

**TOWN OF GREENWICH
Conservation Commission Meeting
Town Hall Meeting Room
October 1, 2009**

Minutes

Attendance:

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

Staff: Denise Savageau and Aleksandra Moch

Audience present: Barry Montgomery, 32 Field Point Road; Tony Johnson, Greenwich Housing Authority; Jan Thalheim; Derek Dilai, Weston & Sampson; Chris Wester, Weston & Sampson; George Yankowich, Greenwich Housing Authority; Michele Albonizio, Fogarty Cohen Selby & Nemiroff; Winston Robinson, Parks and Recreation Board.

Commission Discussion Session – 7:00 p.m.

Called to order at 7:05 p.m. by Rutherford

- 1) **Seating of Alternates:** Silberberg was seated for Brash and Chapin was seated for Franco.
- 2) **Review and approval of draft minutes of September 3, 2009 monthly meeting:** A motion was made by Baker and seconded by Silberberg to accept the minutes with the following corrections: page 1 item 5a change “Green to Greener” and page 2 item 7a-2 should be read as “deer fencing be removed”. The motion carried unanimously.
- 3) **Review of Correspondence:**
 - a) Savageau reported that the Residence for Appropriate Development, Inc; (RAD, Inc.) issued a letter to Lionshare Farm requesting more information about the facility housing non-domestic animals that has been established at 404 Taconic Road in Greenwich. Their concern was about a potential impact of the buildings and wild animals management areas on the surrounding environment, public health, safety and welfare of the neighborhood. Marcella Leone, Director, Zoological Center at Lionshare Farm responded to the letter in writing, stating that the facility is held to the strictest standards that include safety, well being and protection, not only to the public, but also to the personnel and wild animals.

Savageau stated that even though part of the property falls into Greenwich

municipal boundary, the facility housing the animals is located on Stamford's side of the boundary. She will contact City of Stamford officials to make herself familiar with their regulations and safety standards regarding handling of wild animals on private properties. She will report her findings at the next meeting.

4) **Chairman's Report**

- a) POCD subcommittees: Rutherford appointed the following to serve on the Open Space Plan Committee: Rutherford, Brower, Henrey and Chapin. Savageau will serve as staff. The committee will include other representatives such as Greenwich Land Trust, Audubon, Parks and Rec, and P&Z. Rutherford will work on filling out the committee for the next meeting.

A general POCD committee is needed to work to look at all tasks assigned Conservation and work with staff to prioritize the workload. All Commission members are asked to rank the list provided to them. (see Old Business)

5) **Staff Report**

- a) Administrative
 - i) Annual Report: Savageau reported that she is working on the annual report which is due Oct 30.
 - ii) Budget Guidelines: BET is in the process of developing budget guidelines. This year's budget is very tight, due to the decreasing revenues from the interest rates, significant drop in real estate transactions and need for large capital improvements.
- b) Watershed Management
 - i) Byram River - USGS Stream gauge: Savageau announced that the USGS installed a gauge station in the Byram River at Comly Avenue Bridge. Data are being transmitted via satellite directly to USGS and is available for viewing on the web. The data will help to establish a base line and provide for early detection/warning of flood and drought conditions.
- c) Wildlife Management
 - i) Critical Habitat/Conservation Areas
 - (1) Fishway: Savageau stated that \$500.00 grant money received by the Conservation Commission was approved by both the RTM and BET, and it will be used to purchase a computer, which will be hooked to the underwater camera and will provide for a live link to the web. GCTV is helping with the technical applications.

Savageau reported that there is an urgent need to repair the concrete structure of the fishway. The structure is old and bids have been received for repair. Savageau indicated this will be put in as a capital improvement project (CIP) as this needs to be done. Staff will continue to look for

outside funding but the repairs should not be dependent on outside funding.

- (2) Eel Survey: Savageau stated that Eltz performed the survey and prepared a report to document his findings.
- (3) IBAs: Savageau reported that the second vegetative survey of Great Captain's Island was completed by Penny Sharp. A written report is being prepared and will be presented to the Commission when completed later this fall.

d) Town Properties

- i) Open Space RFP: Savageau reported that Spaman is putting together a Request for Proposal to perform an inventory of vegetative cover in three major open space areas owned by the Town. The inventory will help to develop a management plan for those sites. Conservation staff has been involved with this.

Savageau also informed the Commission that the infrared GIS layer is very helpful in interpreting vegetative cover. This tool should be very useful for performing a natural resource inventory and for other land use analysis.

e) Energy

- i) Energy Management Team: Savageau reported that the group continues working on the establishing baselines for the town.
- ii) EECBG - Savageau reported that the Town has received approval to use the EECBG grant of \$627,500 to install photovoltaic system on the top of the roof of Glenville School. Savageau submitted the grant application for the Town and is the contact to the Dept of Energy on the grant.

- f) Artificial Turf Workgroup: Savageau reported that the group met on 9/29. The group decided to have random samples of the carpet and possibly the infill tested. Savageau will work with health department officials on the protocol for the sampling.

g) Education/Outreach

- i) Awesome Tree Contest – Greenwich Tree Conservancy: Savageau reminded folks that October 16 is the deadline for submitting nominations for the Second Annual Greenwich Awesome Tree Contest. Awards will be granted in several categories such as: Best climbing tree, favorite shade tree, best wildlife tree, favorite park or school tree, the fattest tree.

6) **Committee/Liaison Reports**

- a) Parks and Recreation Board: Baker and Chapin reported that the former Deluca's property located in the corner of Palmer Hill Road and Mianus Pond will be re-named as Dumpling Pond Park. The Old Greenwich Civic Center is considered for an expansion. Due to the site limitations, such as presence of wetlands and seasonal flooding any future improvements may be problematic. A committee

was formed to study the feasibility of the site development. Eco-scout project resulted in a restoration of a trail at the Garden Education Center.

8) **New Business**

- a) McKinney Terrace - 71 Vinci Drive and Western Jr. Highway, MI #576 PSP-C #3988 – 8 p.m.

Representatives for the housing authority presented the application to the Commission. Albonizio introduced the project. She spoke about the current condition of the site and the proposed development. Dilai described the proposed drainage system that was designed to mitigate the increase in storm water runoff. Yankowich described the existing vegetated cover and shallow bedrock.

Question and answer period ensued. Savageau presented her staff report and made recommendations to reduce impact of project. Following discussion Brower made a motion to adopt the following resolution. Motion was seconded by Silberberg.

The Conservation Commission has determined that the site plan for an additional 54 units of senior housing at McKinney Terrace will have no significant environmental impact if the following recommendations/provisions are met. The Commission therefore recommends moving the project to final site plan if the following conditions are met:

- (1) The storm water drainage system will serve to detain runoff and also treat first flush. The site location, as it relates to the entire watershed, should be evaluated with the project engineer and all town departments involved ensuring that the opportunity to improve drainage in the area is being handled appropriately. Conservation staff is available to assist with coordination of such a meeting. Additionally, moving the underground storage units away from the top of slope towards the building should be seriously explored.*
- (2) It is strongly recommended that the access road be eliminated from the plans. The amount of disturbance, including removal of vegetation, and the potential problems on steep slopes that could result, is not justified for the 1-2 times per year that access would be needed to clean catch basins. Access from the park/south side of the property to the rear of the existing buildings should be an easy and environmentally friendly alternative. The project should not move forward unless the access road, as presented, is eliminated from the plans.*
- (3) The Town Tree Warden has jurisdiction over all town trees. The applicant should work with Tree Warden to ensure that all trees that are proposed to be saved during construction are adequately protected during*

the process. Conservation staff is available to work with the Tree Warden to ensure that this is included in construction sequencing and E&S controls. It is strongly recommended that a barrier, such as a temporary chain link fence, be used to protect the oak tree that is located east of the elbow of the new building on the eastern side of the property.

(4) The plan includes the addition of a sidewalk on the west side of Western Junior Highway. There is adequate sidewalk on the east side of the road therefore, this sidewalk is not needed. To keep down impervious surface, this should be eliminated from the plans. The proposed site lines improvement should require minimal disturbance to the parcel without the sidewalk. Again, this is within the Tree Wardens jurisdiction and he should be consulted.

(5) Final plans will require a final review by Conservation Commission and/or staff. At that time a final review of erosion and sediment controls and landscaping will be conducted.

The motion was approved unanimously.

6) Committee/Liaison Reports (continued)

- b) Land Acquisition: no report
- c) GRAB: Dickinson stated that the next meeting will take place on October 21, 2009.
 - i) Telephone directory resolution – Savageau reported that any other comments should be submitted asap as she will be submitting the resolution to the law dept for comments.
- d) Coastal Resources Advisory Committee: Silberberg reported that several meetings were conducted on discussing better and more efficient ways to dredge.
- e) Go Greener Greenwich (G3):
 - i) Eco-Fair: The September 13 event was a great success. The only complaint received from the public was the entrance fee. The fee was collected to mainly cover the cost of the band. The Committee is looking at an event Earth Day next year. Conservation Commission had its own booth with water testing. The goal was to demonstrate that the difference between bottled water and tap water was not noticeable for most of the public. Many people took the pledge to limit use of bottled water.
 - ii) Monthly themes: September was a transportation month, while October and November are all about energy. December will promote going green with the holidays.
- f) Other
 - i) Baker reported that she and Chapin has represented the Commission at the RTM Land Use Committee for the \$500 grant.

- ii) Baker also reported on the Long Island Sound License Plate fund going into the general fund. Atty. General Blumenthal has determined this would not be legal and funds are being restored to their proper place.
 - iii) Fairfield County/East Coast Greenway Bicycle & Pedestrian Summit is scheduled for October 22, 2009 at UCONN in Stamford.
 - iv) Baker made an observation that there are many new curbs being added to the Town's roads. The curbs not only create obstacles for bike riders, but they also have a negative impact on storm water management by adding more water to the catch basins.
 - v) Thalheim attended the meeting to seek Commission's advice on his solar energy project. He is in process of completing his new home, and he would like to use the solar system for water heating. The system; however, has some difficulties to pass building inspections. Savageau will work with the property owner to resolve the issue.
- 7) Old Business
- a) POCD
 - i) Implementation priorities: Baker will Chair the committee. Dickinson and Chapin will put the priority list together using the ranking provided by the Commission members.
 - ii) Open Space Plan: see Chairman's report

A motion was made by Silberberg and seconded by Rutherford to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.

Meeting was adjourned at 10:35 p.m.

Submitted by,

Aleksandra Moch