



TOWN OF THOMPSON Conservation Commission

MINUTES—REGULAR MEETING
MONDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2021 7:00 PM
HYBRID MEETING VIA ZOOM PLATFORM

1) Meeting Called to Order by Vice Chairman Norma O’Leary at 7:00 PM.

Present: Norma O’Leary, Carol Smith, Judy Rondeau, and Bernie Davis (via ZOOM)

Staff: Dan Malo (Conservation Agent) Guests: Amy St. Onge (First Selectman)

2) Approval of Minutes

Members received the September 20, 2021 meeting minutes via email:

Judy Rondeau moved and Carol Smith seconded the motion to accept the minutes of the September 20, 2021 meeting as presented. All in favor. The motion carried.

3) Financial Matters

Members discussed the budget; 24.2% of budget for the current FY has been spent; Money remains available for training opportunities which may arise.

Judy Rondeau moved and Norma O’Leary seconded the motion to approve the budget. All in favor. The motion carried.

4) Correspondence

a. Members received via email:

- Minutes: Conservation Commission, September 20, 2021
- 2022 Conservation Commission Meeting Dates

b. Incoming Mail:

- ECCD Outlook Newsletter, Summer 2021 Edition
- Connecticut Wildlife Magazine, September/October Edition
- Invitation to CT Audubon 2021 Annual Meeting of Members

c. Outgoing Mail: None sent

d. Incoming Mail via email:

- CT Association of Conservation and Inland Wetlands Commissions (CACIWC)
– 44th Annual Meeting and Environmental (virtual) Conference Invitation
- Inquiry from Wes Howard, Director of Sustainability for Marianapolis Prep

e. Outgoing Mail via email:

- Inquiry email to past recipients of bluebird nesting boxes

Members discussed the 2022 Meeting Calendar; Juneteenth is now a federally recognized holiday, observed on Monday, June 20, 2022, however the date is not yet recognized as a statewide holiday. A special meeting will be called if the date becomes recognized, for the following Tuesday, June 21, 2022. **The Commission confirmed the calendar dates for 2022.**

Members discussed the Connecticut Association of Conservation and Inland Wetlands Commission invitation to their 44th Annual (virtual) Meeting & Environmental Conference, to be held Saturday, November 6, 2021. The date conflicts with a potential Inland Wetlands Commission sitewalk, but members suggested that Dan Malo try to attend. The cost is \$30.

5) Officer and Committee Reports

- a. New Requests: None.
- b. Old Requests: None.
- c. Updates:

Dan Malo discussed his Conservation Report: it appears that publication of the Habitat Newsletter by Connecticut Association of Conservation and Inland Wetlands Commissions (CACIWC) is on hiatus. He has reached out to the publisher regarding the newsletter's status.

Dan Malo asked the Commission priority projects for volunteers. Stewards of the French River have inquired about projects along the French River; and Wes Howard, Director of Sustainability for Marianapolis Prep has asked if students could help with cleanups and other environmental initiatives. It was suggested that the Stewards of the French River could help maintain/cleanup the North Grosvenordale Pond trails. It was suggested that a Marianapolis volunteer project should incorporate an educational element, such as 'water quality monitoring' or 'rain gardens', in coordination with their science department. Dan Malo will reach out to both parties.

Dan Malo will contact CE property owners to conduct a review of the easements and will present the draft outreach letter to the Commission prior to the November meeting.

The Commission discussed the Statewide Open Space Goals. Dan Malo stated that Thompson has surpassed the municipal, federal, non-profit, and land trust goal of 11% protected open space soundly, but the state protected land percentage lags well behind at 3.2% where the goal should meet 10%, to combine towards a total goal of 21% protected land within Thompson. The approximate 7% state protected land shortfall amounts to approximately 2,000 acres; Dan Malo suggested that this shortfall may give the Town leverage to induce the state to protect more land through state acquisition, or may help our ranking towards future grant applications.

The Commission discussed the types and characteristics of land that should be conserved. Dan Malo discussed avenues of funding for potential acquisitions and presented a list of grants that the Commission or Town should consider seeking in the future. Some have rolling deadlines, but the majority have deadlines that are too near or just recently passed. Dan Malo believes that the Commission should analyze the grants and identify projects to apply confidently in 2022. Dan Malo discussed the Open Space Fund, generated by fees collected in lieu of open space which currently amounts to \$104,454.87. The fund has been used in the past to acquire land, pay for appraisal fees, or conduct surveys. Dan Malo believed that its use should be considered to conserve property, in addition to local fundraising efforts which could supplement that fund.

Dan Malo has not yet had opportunity to discuss Thompson's MS4 compliance with the Town Planner, Wetlands Agent, First Selectman, and Public Works Director. Amy St. Onge suggested that Dan Malo reach out to Kelley Genest with the Town Highway Department.

Judy Rondeau previously suggested that the Town implement a Healthy Water Plan for the Five Mile River. Dan Malo stated that a Healthy Water Plan is more easily achieved with this watershed than the Quinebaug or French Rivers, which cross state borders. The plan for the Five Mile River might only involve cooperation between 3 municipalities. An implementation plan could be modeled after the Upper Natchaug Healthy Water Plan, conducted by the Eastern Connecticut Conservation District, DEEP, and EPA. Judy Rondeau spoke to the Upper Natchaug Plan, how some aspects are incomplete, and the timeframe it took to conduct the project.

Human Resources has identified a candidate for the recording secretary position. The candidate already works with other town commissions in a similar capacity. HR would like to schedule an interview. Bernie Davis suggested that Dan Malo and Amy St. Onge could conduct the interview.

The former Conservation Commission webpage host and domain name is scheduled to auto-renew in November. Dan Malo will coordinate with Amy St. Onge to cancel this service.

Dan Malo has reached out to Jim Larkin with NECCOG, to have a conversation about ArcGIS and discuss how the Town has worked with the COG to create maps in the past.

The Conservation Office phone issue is fixed. Previously, calls were routed to the Town Planner.

6) Old Business

a. Update on previous Conservation reviews: No update.

b. Blue Bird houses: Follow-up with past recipients:

Emails have been sent to approximately 50 past recipients of the bluebird nesting boxes and replies are starting to come in. Unfortunately, no new installation photographs have been provided. Four residents have been added to a future distribution list.

c. Fabyan Property with "Honor Roll" marker:

The Commission discussed some of the peculiarities of the Fabyan Honor Roll Marker, considering especially its proximity to the roadway, lack of parking, and private property. Members suggested that relocation of the marker might be the surest way to ensure access.

d. Neglected Cemeteries Grant: runs through 2022. Preparation to renew should begin soon.

7) New Business—None received

8) Citizens' Comments—None received

9) Members Forum—No new matters

10) Announcements

A Veterans Day service will take place at Oscar Swanson Park on November 11, 2021.

11) Future Meeting

Will be held Monday, November 15, 2021, at 7 PM as a hybrid meeting in-person and on ZOOM.

12) Adjournment

After completion of the agenda, Vice-Chair Norma O'Leary adjourned the meeting at 8:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted, Dan Malo



To see/hear the entire meeting via ZOOM, click here to copy and paste into your search bar:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84451234567?pwd=Zm9pZ3C6TFVgVUxZPKGlbVmhVOjYyZWZlUzRlcXhXaUonmtC>

Access Passcode: @^7.8jWD