



CONSERVATION COMMISSION

MINUTES

Regular Meeting

January 11, 2023

Chairman Nick Webb called the January 11, 2023 on-line Regular Meeting of the Conservation Commission of the Town of Clinton order at 6:33 P.M.

Members present: Chairman Nick Webb, Secretary Mary Jo Phelps, Catherine Zamecnik, Bertram Schmitz, Lawrence Ouellette, and, Mark Giaconia

Member absent: Student Member Tobias Adler

Also present: Town Planner Abby Piersall (Planner Piersall) and Clerk Sherry Lee Hynes (Clerk Hynes)

Visitor(s):

Maureen Wellman, 23 Waterside Lane, Clinton Connecticut, a resident and a member of the Historic District Commission (HDC). She read in part the Minutes of the Planning and Zoning Commission's (PZC) recent denial (January 9, 2023) of an application to re-zone 39 Waterside Lane from R-20 to R-10. She asked the Commission for a letter to support the HDC's position.

The Commission discussed her request. Ouellette noted that the property is in a historically significant area. He and Planner Piersall pointed out that a letter from the Commission would not be acted on now as the application was denied. Planner Piersall explained the appeal process and Ouellette explained the court process for an appeal. Planner Piersall suggested that the Commission could comment on the historical importance of the area and recommend review of village district opportunities as listed in the Town Plan of Conservation and Development. She also noted that a position letter could sent if a new application is submitted for this property.

Ouellette **MOVED** that the Conservation Commission send a letter to the Planning and Zoning Commission notifying them that if there is ever a point in time where a zoning change on Waterside Lane from R-20 to R-10 is put before the Planning and Zoning that the Conservation Commission would request the opportunity to submit its position on the issue before there is a decision. Schmitz seconded the motion. Discussion: none. Voting in favor:

Webb, Phelps, Zamecnik, Ouellette, and, Giaconia. Opposed: none. Abstentions: none. The motion was **carried**, 6-0-0.

Webb will compose the letter.

**Referral:** PZC 22-20: Eagle River Subdivision, 161 West Main Street, Frederick & Linda Bauer (Re-submission of subdivision application). There being no changes to the project as previous submitted, Chairman Webb, advised Clerk Hynes to re-submit the recommendation from the previous application for the present application. Town Planner Piersall advised that the PZC public hearing was continued to March due to the need to go to the Inland Wetlands Commission for a review per the Zoning regulations. She noted that on the original application there was indication that there were tidal wetlands. It has since been determined that there are also inland wetlands on the site.

Zamecnik asked that the letter indicate that the area for public access should be just along the river, i.e., an easement, to create a blueway/greenway link along the river between abutting properties.

Town Planner Piersall advised that a letter from Redwing Foundation was submitted to the PZC and there is no plan for public access or stewardship. Ouellette questioned the status of the Redwing Foundation. Zamecnik advised that that group has mostly protected land sites that are not open to the public. Webb noted that this Commission indicated in their recommendation on the previous activity that it was supporting the land transfer to the Redwing Foundation as long as there was an easement for public use along the river. Ouellette felt that the easement area could be in the 10% open space required for the creation of a subdivision.

Ouellette **MOVED** to send a letter to the PZC in support of the project with the following conditions:

1. 10% of the site should be an easement along the river; and
2. If the open space is given to Redwing, then Redwing should submit a stewardship plan with proof of adequate funding for same.

Phelps seconded the motion. Discussion: there was a discussion on stewardship of the property. Discussion: none. Voting in favor: Webb, Phelps, Zamecnik, Ouellette, and, Giaconia. Opposed: none. Abstentions: none. The motion was **carried**, 6-0-0.

Webb will compose the letter.

**Minutes:** December 8, Regular Meeting.

Zamecnik advised that she is not a member of the Sustainability Committee.

Schmitz **MOVED** to accept and approve with the correction above, the Minutes of the December 8, 2022 Regular Meeting. Phelps seconded the motion. Discussion: none. Voting in favor: Webb, Phelps, Zamecnik, Schmitz and Giaconia. Opposed: none. Abstention: Ouellette. The motion was **carried**, 5-0-1.

### Commission Workshops:

- Pollinator Pathway Project. No action.
- Dark Skies Project. Zamecnik is still gathering information and will be working with Phelps on a presentation. Webb advised that he believes the newer commercial sites are taking into consideration the Dark Skies initiative as to proposed lighting. The focus now should be switched to municipal and residential sites.
- Residential Food Composting. Webb has spoken with Schweitzer Waste Removal, Clinton, Connecticut as they are a major collector of refuse within the Town. Planner Piersall advised that there is an application to the DEEP from the Town. Webb will contact Town Manager Karl Kilduff to ask for a copy of the application and to advise him that Schweitzer Waste Removal is interested in the program.
- Japanese Knotweed. No action.
- Land Acquisition Procedures. Webb will circulate a power point presentation for review for the next regular meeting.
- Amendments to By-laws. Clerk Hynes was asked to resend the draft to all.
- Open Space Parcel - 32-36 Carter Hill Road. No action was taken.

**Bills/Correspondence.** The Connecticut River Costal District has submitted a statement of services to the Town Council with a copy to the Commission. The suggested annual fee is based on the per capita of the Town. No action was taken.

### Old/New Business

- Possible Open Space Parcel: 23 Acres on Killingworth Turnpike near the power lines is on the market. Giaconia has walked the site. This site abuts the Jesse Buell Forest and Connecticut Light and Power property. The Indian River is on a portion of the site. There is a swamp, a mountain and ledge on site. The view from atop the site is exceptional. An access would be needed along the power lines due to the topography of the site. Ouellette, also on the Board of Directors of the Clinton Land Conservation Trust (CLCT), thought the area might be of interest to the CLCT and perhaps there could be a joint effort to acquire the property.
- Operating Budget FY 22/23.
  - Zamecnik **MOVED** to renew the Commission Membership to the Connecticut Association of Wetland Scientists (CAWS). Schmitz seconded the motion. Discussion: none. Voting in Favor: Webb, Phelps, Zamecnik, Schmitz, Ouellette, and, Giaconia. Opposed: none. Abstentions: none. The motion was **carried**, 6-0-0.

- Japanese Knotweed. Webb anticipated that there will be costs for educational materials.
- Proposed Budget FY 23/24. Webb will distribute the proposal he submitted to Finance Director Sue Cunningham and Town Manager Kilduff. Zamecnik inquired about a line item under Capital Improvement. Planner Piersall indicated it is for the State-mandated ten-year update to the Town Plan of Conservation and Development. This Commission will have input on the proposed update.
- Member Educational Opportunities. Notice of opportunities were distributed prior to the meeting. Clerk Hynes noted that there is a save-the-date for the annual meeting of CAWS in March.
- Sustainable CT. Certification. Planner Piersall met with Eric Bergmann. They are working together to gather the additional information required for the certification and to address the comments in the Certification Committee's letter to the Town on the reason for the disapproval of the Town's Application for Certification.
- Membership. Webb has reached out to the Republican Town Committee to recommend candidates to fill the vacancy(s) on the Commission.
- Library – Public Use of Infrared Camera – develop public information. Webb will be using the camera to take photographs for a public information handout/presentation.
- Referral to Planning and Zoning Commission: CON 22-1: Eagle Landing Re-subdivision, 161 West Main Street, Bauer – Withdrawn. A new application, see above, has been submitted.
- State Grant Award for a Joint Regional Coastal Resiliency Plan. Planner Piersall is involved with the grant to generate a plan for Saybrook, Westbrook and Clinton. There will be an over-all policy with recommendations for each town. The plan will help position the town o pply for future grants.
- GIS. Phelps inquired if there is any way to determine the percentage of open space in Clinton. Planner Piersall is looking into ways to update the GIS system at the Town level. At this time, such a calculation wqould require manual review. Ouellette advised that the CLCT owns almost 10% of the open space within the Town.

**Additions to Next Regular Meeting Agenda:** Wednesday: February 8, 2023

- Coastal Resiliency Grant.

There being no further business, Zamecnik **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting. Ouellette seconded the motion. Discussion: none. Voting in Favor: Webb, Phelps, Zamecnik, Schmitz, Ouellette, and, Giaconia. Opposed: none. Abstentions: none. The motion was **carried**, 6-0-0. The meeting was **adjourned** at 8:04 P.M. to the February 8, 2023 Regular Meeting.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Sherry Lee Hynes*  
Sherry Lee Hynes, Clerk

Conservation Commission  
Minutes Regular Meeting  
January 11, 2023

Posted: Town Clerk  
Website