

Town of Stonington Conservation Commission
Minutes of a Regular Meeting held on November 28, 2016
Police Station Community Meeting Room, 173 South Broad Street, Pawcatuck, CT

1. Call to order: Called to order by Chairman Stanton Simm at 7:10 p.m. Commission members also in attendance were Jim Friedlander, Ben Baldwin, and Stuart Cole. Members Sheila Lyons and Bob Dewire were absent. Members of the public were present.

2. Review of Town Developments and Proposals

2a. PZ1624RA Stone Acres Farm, LLC – *Regulation Amendment application for the creation of an Agricultural Heritage District (AHD), a floating zone intended to preserve Stonington's cultural landscape, ensure continuation of agricultural industry, and provide an alternative to less desirable development of agricultural lands.* Attorney Bill Sweeney of TCORS representing the applicant distributed copies of the regulation and a presentation given to the PZC. He described the AHD. Jane Meiser, a member of the applicant, was present. Sweeney stated a few dozen properties in town might be eligible to use the AHD, but that probably few would go to the trouble of using it. Stuart Schwartzstein, member of the POCD Implementation Committee, spoke as an individual in support of the amendment and submitted a statement. MOTION: The Conservation Commission supports the application and concept and would go further to enable its use within commercial and industrial zones (Stuart Cole, Jim Friedlander). Passed unanimously.

2b. Any pending applications and new preliminary proposals. None.

3. Old Business

3a. Mystic River Dam Committee – Not reviewed.

3b. Discussion of Stonington's 200 Greatest Roadside Trees – A Tree Warden has been appointed.

3c. Discussion of Open Space and Conservation Easement Transfers for Ongoing and Past Subdivisions – Chairman Simm said that he would ask the Town Attorney for next steps regarding the Toll Bros. open space. They had stated that it would be transferred when roads were transferred to the Town, but that appears distant at present.

3d. Discussion of 2015 Plan of Conservation and Development – Ben Baldwin went through The Commission's tasks and their statuses as listed in the POCD Implementation Schedule Template – CC Tasks (Template – all task.xlsx), stating that the POCD wants updates on who is responsible for each task, target completion date and present status:

5.1.12 Preserve water co. land – Chairman Simm stated that such land is difficult for Aquarion to sell without notice. Baldwin suggested tracking Aquarion's apparently dormant Voluntown Road property and Town of Westerly Water Company land as well. The task is considered ongoing, with no end date.

5.1.13 Pumping sta. for RVs – No longer a task.

5.3.3 Prepare a town-wide Natural Resource Inventory – Not started. Chairman Simm said that this is important for the Town, funding needs to be allocated, and a consultant hired to conduct it.

6.1.10 Inventory town-owned Open Space. Ben Baldwin said he distributed a list of the 90 parcels of Town-owned land at the last meeting for the purpose of identifying agricultural land suitable for leasing. While an inventory town-owned Open Space will be part of the overall inventory (Task 6.2.3), every parcel on the distributed list contains open space (About 14 parcels totaling 73.26 acres is Town-owned in fee dedicated open space).

6.2.3 Provide annual review of OS & report on progress on the OS Plan - Ben Baldwin said he is conducting the inventory which is difficult as it requires all open space be tracked, not just dedicated open space. It is about 25% complete, not including earlier inventories it is based on. He intends to have a draft for review by the end of the year or next meeting in January and future years should be simpler as just changes would be tracked. He is having difficulty identifying conservation easements.

6.2.4 Update 2007 Open Space Plan – Ben Baldwin distributed a draft to members on 10/11/2016 incorporating member contributions. Completion is unknown as Baldwin no longer has the ability to conduct or update the mapping he did in 2006. He suggested that staff be

queried as to how the plan might be completed and be useful. If it is to be a simple update, it is about 50% complete, not including the mapping.

6.3.2 Apply for DEEP greenway designation – This low priority item was not discussed.

6.3.3 Include potential for trails to open space rating form - This was completed in 2013.

6.3.4 Continue to hold public forums to educate on open space - This medium priority item was not discussed.

6.3.5 Develop a guide to open space that is publically accessible - Completed by Richard Ward of Recreation (Hike Stonington).

7.1.6 Inventory scenic resources - This low priority item was not discussed. The Conservation Commission has a list of scenic places compiled for an earlier POCD.

7.1.8 Review scenic road ord. for updates & revise - Jim Friedlander researched in the past. Baldwin suggested reviewing neighboring towns' ordinances.

3e. Discussion of Updates to 2007 Open Space Plan – Discussed above.

3f. Installing signs on Town open space properties – Ben Baldwin said that one medallion was placed by the Highway Department at the Town open space on South Broad Street between the Faulise Post Office and Chucky's gas station.

3g. Any Other Old Business. None.

4. Open Space Parcels

4a. Discussion of parcels for preservation – Discussed except under 3c.

4b. Discussion of State land at 8 Summit Street, Mystic. - Not discussed.

5. New Business

5a. The 9.6-acre open space at the end of Meadow Lane in Phase I of Cherenzia's Crescent Club was accepted by the Town with the idea that it would be eventually transferred to the holder of Phase II's open space, 19 acres held by Stonington Land Trust. The Bessettes' Shady Lane Farm includes a field extending into both parcels. MOTION: The Conservation Commission requests the transfer as originally planned (Stuart Cole, Jim Friedlander). Passed. Cole, Friedlander and Baldwin voted in favor. Chairman Simm did not vote.

5b. Chairman Simm will also speak with First Selectman Simmons regarding the status off the Admiral Cove open space.

5c. The Barn Island fieldtrips are expected to cost \$3,860, per NESS, about \$300 more than available. MOTION: Ask NESS if they will accept the amount available (Jim Friedlander, Stuart Cole). Passed unanimously.

5d. MOTION: Pay \$60 membership to the Connecticut Association of Conservation and Inland Wetland Commissions – CACIWC (Ben Baldwin, Jim Friedlander). Passed unanimously.

5e. The 2017 schedule was set: 4th Monday every month and no meeting in December.

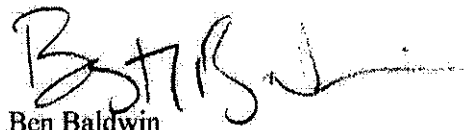
5f. Chairman Simm stated that after 31 years he has decided that this will be his last Conservation Commission meeting. He will resign from the Commission after tending to the above noted tasks.

6. Review of draft minutes – 10/24/16

No meeting was held on 10/24/2016. MOTION: Approve the minutes of 8/22/2016 (Stuart Cole, Jim Friedlander). Passed unanimously.

7. Adjournment – Motion to adjourn (Jim Friedlander). Made at 9:25 pm. It was noted that the Commission is not likely to have a quorum until its April meeting.

Minutes submitted by



Ben Baldwin

Secretary, Town of Stonington Conservation Commission

Approved at a regular meeting of the Commission on May 22, 2017