

**Town of Wethersfield Conservation Commission
Minutes of the March 12, 2014 Meeting**

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Co-Chairman Robert Pulford called the meeting to order at 7:13 PM in the Town Hall Lower Level Meeting Room, which was attended by Commissioners Rick Doran, David Herold, Bill Knapp, Ralph Moyer, Linda Neilson and Rebecca Zalznock. Also in attendance was Town Council Liaison Donna Hemmann, Kathy Bagley, Director of the Parks and Recreation Department, and Town resident Jim Woodworth.

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Minutes for February 12, 2014 were reviewed and on a Motion by R. Doran, Seconded by B. Knapp, and approved unanimously.

II. KATHY BAGLEY REPORT

- a. Ms. Bagley reported the 4.6 acre undeveloped parcel located on Cumberland Avenue continues to be owned by Northeast Utilities. This parcel abuts the formerly owned Northeast Utilities facility (accessed from Wolcott Hill Road) that is currently being renovated as a CREC magnet school.
- b. The Town web site GIS system will reportedly be updated with new informational layers within the next few months.
- c. The Engineering Department agreed to process the Conservation Commission Open Space Inventory into their GIS database. Ms. Bagley will contact Commission Chairman R. Baldoni to retrieve the copies of the inventory inspection sheets previously prepared by Commission members.

III. OLD BUSINESS

Town resident Jim Woodworth provided updated information of the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service farmland preservation program. This program is designed to designate local important farmland soils and provide funding for acquisition of available farmland. In order to pre-qualify for this program, the Town needs to (1) complete an Inventory of farmland; (2) request NRCS soil testing of the identified parcels; (3) establish an Agricultural Commission by Town Ordinance; (4) prepare a Cooperative Letter of Agreement with the Agricultural Commission; and (5) provide a matching fund mechanism if farmland becomes available for sale.

Based on information provided by Councilwoman Hemmann and Ms. Bagley, the Commission discussed the actions necessary to begin this process, including the possibility of incorporating the duties of an Agricultural Commission into the duties of the existing Conservation Commission. The Commission agreed to include farmland parcels in the Great Meadows in the Open Space Inventory; and to rank such parcels using the Criteria for the Acquisition of Open Space that was approved by Town Council in 2004. R. Doran volunteered to research the State definition, requirements and duties of an Agricultural Commission, and the existing ordinances of other Towns; and will present his findings at the April meeting.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Bagley reported that the Town received grants for the development of a "Heritage Trail" self-guided walking tour. Currently in the planning stage, the walk way will include signage and informational kiosks placed throughout Old Wethersfield. Because the Heritage Way walk way name conflicts with the existing "Heritage Way Trail", the Commission is asked to consider renaming the multi-use recreational trail. R. Zalznock agreed to research and provide names of bike / recreational trails used in other towns at the April meeting for consideration by the Commission.

Co-Chairman Pulford adjourned the meeting at 8:33 PM, so moved by R. Moyer and seconded by R. Duran.

Respectfully submitted by

Rebecca M. Zalznock