

**Conservation Commission Meeting
Town Hall Meeting Room
May 7, 2009**

Minutes

Attendance:

Members present: William Rutherford, Lisette Henrey, Sue Baker, Eric Brower, Nancy Chapin, and Gary Silberberg

Staff: Denise Savageau and Aleksandra Moch

Audience present: n/a

Commission Discussion Session – 7:00 p.m.

Called to order at 7:06 p.m. by Rutherford

- 1) **Seating of Alternates:** Silberberg was seated for Brash and Chapin was seated for Dickinson.
- 2) **Review and approval of minutes** of April 2, 2009 monthly meeting: A motion was made by Baker and seconded by Chapin to accept the minutes as presented. The motion carried.
- 3) **Review of Correspondence:**
 - a) New issue of The Habitat was handed to the Commission members. The issue contains an article on Mile-a-Minute.
 - b) Savageau also reported that a workshop will be offered in Katonah by the Cornell University Department of Natural Resources and Cornell Cooperative Extension of Westchester & Dutchess Counties. The workshop will cover Integrated Vegetation Management (IVM) and principles of bio-control of invasive plants such as Mile-a-Minute, as well as more information about the availability of local land-management resources.

A biological control program targeting Mile-a-Minute weed was initiated by the Forest Service in 1996, with field surveys and laboratory host specificity tests conducted in China and subsequent testing continuing under quarantine conditions in Delaware. A stem-boring weevil, *Rhynoncomimus latipes* Korotyaev, was determined to be host-specific to Mile-a-Minute weed. UCONN is looking to use the insect in CT for research purposes. The university has contacted the Town and Greenwich Audubon in search for a proper site.

4) Chairman's Report

- a) Mission/goal setting: Rutherford indicated that the Commission needs to focus on this process over the next couple of months prior to the new budget. This is particularly important given the increasing interest in environmental issues and the Commission's role expanding beyond land use. Rutherford and Savageau met with the First Selectman and discussed this. Tesei indicated it was important to document this expanding role.
- b) Appointments: Rutherford and Savageau also discussed appointments with Tesei. At this time the Commission has one opening for a regular member. There is one vacant position to fill. Rutherford had a couple of suggestions as to what qualities the Commission should look for in the new candidate. He let Tesei know that there should be no rush in finding a new member. The Commission understands that it takes time to find a professional and dedicated candidate.
- c) Budget: Rutherford reported that a salary freeze was approved for the department heads who are the MC employees – the Conservation Director is the only Conservation Commission staff in that category.
- d) Rutherford also reported on a new evaluation method proposed by HR for the MC members. He will be attending a training program on May 12 and asked who else would be interested. Chapin and Henrey volunteered to attend the HR training and help with the evaluation.

Rutherford leaves and Brower chairs the meeting (8:06 p.m.)

5) Staff Report

- a) Watershed Management
 - i) Byram River flood gauge: The installation of the gauge will be supervised by the DPW.
 - ii) Byram Watershed Coalition: was not discussed
- b) Wildlife Management
 - i) Deer Management:
 - (1) Savageau reported that the CT Agriculture Experiment Station Study was still considering Babcock Preserve for a study of correlation between the density of Japanese Barberry (*Barberry thunbergii*) and tick population.
 - (2) Savageau gave a brief update on the Fairfield County Deer Management Alliance. The Alliance was established to facilitate communication and joint efforts of municipalities in deer management. The group meets bi-monthly, currently focusing on the impact of deer population on human health, especially lime disease. Savageau is co-chairing with Pat Sesto, Environmental Director for Wilton.
 - ii) Critical Habitat/Conservation Areas
 - (1) Fishway:
 - (a) Open house schedule: The final open house will be held May 16, 2009 from 2 p.m. – 4 p.m. Conservation Commission Staff and volunteers

provided tours with brief history of the site. The first two open house events turned out to be a great success. Over two hundred visitors took the opportunity to view the site.

(b) Underwater camera: The new camera will soon be connected to the internet and allow the viewing of the fish run.

(2) IBAs – no report

(3) Horseshoe crabs

Monitoring: Savageau reported that the count is again being coordinated statewide by researchers at Sacred Heart University. Discussion ensued about the protocol, which was developed in Chesapeake Bay, and the reality of Connecticut beaches including Greenwich Point. Savageau indicated that this was discussed at length at a meeting with DEP and the researchers. It was agreed to use the protocol by all but that additional monitoring at different tides would take place outside of the research timeframes. Savageau and Eltz conducted a baseline count in late April with no hc observed at that time. Eltz is coordinating the volunteer monitoring program again. A startup meeting was held April 5.

Tagging: Part of the monitoring program also includes tagging horseshoe crabs. Volunteers will also be working on this. The tags will help to collect data on specie disperse and migration patterns. Signs will be posted at appropriate sites requesting folks to report tags.

c) Town Properties

i) Historical Landscape Report – Public meeting – May 13- 7 p.m.: At the meeting Martha Lyon, Landscape Architecture, LLC will present her final report.

ii) Parks – friends group: Savageau reported that there a movement to create a friends group for Greenwich’s parks with a focus on passive recreation. Discussion ensued about the pros and cons of friends group.

d) Energy Management Team: Savageau reported that the team is working on establishing a base line. As part of the stimulus package the Town will be receiving \$627,500 from the Energy Efficiency Block Grant. The EMT, chaired by Savageau will be working with the Selectman’s office to decide how to use the funds and prepare the proposal application. This is due at the end of June and Savageau anticipates that this will consume much of her time in June.

e) Artificial Turf Workshop: Baker and Henrey will represent the Commission. The first meeting is scheduled for May 19th. Savageau is co-chairing the Committee with Caroline Baisley, the Director of Health.

f) Education/Outreach

- i) Go Green Greenwich: The campaign, designed to educate and motivate residents, will launch its May topic on chemicals in our environment. The first event will take place on May 7th on organic landscaping followed by a May 12th event with a panel discussion of experts from the scientific, medical, academic and legislative communities on “Protect our Children from the Health Hazards of Common Chemicals”. Both events are free and open to the public. Savageau, Baker and Chapin are working on the theme for June/July which is water conservation.
- ii) Earth Day Month: The month was very busy with interesting events that attracted a huge number of attendees.
- iii) GCTV: on hold

6) Committee/Liaison Reports

- a) **Parks and Recreation Board:** Baker reported that the number of passengers on the ferry to Great Captains Island was being cut to 42 passengers per new Coast Guard regulations. She also reported that the Parks Board discussed the contamination in the water off of the Cos Cob Power Plant site. Savageau indicated that DPW was preparing information for P&Z to address concerns raised in their denial letter.

Chapin, who replaced Brash as a new liaison for the Parks and Recreation Board stated that Spaman was interested in the establishment of Greenwich Park Alliance that could serve as an advocate the passive park system.

- b) **Land Acquisition:** Brower stated that the negotiations over the Water Company Land have been terminated. He is hopeful the dialogue will open up again when the economy turns around.
- c) **Greenwich Recycling Advisory Board (GRAB):** Dickinson forwarded a written summary of the meeting.
 - i) The final one-day collection of sneakers took place at the Greenwich High School on April 25.
 - ii) Hazardous Waste Day is scheduled for Saturday, May 9 at the Greenwich High School, from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m.
 - iii) Westport RTM passed an ordinance banning most plastic bags from their town. The ordinance was passed on September 2, 2008 and went into effect on March 19, 2009.
 - iv) On May 14 Silberberg will present ideas on how to reduce the number of unwanted telephone books delivered around town.
- d) **Coastal Resources Advisory Committee:** was not discussed.

- e) Other: Henrey announced the beach cleanup for Calf Island Conservancy on Sunday, May 10th. The boat taking volunteers to Calf Island will leave at 9:00 a.m.

7) Old Business

- a) Cos Cob Power Plant – (see Parks and Rec report)
- b) Shemin's Nursery: no updates

8) New Business:

- a) Savageau reminded members about Greenwich Awesome Tree Contest. This year trees will be judged in category of best climbing tree, favorite shade tree, best wildlife tree, favorite park or school tree and the fattest tree. Applications are now available.
- b) Brower reported that the Lyon House was recently added to the National Register of Historic Places and a ceremony took place on May 6. Brower, Savageau, and Dickinson attended the ceremony.

- 9) A motion was made by Baker and seconded by Silberberg to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

Submitted by,

Aleksandra Moch