

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

MEETING

MINUTES

WEDNESDAY, January 3, 2024

Branford Community Center, 30-48 Church St., *Activity Room*

7:30 P.M.

or via Zoom with the link below if unable to attend.

Commissioners Present: Heather Wells-Sweeney, Karyl Lee Hall, Neil Goodlad, Christie Day, Joshua Greenberg,
Commissioners Absent: Carol Kaminsky, Karen Hannon, Patrick Sweeney, Adrian Bonenberger, Cynde Jasek

Chairperson Sweeney noted that we will not be approving the December meeting minutes tonight. They were not mailed out in time for the commissioners to review. We will approve them at the February meeting.

She also mentioned that Cynde Jasek is having some health issues and has resigned from the commission.

1. Correspondence and Announcements

- A. Neil Goodlad noted he sent out an item regarding the Pine Orchard Association communication that was sent to their members regarding the Rt 146 Management Plan.

Karyl Lee Hall said she received it and she read Neil's email and noted it's perfectly acceptable for him to represent the assn. and she said she got appointed to the Rt 146 management plan committee because for years she co-chaired the scenic roads committee. If Neil wants to be a spokesman for the pine orchard assn, that would be great but there can't be two voices from the conservation commission. Neil added some comments to the fact that he reminded the pine orchard group that if plants are removed around corners (site line issues), please make sure the replacements are natives.

Karyl Lee Hall said her role on the committee is to oversee the process so people get to have their say and the final product is legitimate. She encouraged Neil to make his comments (in writing) as soon as he can.

She added a few more comments. Neil offered to assist her if needed.

2. New Business:

A. Request from BLT for letter of support

Chairperson Sweeney noted she received a letter from the Branford Land Trust regarding the Todds Hill property. They received a grant to put in a wheelchair accessible trail around the site. She explained the segments of the grant.

The president of the BLT asked if this commission could submit another letter of support.

Neil Goodlad talked of the lack of trash cans there.

**Neil Goodlad made a motion to send a letter of support.
Christie Day seconded the motion.**

B. Volunteer Day at Library---Who's available?

Chairperson Sweeney noted she will be there the entire day (next Saturday) and Neil Goodlad volunteered to attend. She asked for additional volunteers to come and help promote the commission's activities.

She also noted that Patrick Sweeney and Lauren Brown need volunteers to assist with invasive plant removal.

C. Open seat

Chairperson Sweeney noted that there are now two empty seats on the Commission. She urged the commissioners to think of possible volunteers to fill these seats. She thinks it would help to diversify the commission.

3. Budget:

A. Fiscal year 2024 - year to date- Nothing was discussed

4. Continuing Business:

A. Priority- and Goal-setting

Chairperson Sweeney noted that if funds are to be moved around, then she will have to go before the board in February.

She will email the budget info to the commission. It can be discussed at the next meeting.

B. Permits for coastal projects- None

C. Proposed developments and other building projects- None
--Pine Orchard

D. Invasive plant control- Nothing was discussed.

- E. Natural Resource Inventory (next publication 2023)
Christie Day said this is almost complete. She noted that they can use these consultants for smaller projects if needed. She will have more information at the next meeting. She mentioned when it is complete, perhaps put a notice in the paper or in the Branford Patch.
- F. Branford Festival- Nothing was discussed.
- G. Earth Day-Chairperson Sweeney noted that Earth Day is April 15th this year and she needs volunteers. More information will follow.
- H. Crabbing Bridge (Guilford)
- I. Farm River coalition
 - FFRE
 - Grant application for removing water chestnut

Chairperson Sweeney said there is a community group that has been around for 20 years called the "Friends of the Farm River Estuary" in short Beach. The recently voted to allow the Farm River Coalition to be joined with them. This allows for grant money for them to be a fiduciary agent. She noted that they will be applying for a grant from DEEP for mechanical removal of the aquatic invasive "water chestnut". It is in Pages Pond in North Branford and covers a bit more than an acre. She talked a bit about the invasive plant. She also mentioned that there will be hand removal in the places that machinery can't reach.

5. Reports:

- A. Select Committee for Open Space Acquisition- Nothing was discussed
- B. Library books donations- Nothing was discussed
- C. Spill reports- None
- D. Contaminated sites- None
- E. Coastal Resiliency Plan- Nothing was discussed.
- F. Website

Chairperson Sweeney noted that the website is almost done. More info to follow at the next meeting.

6. Other:

- A. Tweed Airport Expansion

Karyl Lee Hall explained that the environmental study is complete and the FAA made a finding that this project will pose no significant impact to the site so the project will move forward. The Save the Sound Group may appeal the decision. If they do, the appeal period is 60 days from the date of the decision which came out on December 22. She then spoke of groups that may join the appeal as a named plaintiff and the option is there for the conservation commission to join the appeal. This will be discussed in the future if an appeal is made. More information will follow.

7. Adjournment- 8:09 pm