

Conservation Commission
Town of Willington

Minutes

Wednesday November 16, 2022 at 7:00 PM
[Remote Meeting via Zoom]

- I. **Call to Order:** Meeting was called to order @ 7:04 pm by Chairman Kathy Demers
- II. **Roll Call / Seating of Alternates:** Regular members present included: Kathy Demers, Marilyn Schreiber, Carol Jordan, Bob Shabot and Patty Phillips. It was noted that regular member Peter Andersen submitted his resignation on 9/6/22 because he was moving to Maine. On a motion by BS/MS: *"Alternate Nora Jones be seated for the vacant regular member seat"*. Unanimously approved.
- III. **Approval of Minutes:** On a motion by BS/MS: *"The minutes of the August 17, 2022 meeting be approved as written."* Ayes: KD, MS, BS, PP and NJ. CJ abstained. It was noted that there were no meetings held in September or October 2022.
- IV. **Present to Speak:** None
- V. **Treasurer's Report/Finances:** A total of \$160 in membership dues were paid to the CT Association of Conservation and Inland Wetland Commissions (CACIWC) and CT Land Conservation Council (CLCC). KD submitted a receipt to the treasurer for apple cider bought for the recent volunteer workday. On a motion by BS/MS: *"The CC will reimburse \$17.97 to Kathy Demers related to costs for apple cider purchased for the Fenton-Ruby Park workday."* Unanimously approved.
-CIP request: The commission discussed the current Open Space Fund balance and possible CIP request for the next five years. It was estimated there would be approximately \$53,520 left in the Open Space Fund once all expenditures related to the Talmadge Estate property purchase were paid in this fiscal year. Members would like to see the OS fund "replenished" with money added annually to help cover the cost for future land purchases and conservation easements. On a motion by BS/PP: *"The Commission recommends to the CIP committee that \$30,000 be deposited annually into the Open Space Fund for each of the next 5 years."* Unanimously approved.
-BOF request: The commission discussed the anticipated DEEP Open Space grant award of \$81,250 and how this money will be reimbursed to the Reserve and Open Space funds which were used for the Talmadge Estate property purchase. CJ suggested that each funding source should be refunded on a pro-rata basis, equal to the percentage that was expended for the land purchase price of \$125,000. KD will attend the BOF meeting this week to discuss the issue.
- VI. **Old Business**
 - A. **Talmadge Estate Property:** Still waiting for DEEP to complete the review of the survey. Then need to update title search, add DEEP to Title Insurance and review/sign conservation easement before DEEP will release grant award. Public Works staff recently removed the old truck body and the 6 tires from the property. CC members will mark boundaries with paint and signs, lay out and blaze new trail and erect new trailhead sign before dedication in the spring. On a motion by KD/BS: *"The Commission authorizes the expenditure of up to \$200 to purchase hardware, lumber and paint for the Talmadge Estate Property projects."* Unanimously approved.
 - B. **Properties Management**
 1. Fenton-Ruby Park / Drobney Sanctuary:

- Park Work Day 10/22/22: KD reported that 16 resident volunteers, including members KD & BS attended the Park workday and cleared the area around the old Taylor House foundation. CJ provided homemade cookies to go along with the cider as refreshments.
- Boundary Encroachment/Tree cutting: KD noted that Town representatives sent out a letter and had a meeting with the landowner. He has been advised that any further removal of vegetation from Town property would be taken very seriously.
- Other: The Willington Girl Scout Troop made and installed 4 new birdhouses at the Park. The new bench made by resident Chris Demers has been installed on Julia's Trail.

2. Knowlton Preserve / Talmadge Tract:

- Maintenance/Trail report: Stewards Bill and Kathy Bland will install hardware cloth on a Talmadge Spur Trail bridge to reduce slipping risk when surface is wet.
- Parking Lot Signage: Tabled
- Forest Management Plan: The contract and deposit have been sent to Connwood Forestry and the field work is expected to begin soon.

C. **Town Development News:**

- Planning and Zoning Commission application PZ-22-10 related to the zone change for the warehouse on River Road was denied. PZC is considering placing a moratorium on the Strategic Development Zone regulations so they have time to work with the Economic Development Commission to review and consider if revisions needed. A new building with a solar array and EV charging stations has been permitted on a property located on Ruby Road next to the RT 84 interchange.

D. **Collaborative Organization News & Communication**: M. Schreiber volunteers for Joshua's Trust and participates on a subcommittee looking at how the Trust can meet its regional land conservation goals. She recently reviewed the Town of Willington's Plan of Conservation of Development in order to complete a JT survey about how each town is dealing with Open Space issues.

E. **Regional Pollinator Pathway Initiatives**: The Willington Girl Scouts created an information sheet about Pollinator Gardens and Pathways which is now posted as a separate menu item on the commission's website.

F. **Open Space Opportunities**: 7 acre parcel on Burma Road. The Selectmen and Land Use offices are reviewing the status of the unmaintained portion of Burma Road. The commission discussed the possible benefits of adding the property to Fenton-Ruby Park as well as concerns about cost, the building on the property and the pond's dam. More study needed.

G. **Cadlerock Properties**: KD updated members on the recent Public Hearing held jointly by Willington's and Ashford's BOS related to the possible uses of the property and the brownfield grant application to finish the remediation on the property.

H. **Other**: None

VII. **New Business**

A. **Communications**: None.

B. **Meeting Schedule for 2023**. Members agreed to continue holding meetings remotely on the 3rd Wednesday of each month. KD will prepare the 2023 schedule for a vote next meeting.

C. **Other**: Membership reappointments were discussed. PP and NJ's terms will expire 12/01/2022. On a motion by CJ/BS: ***"The Conservation Commission recommends that the BOS reappoint Patty Phillips as a regular member and Nora Jones as an alternate member."*** Unanimously approved.

VIII. **Next Scheduled Meeting**: December 21, 2022

IX. **Adjournment**: Meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:55 pm.

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