

Town of Wethersfield Conservation Commission
Minutes of the November 12, 2014 Meeting
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Co-Chairman Robert Pulford called the meeting to order at 7:20 PM in the Town Hall Conference Room, which was attended by Commissioners Rick Doran, Dave Herold, Ralph Moyer, and Rebecca Zaliznock. Also in attendance was Kathy Bagley, Director of the Parks and Recreation Department; and Donna Hemmann of the Town Council.

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Minutes for September 10, 2014 were approved unanimously under a Motion by R. Moyer, Seconded by R. Doran.

II. K. BAGLEY REPORT

1. Ms. Bagley distributed copies of the most recent (but undated) version of the "Planning for Agriculture: A Guide for Connecticut Municipalities" to each Commissioner. This document provides guidelines for municipalities in preserving agricultural lands within their towns.
2. Ms. Bagley will scan and electronically distribute to the Commissioners a copy of the "Proposed Criteria for the Acquisition of Open Space", which was approved by the Town Council on October 4, 2004.

III. R. DORAN REPORT (FARMLAND PRESERVATION PROGRAM UPDATE)

The Commission continued to work towards the completion of Town eligibility requirements for, and participation in, the State farmland preservation program. Mr. Doran responded to various issues raised by Town Manager Jeff Bridges at the Commission's September 2014 meeting. The following issues were addressed and discussed:

1. Mr. Doran reviewed the parcels currently listed in the Conservation Commission Open Space Inventory, and evaluated 19 additional parcels located along Elm Street to add to the Inventory. Contrary to the 3 upland parcels Mr. Bridges considered eligible for the farmland preservation program, Mr. Doran applied the Commission's rating criteria for desirability, and identified 9 parcels that rated "desirable" or "very desirable".
2. According to the previous presentation by Mr. Bridges to the Commission, State law requires that any creation of an Agricultural Commission must be separate from the Conservation Commission. Mr. Doran will research the process used by the Town of Rocky Hill to form their Agriculture Commission and verify if the requirement is a State law or a Town Ordinance issue. Mr. Doran also stated that if the Town was approached by a farmer wishing to sell agricultural rights, then the Town would be required to form an Agricultural Commission in order to be eligible for State funding assistance.
3. Upon a request by R. Moyer, Mr. Doran will prepare a brief narrative report for the Commission discussing his rankings of the more vulnerable properties than those already listed in our Inventory.

Co-Chairman Pulford raised the issue of the one member vacancy on the Conservation Commission and the need for Commissioners to actively recruit any potential member willing to volunteer. Mr. Pulford ended the meeting at 8:00 PM under a motion by R. Doran, Seconded by D. Herold.

Respectfully submitted by

Rebecca M. Zaliznock, Secretary