parcels needing protection.

8. Adjournment: Meeting was adjourned at 7:50 pm

Kimberly H. Barbieri, CZ&WEO
Staff to Conservation Commission

cc: P/Z, IWC, City Clerk, Mayor’s Office