

Town of Stonington Conservation Commission
Minutes of a Regular Meeting held on April 27, 2015
Police Station Community Meeting Room, 173 South Broad Street, Pawcatuck, CT

1. Call to order: Called to order by Chairman Stanton Simm at 7:07 p.m. Commission members also in attendance were Stuart Cole, Ben Baldwin, Sheila Lyons and Tim Bell. Members Jim Friedlander and Bob Dewire were absent. It was noted that Walter Grant had resigned. Members of the public were present.

2. Review of Town Developments and Proposals

2a. PZ1505SUP & CAM Roland Pampel & Alban Pampel III Trust (Stonington Boathouse, LLC) - Special Use Permit and Coastal Area Management applications for construction of an approximately 6,140 square foot commercial building to be used as a 250-seat event facility. Proposal includes driveway & parking, storm drainage system, well, subsurface sewage system, and site landscaping. Property located between 786 & 804 Stonington Rd., Stonington. Assessors Map 75 Block 2 Lot 3. Zones GC-60 & RC-120. Paul Biscuti of DiCesare-Bentley Engineers presented the application of Robert & Ann Taylor, the applicants, who were present. The building will be on piers at an elevation of 16 ft. and fill will be required for parking lot and septic system. No water access is planned, but it was noted that CAM may request it. There are endangered plants near the water and a 100 ft. buffer is kept from tidal wetlands. The wedding reception use is expected to occur 60 days per year, mainly weekend April through October. It was noted that a future owner might use the building as a restaurant and septic is designed for that use, but no kitchen is planned. The applicants departed at 7:39 pm. Mr. Biscuti addressed the Conservation Commission's concerns regarding drainage and the area along the waterfront which will not be improved, but maintained for ground-nesting birds and rare plants. Ben Baldwin noted that the Nature Conservancy's recent mapping of Marsh Advancement by the 2080s shows this parcel inundated.

2b. Discussion regarding the proposed modification of drainage design for Toll Brothers' Old Mystic Estates Subdivision (PZ0360SD, SUP & GPP Meehan). Discussion is related to Toll Brothers' proposed settlement of their CT Superior Court Appeal against the Planning and Zoning Commission and the proposed dedication of open space. Chairman Stanton Simm described the proposal, approved by the PZC, where Toll Bros. will put in drainage from Whitehall Pond to the Mystic River, dependent upon DEEP approval and other stipulations of the PZC. Sheila Lyons is to write a letter to Town Planner Keith Brynes on behalf of the Conservation Commission stating that in reviewing the PZC application of Toll Bros. Old Mystic Estates subdivision we request that the regulations indicate at what point in the approval process the 15% set-aside is required to be transferred for preservation. Although it is not now an issue for Toll Bros., utilities such as detention basins must be kept out of the open space. How do we implement the requirements so that they are fair across the board? It is noted that 8.1.10 of the subdivision regulation requires a warranty deed transfer before mylars are signed. We are concerned and would like to apply for a regulation amendment for when open space is to be transferred and to exclude utilities such as pumping stations from open space. MOTION: Sheila Lyons is to write a letter to Town Planner Keith Brynes (Stuart Cole, Tim Bell). All in favor except that Sheila Lyons did not vote. MOTION: Sheila Lyons is to also write to the PZC (Stuart Cole, Tim Bell). Passed unanimously.

2c. Any pending applications and new preliminary proposals. No others.

3. Old Business

3a. Mystic River Dam Committee – Ben Baldwin said Hyde Pond is owned by Brand Fire Safety and that a conservation easement was granted to the town and appears to include the Stonington portion of the dam. Connecticut Fund for the Environment (Save the Sound) will remove the dam “to improve safety of the downstream community and enable migratory fish passage.”

3b. Discussion of Stonington's 200 Greatest Roadside Trees – Ben Baldwin has set up an online map of reported trees for Tim Bell to review. The extensive cutting along Flanders Road was noted to be on private lands.

3c. Discussion of Open Space and Conservation Easement Transfers for Ongoing and Past Subdivisions. – Discussed under 2b.

3d. Discussion of 2014 Plan of Conservation and Development. A memo was distributed containing draft minutes for the POCD portion of a Board of Selectman meeting held April 22. Sheila Lyons will represent the Conservation Commission at the PZC hearing on the POCD to be held on April 28.

3e. Discussion of Updates to 2007 Open Space Plan – Not reviewed.

3f. Installing signs on Town open space properties. – Ben Baldwin said there was no further town-owned open space suitable for a marker.

3g. Any Other Old Business. Chairman Simm said two tiny parcels on Latimer Point were offered to the town as open space and he directed the donor to the Latimer Point Association.

4. Open Space Parcels

4a. Discussion of parcels for preservation – Ben Baldwin said that the large swamp adjacent to the McKinley Preserve northeast of Farmholme Road appears to have sold.

5. New Business – None.

5a. Application No. 201407219-MG from the town to DEEP for replacement of a culvert from Bayview Ave to Little Narragansett Bay in the area of the former American Velvet Mill (<http://www.ct.gov/deep/cwp/view.asp?A=2586&Q=563590>).

5b. NESS will take over fieldtrips for elementary school children which have been lead by Bob Dewire of Naturescapes for several decades. Six classes to the pond at Spellman Park and 6 to Barn Island are expected to cost \$3,859 vs. \$1,900 paid in recent years to Naturescapes. The 4 in-class visits would cost extra. Spending in other areas must be reduced if the Conservation Commission is to continue the fieldtrips. Allocations to Stonington Land Trust will be \$100, \$150 to the DPNC, and \$50 to Avalonia Land Conservancy. MOTION: Hire NESS to continue Barn Island and Spellman Park fieldtrips, and if we can raise an additional \$925, also continue in-class programs (Stuart Cole, Sheila Lyons). Passed unanimously.

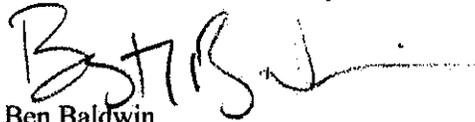
5c. The construction of a bus depot for the town at 40 Extrusion Drive (36-4-2D) owned by Skywall Properties LLC in exchange for continued use of parcel 149-2-1 on Jerry Browne Road was discussed.

6. Review of draft minutes – 3/23/2015

MOTION: Approve the minutes of 3/23/2015 as submitted (Tim Bell, Stuart Cole). Passed unanimously.

7. Adjournment – Motion to adjourn (Ben Baldwin). Made at 10:06 pm.

DRAFT Minutes submitted by



Ben Baldwin

Secretary, Town of Stonington Conservation Commission

Approved at a meeting of the Commission on 6/22/2015.