

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

Minutes

Attendance:

Members present: William Rutherford, Lisette Henrey, Renee Seblatnigg, Sue Baker, Nancy Dickinson, Alexander Brash, Gary Silberberg, Giulietta Fargion, and Suzanne Graham

Staff: Denise Savageau and Aleksandra Moch

Audience present: Mary Lou Lange, President of Greenwich Residence for Appropriate Land Use; Michele Albonizio, Fogarty Cohen Selby & Nemiroff, LLC; Bruce Cohen, Fogarty Cohen Selby & Nemiroff, LLC; Anthony D'Andrea, Rocco V. D'Andrea, Inc.; Pat Young, Stanwich Headmistress; Rob Brunetti, Pecora Brothers; William Kenny, William Kenny Associates; Kyle Slocum, The SLAM Collaborative; Doug Moffitt; Nancy Chapin

Commission Discussion Session – 7:00 p.m.

Called to order at 7:17 p.m. by Rutherford

- 1) **Seating of Alternates:** Silberberg was seated for Brower.
- 2) **Review and approval of draft minutes of November 6, 2008 monthly meeting:** A motion was made by Dickinson and seconded by Silberberg to accept the minutes as presented. The motion was carried.
- 3) **Review of Correspondence: none**
- 4) **Chairman's Report**
 - a) Appointments – upcoming in 2009: Rutherford reviewed status of appointments. Several Conservation Commission Members who have applied for reappointment have already met with the First Selectman. Further interviews will most likely take place after the holidays.
 - b) POCD: The original draft is being rewritten. Savageau and Rutherford are continuing work on environmental chapters of the plan.
- 5) **New Business**
 - a) FY 2010 Budget and Operational Plan: Savageau presented the new budget focusing on cuts and the need for future savings. 172 Account was reviewed first. A motion was made by Silberberg and seconded by Dickinson to accept the budget as presented. Motion carried. The combined account 174 includes shared expenses of IWWA, P&Z and

Conservation Commission. A motion was made by Baker and seconded by Silberberg to accept the proposed budget for this account as presented. The motion was carried.

b) Stanwich School – Site plan – 8:00 p.m.

At the request of Rutherford, Savageau initiated the discussion with review of the previous staff comments. Cohen and the applicant team presented a new site plan that was revised to address the issues and concerns raised by the Staff.

Lange shared her concerns as an opponent of the plan. She cited concerns regarding the intensity of the proposed development, storm water management, and site disturbance.

After a discussion, a motion was made by Brash and seconded by Henrey to support the proposed project with the following resolution:

The Conservation Commission recognizes the effort that the Stanwich School has put into the development of a comprehensive site plan that concentrates development on the western side of the property where the school is presently operating. The plan proposes leaving a good portion of the eastern property in a wooded state and providing habitat enhancement in this area and moves the leaching fields out of the conservation area.

The Commission is pleased with the location of the proposed conservation area along the eastern boundary of the property. It provides a contiguous area that functions as a buffer to neighbors and maintains a green corridor on the property. As currently proposed, a Conservation Area of 4.83 acres (15%) will be protected in fee simple and an additional 4.49 acres will be protected through conservation easements totaling 9.33 acres or 29% of the total site. The Commission would like, however, to see the easement area extended to include the vernal pool.

The applicant proposes to cleanup the hazardous material found on the wood roads and this should be completed. The applicant also proposes to apply for LEED certification and the Commission applauds that effort.

Therefore, the Conservation Commission recommends that the Stanwich School plans, as currently proposed, be approved with the following recommendations:

- 1. To permanently protect the vernal pool wetland system, the Commission recommends expanding the conservation easement area to include approximately a 35' buffer west of the vernal pool.*
- 2. The proposed landscape design has significantly increased the number of plants being used and has taken previous recommendations into consideration. Deer browse can be a problem, particularly for some evergreen species, and this should be planned for in the final selection of plant materials and planting.*
- 3. That the Stanwich School be commended for working with the Board of Selectmen's Environmental Action Task Force and its Artificial Turf subcommittee and that it be encouraged to continue looking at alternative products to rubber infill AT fields.*
- 4. Final storm water design will be reviewed by Conservation staff working in coordination with DPW engineering and IWWA.*

The following comments from our 1-07-08 memo are also still applicable:

- 1. The Commission accepts the recommendations of HPI's Archaeology report and as outlined in a memo to the Commission from Nancy Dickinson dated January 3, 2008. These recommendations should be included in any final approval for work on this site.*
- 2. To provide for better air quality and reduce the carbon impact of the school, the school should continue to encourage bus ridership with all its students and work to expand this program with the Greenwich Public School system.*
- 3. No lighting of ball fields, tennis courts, etc is proposed nor should this be allowed.*
- 4. The applicant should be encouraged to continue to work towards LEED certification for the site. As part of this effort, additional low impact development practices should be explored including the use of pervious parking.*

The motion carried unanimously.

6) Staff and Committee Report

- a) Deer management program: Savageau and Spaman were approached by the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station regarding a new deer radio-coloring program for a study on deer and roadways and an additional study on the role of Japanese barberry in tick populations. The program may be funded by one of the USDA grants. CAES is considering the Babcock property be inclusion in the studies. Savageau will keep the Commission informed.
- b) Osprey Poles at Greenwich Point: Savageau reported that several of the boat owners have complained about ospreys roosting on masts and dropping fish entrails etc on their boats when feeding. The group had requested that the existing osprey platforms around Greenwich Point be removed or relocated. The osprey platforms were installed by Audubon Greenwich with cooperation of the CT DEP. After some discussion, it was the consensus of the Commission to support Audubon in maintaining the ospreys' platforms and looking for alternative solutions to the problem.
- c) EATF Artificial Turf Subcommittee – update: Henrey reported that several presentations were presented at the last committee meeting. There is an array of alternative designs; unfortunately the environmental sensitivity of each option came with higher maintenance and cost.

Savageau stated that the Junior League is planning to install a playground in Bruce Park and has all of its permits from town agencies. The proposed synthetic infill has raised a red-flag with some of the potential private funding organizations. Savageau stated, for the record, that the neither the Conservation Commission nor the EATF Artificial Turf Subcommittee has made recommendations to any of the private groups. Rutherford and Savageau both indicated that Commission was waiting for the EATF to finish its work before considering a policy on artificial turf. At this time the EATF is looking at alternatives to rubber infill.

d) Other:

Silberberg reported that the Coastal Resources Committee is recommending that the First Selectman establish a Coastal Management Advisory Council. Silberberg has submitted his nomination. Silberberg also reported that the newly appointed Harbor Master, Jonathan Asch, had requested that any future docks and piers be reviewed and accepted by him and the Shellfish Committee. Silberberg recommended to Asch that the Conservation Commission and P&Z have their inputs as well. Baker also has made this recommendation. Discussion ensued. Consensus by Commission to send a memo to First Selectman Tesei recommending that the Conservation Commission be represented on any new Coastal Management committee. Rutherford directed Savageau to draft memo for his signature.

A motion was made by Baker and seconded by Brash to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.

Meeting was adjourned at 10:10 p.m.

Submitted by,

Aleksandra Moch