

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

*****SPECIAL MEETING*****

MINUTES

MONDAY, March 31, 2025

6:30 p.m.

via Zoom with the link below if unable to attend in person.

The meeting started at 6:30 pm

Commissioners Present: Heather Wells Sweeney, Lauren Ruotolo, Joshua Greenberg, Neil Goodlad Carol Kaminsky, Patrick Sweeney, Karen Hannon

Commissioners Absent: Christie Day

1. Brainstorm about ways to motivate residents to plant native plants, reduce the size of lawn, and avoid use of pesticides

Chairperson Sweeney did a roll call of who was present. She said the purpose of the meeting is to brainstorm ways to motivate residents to plant native plants as well as encourage people to reduce the size of their lawn and to avoid using pesticides.

She introduced a guest speaker Jana Hogan who is from the Pollinator Pathway Group . She is at the meeting to share ideas and help guide the discussion.

Jana then spoke and gave a brief history of the group noting they started in 2020. She lives in Ridgefield Ct and is on the conservation commission there. She was also the Board President of a large nature center in Wilton & Ridgefield. She said the Pollinator group was formed and it started by looking at the open space map and areas of high conservation value and targeted spots to plant gardens.

She stressed the most important thing is signage as well as education. The group expanded and educated residents and from there the library got involved as well as the museum. Then, the group went to various churches in town and planted gardens there. They also held a talk at the library to further educate people. From there, they worked to form a native plant ordinance.

She also noted she is a member of the garden club. After much time, she finally convinced the club to sell natives at eh Mother's Day Plant Sale. The section of Main Street they worked on turned out very well and they are proud of it.

Another idea she mentioned was planting gardens at all the schools in town. She talked of the different plants that were planted in the various gardens.

Chairperson Sweeney asked her how the native plants ordinance was passed and she explained the process they went thru. She noted this ordinance only pertains to town owned land and that the Planning & Zoning commission is 100% in support of it.

Sharon Huttner was also present at the meeting and she added a few comments about the Branford Planning & Zoning commission since she is a member.

The commissioners asked a few questions and had a brief discussion.

Jana talked about the different ways she has educated people; talks at the library, as well as using Facebook. Right now, they are trying to put together a invasive species task force.

She mentioned that there are 29 homeowners in Branford that have signed up for the Pollinator Pathway.

The commission talked about other locations in town that have gardens and the importance of signage so people know it's a pollinator garden, not just a neglected space that's not being mowed.

They also discussed the importance of educating the public on the use of native plants as well as encouraging the non use of pesticides and the different ways of educating the public.

Jana Hogan suggested contacting Lydia Powell to come and speak about this topic as well as the newsletter for the conservation commission in her town. It encourages people to get involved.

She stressed the importance again of signage that people can put in their yards to let other people know why it doesn't look beautiful and manicured.

Sharon Huttner suggested sending out letters thru the

2. Adjournment