

**Conservation Commission Meeting  
Town Hall Meeting Room  
September 4, 2008**

**Minutes**

**Attendance:**

**Members present:** William Rutherford, Eric Brower, Nancy Dickinson, Renee Seblatnigg, Gary Silberberg, Gulietta Fargion, and Suzanne Graham

**Staff:** Denise Savageau

**Audience present:** Liz Campbell, Carol Zarilli, John Conte, and Ginny Gwynn

**Commission Discussion Session – 7:00 p.m.**

**Called to order** at 7:10 by Chairman Rutherford

- 1) **Seating of Alternates:** Graham was seated for Brash, Fargion was seated for Henrey and Silberberg was seated for Baker.
- 2) **Review and approval of minutes for the July 10, 2008 meeting:** A motion was made by Dickinson and seconded by Silberberg to approve the minutes with the following correction. Change rockery to rookery on page under IBA. The motion carried unanimously.
- 3) **Review of Correspondence**
  - a) Invasive Plant Symposium Flyer – was distributed. Savageau indicated the Eltz would be attending.
  - b) Connecticut Wildlife July/August 2008 – distributed
  - c) The Habitat – CACIWC newsletter Spring 2008 was distributed
- 4) **Chairman's Report:**
  - a) Rutherford reported on meeting Peter Tesei called with the 3 land use chairman, the Flood and Erosion Control Board chairman, and Amy Siebert, DPW Commission. Tesei called the meeting to review the roles of each agency relating to flooding and storm water management. Tesei will be following up with a meeting of the agency staff.
- 5) **Staff Report**
  - a) Great Captain's Island Vegetative Survey – the town was awarded \$5K from Audubon CT to do the survey at GCI. Savageau is bringing this through the town approval process for acceptance of the grant. Eltz is coordinating hiring someone to the grant.
  - b) GCTV- Savageau indicated that she had met with a graphic designed to help design the opening montage for the show.

- c) Great Park Pursuit/No Child Left Inside – Savageau reviewed concept and indicated she has some folks interested in running this program
- d) Tree Ordinance – Savageau presented the Tree Ordinance that was being proposed for town properties. This mostly relates to work of the Tree Warden but also includes a section defining the role of Conservation Commission in managing town open space areas. Savageau explained that this was being presented to the RTM and would most likely undergo changes from a legal point of view. After discussion, the Commission passed a resolution to support the concepts presented in the tree ordinance made by Silberberg and seconded by Graham. The resolution passed unanimously.

6) New Business

- a) Tree Removal at the Bruce Museum – Consensus to move the tree removal on the agenda to accommodate the public attending. Savageau presented a report prepared for the Bruce Museum by Bartlett Tree Research Laboratories dated June 12 and 13, 2007, to the Commission. She indicated that much of the report risk assessment was based on potential expansion of the museum and not on existing conditions. She suggested this was premature and that only the trees and property as is should be considered at the point. Members of the public expressed their concerns with the removal. Campbell, Zarilli, and Conte all spoke against the removal. After discussion the following resolution was made by Dickinson and seconded by Brower.

*Whereas, mature oak trees are a valuable asset to our community and should be protected and preserved whenever possible; and*

*Whereas, the Conservation Commission has considered the removal of the posted trees at Bruce Park and has reviewed the Tree Structural Evaluation Report dated June 12 and 13<sup>th</sup> 2007 prepared for the Bruce Museum and determined the following:*

1. *The oak trees in Bruce Park, posted by the Town Tree Warden for potential removal, are majestic trees and worthy of protection*
2. *The risk assessment report prepared for the Bruce Museum is based on proposed expansion plans and even recommends removing trees rated in good condition*
3. *It is premature to remove trees based a plan that has not yet been submitted for approval by the Town*
4. *Nine of the ten trees posted had not previously been recognized by the Tree Warden as hazardous, had not been slated for removal, and have not yet been assessed by the Tree Warden*
5. *The location of the nine trees on parkland does not create any significant threat to existing buildings or roadways*
6. *With proper pruning and arboricultural practices the trees should be able to be saved and deemed non-hazardous; and*

*Whereas, even healthy trees can pose a liability but their value, both environmentally and economically, outweigh such risks;*

*Therefore, be it resolved that the Conservation Commission recommends the following:*

- 1. That the trees at Bruce Park be preserved unless the Tree Warden determines that, on a tree specific basis, a tree poses a significant risk and that arboricultural practices including pruning and cabling will not change this risk.*
- 2. Any expansion plans by the Bruce Museum should be designed to work with the existing landscape including these significant oaks and that such plans should limit impact to the trees both during and post construction.*

The motion passed unanimously.

7) Old Business

- a) POCD review – the Commission continued its work session on the review of the POCD for the remainder of the evening. At the end of the session, Savageau indicated she would collate all the comments asap and forward them to members for any final comments. Timeframe is to have final comments to P&Z by the week of September 15. Rutherford will review the final draft with Savageau.

Meeting adjourned 10:30 p.m.

Submitted by,

Denise Savageau