



TOWN OF THOMPSON

Conservation
Commission

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Special Meeting

Wednesday, June 22, 2022

Merrill Seney Room at the THOMPSON TOWN HALL Hybrid meeting via ZOOM:

1. Call to Order
Meeting Called to Order by Norma O'Leary at 7:02 PM.
Present: Dave Clark, Peter Cummings, Norma O'Leary, Carol Smith, Sue Wheeler
Staff: Dan Malo (Conservation Agent), Heather Gauthier (Recording Secretary)
Guests: Valerie Clark, Amy St. Onge (First Selectman)
2. Approval of Minutes – April 18, 2022
Carol Smith moved, and Peter Cummings seconded the motion to accept the minutes from the April 18th meeting. The motion approved 4-0-1.
3. Financial Matters (to be mailed to members)
 - Overbudget of 113.9% due to the conservation officer's salary.
 - Carol Smith asked Amy St. Onge what happens when the budget goes over. Amy responded that the town does balance transfers, so the budget equals out. The Board of Finance is already aware of budget.
4. Correspondence
 - a. Members received via email:
 - April 18, 2022 meeting minutes
 - May 23, 2022 email regarding possible Burial Ground at North Grosvenordale Pond
 - b. Incoming Mail: None, expecting the Wildlife Magazine.
 - c. Outgoing Mail: None
 - d. Incoming Mail via email:
 - 2023 Budget Book from Finance Director
 - Information on GIS Certification from University of Rhode Island
 - Neglected Cemeteries Grant reminder announcement from OPM
 - e. Outgoing Mail via email: None
5. Conservation Officer Report (Dan Malo)
 - **Blain Footbridge at West Thompson Dam:** Blain footbridge has been reinstalled and ribbon cutting for the new footbridge was on April 22, 2022 at 3:00 PM. Several dignitaries will be in attendance. This completes a loop through the park.
 - **Wildlife Crossing Signs:** There are some wildlife crossing signs that were purchased years ago. Two were given to Public Works for placement on Ravenelle Road. There are eight signs remaining. Suggestions to place the signs in East Thompson, on Quaddick Road, Buckley Hill Road, and where accidents have happened due to wildlife.
 - **Please Welcome New Members:** Susan Wheeler and Dave Clark have joined the commission, terms will expire in March 2023. Chairman, Phil Thomas, has stepped down. The move leaves one open position and an election of officers should happen next meeting.
 - **Inspection of West Thompson Cemetery:** The cemetery has an active proposal for a cannabis dispensary. The cemetery should be monitored for litter (nips, single-use containers). The cemetery is looking well and is maintained well. The sexton for the West Thompson Cemetery is Tim Bates.
 - **Cabinet:** The price for the cabinet is \$150-\$200 more than what was estimated. Previously the commission has encumbered \$200 for the purchase of the cabinet. Marla Butts, Wetlands, is asking the commission to commit from our unused supply line. **Dave Clark moved, and Peter**

Cummings seconded the motion to approve the additional \$200 for the cost of the cabinet. The motion approved 5-0-0.

- **BSA Dumping Update:** Couple months back there was dumping at the BSA property. Efforts have been made to reach the BSA council without success.
- **Office Organization:** Ongoing project. Supplies for have been consolidated.
- **Office Phones:** Phones are routing to Town Clerk's office. This is being investigated.
- **Burial site near the Knights of Columbus:** There is unmarked fieldstones laid in a particular order that suggests a Burial ground near the North Grosvenordale Pond. The area should be sectioned off with a placard to identify the site and prevent development of the area.
- **Robbins/O'Leary Preserve WLT:** The Preserve has a few issues that should be brought to the Windham Land Trust. The gate at Fred David Road is broke, the bridge on the property has some breakage due to rust, and there appears to be ATV use on the land.
- **PA-490 Open Space:** Under consideration with the town. They needed to readopt language for the current ordinance. The current lot size of 3 acres or more. The ordinance is in the final stages with the Board of Selectmen.
- **Grant Ideas:** Commission members received a document with grant opportunities.
- **Review of Conservation Easement Discrepancies:** Discrepancies have been found between list of easements and the AppGeo program. The easement list will be given to the Assessor who will investigate each easement to verify and add to the AppGeo program.
- **Review of Conservation Easements:** Still ongoing process involving sending letters, Contacts to be made, and making appointments to be set. This process will start with town own properties such as the Tri-State Marker.
- **UConn Clear GIS Training:** UConn Clear is not doing the GIS training due to their outdated website and training program. University of Rhode Island is hosting an informational session regarding their online program. The costs for the fall semester program is about \$1,150. GIS means Geographic Information System; you can match data to the map. GIS mapping is most used to show property and boundary information.
- **2023 Budget Book and 2020-2021 Annual Budget:** Both budgets have been released. The Conservation budget was approved at the current level with increases to the salary lines for the agent and recording secretary.
- **FEMA Floodplain mapping:** Updated flood maps have been released. Some property owners have been appealing the mapping. The new maps will go into effect in 2024. Hopefully a new filter is created in the AppGeo system. AppGeo is useful for the land use personnel to get quick information on the property.
- **Trail Mapping:** Wyndham Land Trust properties have been added to CT Trail Finder at <https://www.cttrailfinder.com/trails>. There are other trail programs which do not interconnect between program platforms.
- **Tree Clearing Complaints:** Complaints about tree clearing are being received but few of them are actionable. There are no town codes aside from Wetland codes regarding tree clearing.
- **Neglected Cemeteries Grant:** OPM reminder that the grant runs for two years from the grant execution period. The current grant for Wilsonville Cemetery will expire November 10, 2022. No announcement for the 2022/2023 grant period. The next cemeteries to be considered for repairs would be Bates Cemetery (in Bonnette Acres), Quaddick Cemetery, Carpenter Cemetery (on Sand Dam Road).
- **Bluebird nesting boxes:** Ongoing project, there is still a waitlist of 18 people who are wanting Bluebird boxes. Still looking for donations of materials or time to produce the boxes.
- **Draft Subdivision Regulation Revisions:** Still an ongoing process. Looks like two issues are still prevalent which are shared driveways vs. private drives and net buildable lot size. Wetlands commission authorized Marla Butts to present her concerns to the Planning and Zoning subcommittee. Members of the subcommittee may seek to have an engineer consult on the road construction standard. The town planner, Tyra Penn-Gesek, hopes to have the revisions finished by October.
- **Juneteenth:** Nationally recognized holiday in June. This may affect meeting dates in future years.
- **Wetlands:** Dan Malo has been assisting Wetlands Agent Marla Butts with wetland activities. Dan submitted my resignation for the Recording Secretary position and hope to be relieved as soon as possible. The commission has vacancies on the commission for one member and two alternates.
- **Additional Items not on the Agents Report**

- **Handbook for Connecticut Conservation Commission** – Copy was provided to commission members. This details the conservation commission and their roles on the commission. There is a short fact sheet from the Land Use Academy at the back of the publication.
 - **(Susan Wheeler) What is our responsibilities?** (Norma O'Leary) Your responsibility is to ask questions, give information that might assist Dan in his job as the conservation agent.
- Events from Ct Audubon Society and the Yale-Myers Forest Summer events were distributed to members.

6. Old Business

- New Members – Norma O'Leary advised that town citizen, Pat Cheever, expressed interest in joining the commission. Welcome to the new members.
- Bluebird Nesting Boxes – Discussed previously in the agent's report.
- Subdivision Regulations – Discussed previously in the agent's report. Marla Butts, Wetland, intends to present to the subcommittee after the holiday.
- Storage Cabinet Appropriation – Discussed previously in the agent's report.
- Fabyan Property with "Honor Roll" marker – Peter Cummings
Peter met with the landowner; he is doing a great job maintaining the marker. He is happy to care for the marker and would like the marker to remain in its current location.

7. New Business: New Business not allowed at a Special Meeting.

8. Citizens' Comments

Valerie Clark, 105 Alm Road

- GIS Discrepancy. Met with the assessor to discuss the GIS map regarding her properties.
- PA-490. There are 740+ properties/500 landowners that the assessors have to reconsider for open space.
- Robbins Preserve. Someone came in with heavy machinery and removed the gate. There are know issues with ATV use on the property.
- Historic gravesite. The Association for Gravestone Studies or the RI Gravestone Group might be able to provide guidance on the burial ground at the Grosvenordale Pond.

Amy St. Onge (First Selectmen)

- Cemeteries. The guys at the highway garage are confused about which cemeteries are cared for by the town and which have volunteers working on the cemetery.

9. Members' Forum

- Dave Clark. I do not think the litter from the cannabis dispensary will be an issue. Litter from the liquor store is far more prevalent. There has not been an issue with this in Massachusetts. Most people will take the items home to consume.
- Norma O'Leary. I had more trees cut at the Porter Cemetery so the town can come in and chip the brush.

10. Announcements

- Hazardous Waste Day at the highway garage is Saturday June 25th from 9am-1pm.

11. Next Meeting is Monday, July 18, 2022, at 7pm (hybrid).

12. Meeting adjourned by Norma O'Leary at 8:27 PM.

View the Zoom Recording

https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/OkRKndFoOxzzwU5B03QDYqZHxzMwpljSS-4adTOeuuH7FW9yC0LuyTOOrEpCFIBs.GgCyb5TlXY_KFowf

Passcode: 51%YL\$gq

Submitted 07/04/2022

Heather J. Gauthier

Recording Secretary

*** These minutes have not yet been approved by the Conservation Commission. Please refer to next month's meeting minutes for approval of and/or amendments to these minutes.*