

Branford Conservation and Environment Commission
P.O. Box 150
Branford Town Hall
Branford, Connecticut

MINUTES

***WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 2019
7:30 P.M. CANOE BROOK SENIOR CENTER
11 CHERRY STREET, BRANFORD, CT***

The meeting started at 7:37 p.m.

Present: Chairman Karen Hannon, Eleanor Saulys, Karyl Lee Hall, Adrian Bonenberger, Dan Fitzgerald, Carol Kaminsky

Absent: James Yakimoff

Comm. Bonenberger noted that Comm. Patrick Sweeney was approved as a Commissioner but not yet sworn in. He will be attending the next meeting.

1. Approval of Minutes:

A. June 5th 2019 meeting minutes

Comm. Karyl Lee Hall made a motion to approve the 6-5-19 meeting minutes.

Comm. Eleanor Saulys seconded the motion.

2. Correspondence and Announcements

A notice of work on Horse Island was received. Comm. Saulys will follow up on this.

A notice regarding Rt. 1 & 22.

Comm. Dan Fitzgerald spoke of the Community Wildlife Habitat Membership.

It is a national wildlife initiated program. The program is based upon the size of the city and you earn points according to your programs. David McCarthy from Inland Wetlands Dept. is having a kickoff event and will provide more details About the program. The purpose is to form new habitats for the permanent pollinators in your town. The town may also be eligible for funding by participating. Going forward, Comm. Fitzpatrick and Comm. Bonenberger will work with David McCarthy on this project.

Comm. Fitzpatrick then talked of the Pollinator Pathway project.

Comm. Karyl Lee suggested that the Commissioners think about the costs of the different projects for future budget planning.

3. New Business:

Comm. Carol Kaminsky noted the town has done a good job improving the Pine Orchard Area. New benches and flowers and wood ships were added. She suggested perhaps adding a few additional trees to that area.

4. Budget:

A. Fiscal year 2019 - year to date

Chairman Hannon noted that they should continue with the idea that in the spring, they may request more money from the Finance Committee based on how successful they are with the Pollinator Project and other future projects that are

being planned. Comm Saulys noted that funds should be set aside for the Natural Resource Inventory project coming up.

Comm. Fitzpatrick noted that 134 people signed up to receive the pollinator plants. He said the plants they had were mature, perhaps they should consider buying smaller plants and provide more varieties in the future.

He thanked Comm. Kaminsky for her assistance in that project. Chairman Hannon suggested sending out an email to the people that participated thanking them and asking them to stay involved. She mentioned that they distributed many wildflower seed packets at the Branford Festival. A portion of the budget went to purchase the seeds. Some funds were also spent on a few memberships (Ct. Audubon & The native plant trust).

Chairman Hannon noted the Commission used all the funds available in the budget. A few misc. items still need follow up and she reviewed them.

She noted the budget for this upcoming year is the same as last year.

There is a total of \$ 4, 482.00 in the budget. Chairman Hannon reviewed it briefly.

The Commission discussed the upcoming Natural Resource Inventory Project and finding people to assist with that. They also should consider what funds will be needed for that. Chairman Hannon noted that the next publication will be in 2023 but planning should begin now.

Comm. Saulys said the Commission is responsible for the mapping of Open Space in the town. The current maps are incorrect. The Commission discussed this.

5. Continuing Business:

A. Permits for coastal projects

Comm. Eleanor Saulys noted she has received a preliminary determination by DEEP that there are problems with an application at 61 Sunset Beach Rd. The property owner is installing a fixed pier. There will be a public hearing on this on Sept. 23, 2019 at the Firehouse Headquarters. She noted she was not present at the preliminary presentation.

B. Proposed developments and other building projects

M. Martin noted that the Burban Drive property has been sold and a large residential project is being considered. No applications have been received yet. It was previously a Church. A new building is being constructed on Thompson Road. Also, a change of use for a building on Liesl Lane is pending. It was an automotive use and may become a doctor's office. There is a property on Main Street that may change from office space to apartments.

C. Invasive plant control

Comm. Fitzgerald said in the one year plant control plan there will be some invasive plant control. Outside of that, if there are areas in the town, such as Ecology Park (which is riddled with mugwort) a controlled burn has been discussed. Comm. Saulys noted that Beacon Hill is a problem. Chairman Hannon talked of a butane torch type tool that may be useful in getting rid of the mugwort. They discussed this briefly. Comm. Fitzgerald noted that the first Selectman spoke to him about it and the Fire Chief is being consulted on this. Comm. Carol Kaminsky mentioned that another project that was done at the end of the fiscal year was the cleanup of the little park where Peter's trees were planted. That may be a good spot to plan some of the wildflower seeds. Comm. Bonenberger asked about possible recruitment of high school students to assist with the Natural

Resource Inventory project. The Commission discussed this briefly.

- D. Natural Resource Inventory (next publication 2023)
The Commission discussed the cost of the project and who to recruit.
 - E. Branford Festival
Chairman Hannon said the Branford Festival was a huge success. The Pollinator project was very popular. Comm. Bonenberger suggested producing an after action report on things that went well and things that could use some improvement for the next festival. Chairman Hannon said there is a list of people who received plants at the festival and the Commission should communicate with them, perhaps thank them for participating and planting the native plants that they received. Also, possibly solicit photos and or feedback. Maybe mention there are openings on the Commission if anyone is interested. Chairman Hannon said she would draft a letter to be sent out. Comm. Fitzgerald mentioned the middle school has an art club and they would like to do something for the Commission and an idea was to have the students participate in the festival next year by assisting with the plant distribution. Also, another idea was to have the students make scale models of butterflies and or birds that the plants would attract and have them hanging at the festival booth. Comm. Bonenberger agreed that was a good idea and said another thought is to have the art students have a contest amongst themselves and the winner could be the background of the Facebook page. The Commission thought this was a good idea. Comm. Fitzgerald will draft an email to the Art club to start the process.
 - F. Animal Ordinance
Chairman Hannon said there was a rabid raccoon near the Greystone Manor Condos and it wasn't advertised. She felt that people should be made aware of it. The raccoon was caught and that's how it was discovered that it was rabid.
 - G. Pollinator Pathway
6. Reports:
- A. Select Committee for Open Space Acquisition
Comm. Saulys reported there is no meeting until October.
 - B. Library books donations
Comm. Kaminsky verified that the same amount of money was in the budget as the previous year. She will send an email out to the school librarians.
 - C. Spill reports
Nothing to report.
 - D. Contaminated sites
Nothing to report.
 - E. Coastal Resiliency Plan
Nothing to report.
 - F. Website
Chairman Hannon has been working with Jenn to collect photos and perhaps there will be new material by next month to add to the website.
7. Other:
Comm. Saulys reported the CACIWC meeting is November 23 at the Red Lion in Cromwell.
8. Adjournment
Meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by M. Martin (Clerk)