

## **WILLINGTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEETING**

Minutes: **June 16, 2021** (Remote Meeting via Zoom)

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order @ 7:06 PM

**Roll Call/Seating of Alternates:** P. Andersen, K. Demers, J. Kulig, M. Schreiber, R. Shabot.

**Approval of Minutes of April 21, 2021:** On a motion by KD/RS “**The minutes of 4/21/21 are amended as follows: under Finance:** At Town Meeting on 3/31/21, residents voted to approve using \$4,500 from the Park and Rec Fund to pay for the Fenton-Ruby Park Forest Management Plan, which will be done by Connwood Foresters, Inc.” Unanimous vote.

**Approval of Minutes Special Meeting of June 9, 2021.** On a motion by KD/RS the item was added to the Agenda. Unanimous vote. On a motion by KD/RS: “The minutes of June 9, 2021 were approved as written.” 2 abstentions: (JK, RS). 3 ayes.

**Present to Speak: NA**

**Finance:** Invoices are expected to be submitted soon for approved items completed this budget year for new trail maps with QR codes, easement monitoring, farm tour advertisement and the Daley award plaque.

**Old Business/Status Reports:**

**A. Mason Road Open Space Acquisition Update:**

- The 2021 **CT DEEP** Open Space Grant round was announced on June 3rd. Application is due by September 30, 2021. The WCC will be working on the grant application through the summer.
- On 5/18/21, Pursuant to Sec. 8-24 of the CT General Statutes, the PZC recommended that the Town acquire the 16.17 acre Talmadge Estate property with frontage on Mason Road for public open space purposes.
- PA and KD will attend the June 17th Board of Finance meeting to present the following motion approved at the June 9, 2021 Special Meeting: “The Conservation Commission requests that the BOF recommends to the BOS to call a Town Meeting to approve an appropriation of \$60,000 from the Open Space Fund to be used for the costs associated with the purchase of the Talmadge Estate property on Mason Road, including the survey and legal fees.”

- PA will continue to correspond with the Talmadge family on the current projected timeline and steps for securing Town and grant funding for the purchase of their property on Mason Road.
- JK has updated the “Proposed Talmadge Property Purchase” map.

**B. Fenton –Ruby Park Mgmt. Plan:** Connwood Foresters, Inc. has begun work on The Fenton-Ruby Park Forest Management Plan.

**C. Burma Road parcel for potential open space:** A site walk was held on 4/19/21 to view a 7+ acre parcel of land which abuts FRP. Per 4/21/21 WCC meeting discussion, PA has appraised the owner, BOS and BOF that the property is not a high priority to WCC at this time and that funds are not available since the Town is currently working on another O.S. purchase.

**D. Easement Property Monitoring:** JK has completed monitoring on the Daleville School parcel.

## **E. Properties Management:**

### **1. Fenton Ruby/ Drobney Sanctuary:**

- The box that holds the Taylor Pond trail guides has been refurbished and will be reinstalled at the beginning of the trail.
- Per WCC’s 4/21/21 meeting discussion, PA sent a letter to BOS regarding an abutting landowner’s request to use the FRP hay field, apprising them that FRP Management Plan section 4.4.1 “Deed Restrictions” would not allow the use.

**2. Knowlton Preserve/ Talmadge Tract:** An abutter to the Town’s Knowlton Preserve has raised concerns to the CT Forest and Parks Association and the WCC that hikers using the Blue-Blazed Nipmuck Trail which is close to his property cause his dogs to bark and become agitated. He also reports that he found someone on his property looking for “treasure” that other people may be placing in the area near the trail. KD reported that she spoke with Clare Cain from CFPA. CFPA holds the easement on the Nipmuck Trail that runs through the Knowlton Preserve and CFPA feels it would be difficult to reroute the trail due to wetlands and also since the trail in that area continues directly across Marsh Road next to the abutter’s property. The WCC discussed that rerouting would be difficult and noted that the current trail seems to be a reasonable distance from the landowners’ boundary and his home. It will be suggested to

the landowner that he consider posting “private property” signage on his boundary line facing the Knowlton Preserve property and trail to deter trespassers.

**3. Trail Maps:** PA dropped off FRP Trail maps to local volunteer Bob Bittner who will replenish maps at FRP as needed through the summer.

**4. Park workday/recruitment day:** The May 22, 2021 FRP work day was a success with 11 local volunteers helping on trail maintenance.

**F. Town Development:** Love’s Travel Stop is proceeding.

**G. Collaborative Organizations:** Tabled

**H. Willington Farm Tour:** The Willington Farm Tour 2021 will be held Sunday June 27 from 12-6 pm.

**I. Daley Award:** Joe Philippi received the 2021 Daley Award during the Park workday on May 22. PA will apprise the BOS about the award.

**J. Other:** The WCC discussed some additional Open Space property maintenance issues that were beyond their resources to accomplish. PA will send a letter to the BOS letter asking if Public Works can do the following: 1) Remove the large dead apple tree that is in the picnic area at FRP, since limbs are falling and it is a potential safety hazard; 2) Provide snow removal in the parking area for the Talmadge Tract /Knowlton Preserve on Mason Road so that public could access the trail systems from the parking area during the winter months.

## **New Business**

**Correspondence:** PA read a letter from a frequent park visitor concerning adjacent property to FRP that he believed could be an asset as an acquisition to the park.

**Next Meeting:** July 21, 2021

**Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at 8:07 pm

Minutes respectfully submitted by Marilyn Schreiber, Recording Secretary.

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TOWN CLERK