

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

SPECIAL MEETING

MINUTES

WEDNESDAY, April 12, 2023

Branford Community Center, 30-48 Church St., Room B

7:30 P.M.

or via Zoom with the link below if unable to attend

Commissioners Present: Chairperson Heather Wells-Sweeney, Karyl Lee Hall, Neil Goodard, Christie Day(arrived at 8:46 pm), Carol Kaminsky, Adrian Bonenberger, Patrick Sweeney, Cyde Jasek, Karen Hannon, Joshua Greenberg?(arrived at 7:07pm)

1. Pollinator Pathway

Chairperson Heather Wells Sweeney noted that the scouts will be smothering the mugwort next to the meadow behind the Early Learning Center and along the trail. Gary Zielinski from the public works dept. with help out with that. This is planned for Earth Day (April 22).

Chairperson Sweeney also mentioned that Kelly was here at the last meeting As a visitor and she has volunteered as a point person for the Pollinator Pathway Project.

2. Correspondence and Announcements

Chairperson Sweeney said a letter was received from the CT Council of Land Conservation thanking the commission and they offered assistance to the commission in the future is needed.

3. New Business:

A. Consider whether or not to send a letter in support of a Bill regarding neonic pesticide restrictions.

Chairperson Sweeney noted that there is a bill going before the CT Legislature to limit the use of neonic pesticides. She explained that these pesticides are absorbed by the plant and are toxic to bees and animals that ingest the plant. She asked the commission if they are in support of writing a letter of support for this bill.

The commission discussed this briefly and the consensus was yes, they would like a letter to be written.

Karyl Lee Hall made a motion for the commission to write a letter of support for this bill.

Neil Goodard seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

B. Update on Burban Drive proposed developments

Chairperson Sweeney said the commission had previously sent a letter to the Planning & Zoning Commission regarding this project on March 2. She noted that this was not a public hearing, it was an informal meeting to discuss the proposed project.

P. Sweeney noted he listened to the meeting on the website and the planning and zoning commission noted the project seemed too dense for the area. He mentioned that no action or votes were taken, it was just a discussion.

C. Update on memberships

Chairperson Sweeney noted that the CT Audubon Society gave the Commission a book on birds which she will donate to the library. The Commission then briefly talked of the stickers that they previously used to when they donated books.

D. Update on BHS photo contest

Chairperson Sweeney said she would like to feature the winners of the contest at the Branford Festival.

E. Notes from CLCC Conference

Chairperson Sweeney attended it and she enjoyed it. She noted that there was a topic of diversity and she would like to reach out for more diversity in the commission.

F. Discussion of outreach, including social media and point person.

Chairperson Sweeney reminded the commission that they have a facebook page which has erratic postings but she has learned that Instagram is the current popular platform.

Neil Goodard volunteered to take on this task as point person and social media platform person. He mentioned some of his ideas and asked the commission to submit ideas to him. He will come up with a list and keep the commission informed of his work.

Regarding outreach: Chairperson Sweeney hopes to reinstate work days and recruit more volunteers. The commission discussed this briefly.

4. Budget:

A. Fiscal year 2019 - year to date

Chairperson Sweeney reviewed each line in the budget and answered questions. She noted the pollinator pathway medallions have arrived and she will be purchasing the stakes this week. She will also have signs printed for the Earth Day booth.

5. Continuing Business:

A. Permits for coastal projects- None

B. Proposed developments and other building projects- Nothing new was discussed

C. Invasive plant control

P. Sweeney said there has been no work done over the winter. He has been speaking with Lauren Brown and they are planning g upcoming projects for the spring. They will also revisit prior sites to keep up with the invasive removal.

D. Natural Resource Inventory (next publication 2023)

Christie Day reported that they interviewed the GZA Engineering firm from Glastonbury. They seemed enthusiastic and they also met the budget requirement. She recommended using them. She noted they could also be a good resource in the future. The commission discussed this briefly and agreed.

C. Kaminsky made a motion to accept the proposal from GZA Engineering to compose the new Natural Resource Inventory.

K. Lee-Hall seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

C. Day noted that this a 4 month time line to complete the report. The commissioners thanked her for her hard work on this project.

E. Branford Festival

Chairperson Sweeney asked the group if they wanted to give away pollinator plants at the festival. The commission discussed this and The consensus was yes, they wanted to give away plants.

P. Sweeney made a motion to dedicate \$2,000 to purchase pollinator plants for the Branford Festival.

C. Kaminsky seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

F. Earth Day

Chairman Sweeney said she has been working with the Living Wisely and Well committee since January on Earth Day. She said there will be the addition of live music this year and the number of booths have doubled as well. She explained what account he music will be paid out of.

P. Sweeney made a motion to use \$100.00 towards the live music.

J. Greenberg seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Chairperson Sweeney said the booth will feature Pollinator Pathway Information. She noted that she would like to pass the torch to someone for next year. She asked the commission to think about it and hopefully, someone will volunteer.

G. Crabbing Bridge (Guilford)

K. Lee Hall gave a brief recap of this and noted that she is in a study group with the Dept. of Transportation. There will be a meeting on April 27 th at 6pm at the Branford Fire Headquarters to introduce the study. She will keep the commission up to date on any developments.

6. Reports:

A. Select Committee for Open Space Acquisition- Nothing to report

B. Library books donations

C. Kaminsky reported that most of the library books have been delivered. The elementary schools are short one or two books, and she will follow up on that. She will keep the commission updated.

C. Spill reports- Nothing to report

D. Contaminated sites - Nothing to report

E. Coastal Resiliency Plan- Nothing to report

F. Website- Nothing new

7. Other:

A. Tweed Airport Expansion

K. Lee Hall reviewed this item noting that they want to extend the major runway there and expand the airport. The environmental impacts of these changes are very serious. The commission had previously sent a letter requesting that an environmental assessment be completed and it was done and is on the Tweed website. Many people feel that the assessment was inadequate. The next step is submitting comments on the assessment. This is very important. She has volunteered to compose a letter for the commission to submit. She asked the commission for permission to compose this letter and the Chairperson and herself will review it and sign it on behalf of the commission. K. Lee Hall will keep the commission up to date on her progress.

J. Greenberg made a motion to give K. Lee Hall permission to compose and sign the letter along with H. Wells Sweeney.

C. Jasek seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

The commission discussed this briefly.

8. Adjournment - the meeting adjourned at 8pm