

## Conservation Commission

### Town of Willington

#### Minutes

Wednesday May 18, 2022 at 7:00 PM

[Remote Meeting via Zoom]

- I. **Call to Order:** Meeting was called to order @ 7:06 pm by Chairperson Kathy Demers
- II. **Roll Call / Seating of Alternates:** Regular members present included Kathy Demers, Carol Jordan, Marilyn Schreiber. On a motion by CJ/MS: “**Alternate Nora Jones to be seated for Jackie Kulig**”. Unanimously approved.
- III. **Approval of Minutes:** On a motion by CJ/MS: “**The minutes of the April 20, 2022 meeting be approved as written.**” Unanimously approved.
- IV. **Present to Speak:** Resident Amanda Galligan stated she was a 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teacher at the Stafford Elementary School and would like to take her students to Fenton-Ruby Park for an all-day field trip on June 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup>. They are studying beavers as part of their curriculum and the park’s ponds are home to several. She requested permission to have a portable toilet delivered by a local sanitation company, so it would be available to the students during the field trip. It would likely be delivered the day before and picked up the day after the event. She stated the school had a fund to pay for the rental and she would instruct the company to place it in the right hand corner of the parking lot. All members agreed this was a reasonable request and asked that Ms. Galligan keep the commission informed about the actual days the toilet would be on site.
- V. **Treasurer’s Report:** Expenditures – 1) \$520.25 to Willards Lumber for trail bridge building materials; 2) The Girl Scouts spent \$155.92 of the \$250 the commission appropriated for their pollinator project at Fenton-Ruby Park. Balance currently \$445.97 with \$150 encumbered for the Nature Walk on June 4<sup>th</sup>.
- VI. **Old Business**
  - A. **Talmadge Estate Property Acquisition/DEEP grant application:** The Town has received all the survey materials including the map and property description. Still waiting to hear from DEEP regarding Open Space Grant application status.
  - B. **Properties Management**
    1. Fenton-Ruby Park / Drobney Sanctuary:
      - a) Work Day 4/23/2022 was fun and very productive: 7 volunteers assisted 3 CC members to clear brush out of the meadow; 6 members of Boy Scout Troop 82 along with Scout Master Ken Follett and Len Pippin assisted a CC member to carry out materials and repair one bridge and rebuild another on Julia’s Trail. The scouts also camped at the Park for two nights.
      - b) On 5/14/2022, Four Willington Girl Scouts and their Troop Leaders Connie Bedan and Hanna Prytko installed a pollinator garden in the picnic area. They planted over 40 native plants, most purchased at a significant discount provided by Tri-County Greenhouse in Mansfield. The scouts will water and maintain the garden throughout the summer. They plan to put educational information about the importance of pollinators and the garden in the Park’s kiosk this summer.
    2. Knowlton Preserve / Talmadge Tract: K. Demers noted that Trail Steward Alec Janis reported that he monitored the Knowlton Spur trail a few weeks ago and no issues were noted. Discussion about signage to mark the trail crossing Mason Road was tabled.

- C. Town Development:** K. Demers noted that the PZC had received a request for a zone change from a residential zone to a Strategic Development Zone for an area consisting of 3 parcels on River Road. One of the parcels contains the Mobil Gas Station. The other two are forested and total approximately 158 acres. As part of the zone change request, a conceptual design was submitted that includes a 1.5 million sq.ft warehouse, associated parking areas and an access driveway from Rte 32. Members reviewed a natural resource map created by using the Town's GIS system. They noted that a 53 acre portion of the Nye Holman State Forest abuts the applicant's property and that a watercourse, 100 ft wetland upland review area and a Natural Diversity Data Base (NDDB) circle were located on the property. Maps created as part of the WCC's Natural Resource Inventory showed the area also contains steep slopes, productive forest soils, an archeologically sensitive area and portions of it are noted as a "Conservation Priority Area." A Public Hearing related to the zone change request has been rescheduled to 6/21/2022. Members agreed that the WCC should submit a letter to PZC for the hearing that outlines the natural resources on the property and discusses any potential impacts that the zone change and conceptual plan might have to them. K. Demers will draft a letter and send to all members so it can be discussed and finalized at the WCC's next regular meeting on June 15<sup>th</sup>.
- D. Collaborative Organization News & Communication:** No news.
- E. Regional Pollinator Pathway Initiatives:** C. Jordan noted that the Girl Scouts will also be installing pollinator gardens at Hall and Center Schools as part of their Silver Award project. K. Demers noted that the Girl Scouts will be placing a pollinator sign in the gardens and will place the Fenton-Ruby Park on the Pollinator Pathway's online Map.
- F. Nature Walk at FRP – June 4:** Naturalist and educator Barbara Austin will lead a nature walk from 1:00 -3:00 pm. Information about the free event can be found on the Conservation Commission's webpage under "Activities and Events". It has also been posted around town and on the Town's eblast and FaceBook media. Registration for the hike can be made on the Parks and Recreation website. The number of participants is limited to 20. Rain cancels. Some members will be present to help with parking and to serve refreshments afterwards.
- G. ARPA Request:** The ARPA commission will hold a virtual public hearing for the next group of approved ARPA requests on 5/24/2022 at 6:30 pm. The WCC's 2 requests for funding related to a forestry plan and bridge building materials will be on the agenda.
- H. Other:** The commission considered planting another hybrid Chestnut tree in the picnic area at FRP. K. Demers noted that online ordering for a bare-root tree is not open again until next spring.

**VII. New Business**

- A. Communications:** None.  
**B. Other:** N/A

**VIII. Next Meeting:** June 15, 2022

**IX. Adjournment:** Meeting was adjourned at 8:36 pm.

Minutes submitted by K. Demers, Chairman and secretary pro tem

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TOWN CLERK