

TOWN OF EAST LYME
COMMISSION FOR THE CONSERVATION OF NATURAL RESOURCES
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2020 – 7:00 p.m.
EAST LYME TOWN HALL, CONFERENCE ROOM 1

PRESENT

Art Carlson, Chairman
Laura Ashburn
Mark Christensen
Don Danila
Penny Heller
Ron Nichols, Alternate

ABSENT

Harvey Beeman, Alternate

FILED

Mar 3 20 20 AT 10:20 AM/PM

Laura Ashburn

EAST LYME TOWN CLERK

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Carlson called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m.

I. PUBLIC DELEGATIONS: *None*

II. MINUTES

A. Minutes of January 8, 2020

Motion (1): Motion made by Commissioner Christensen, seconded by Commissioner Heller, to approve the January 8, 2020 Commission for the Conservation of Natural Resources Regular Meeting Minutes, with the following amendment:

MOTION (1): . . . ~~(5-0)~~ (4-0-1) Voting in Abstention: Commissioner Beeman.

Discussion: None. Voice vote, 5-0, all in favor. Motion carried

III. NEW BUSINESS

A. Discuss State's Blue Plan (for Long Island Sound)

Commissioner Heller reported that the legislators are scheduled to vote on the State's Blue Plan. Following its approval, the Plan will be sent to CT DEEP (Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection) for implementation. It is hoped that it will be implemented by the Spring of 2020. The Plan will affect the Town of East Lyme in those areas where the mean water measures deeper than 10 feet. Guidelines/suggestions are included for the wetland areas.

The item will be deleted from future agendas.

B. Accurate Water Sampling throughout the Town

After meeting with the Zoning Commission and the Board of Selectmen and speaking with the Water Engineer, who only tests the well water, Chairman Carlson proposed the possibility

of measuring the quality of the water in the Four Mile River, Latimer Brook, and Cranberry Meadow Brook by sampling the water located at the outlets of the upper boundaries of the Town. Discussion ensued regarding the ultimate purpose of the sampling, the need for numerous samplings over an extended period of time to obtain the most accurate data, the bio-assessment studies that are currently conducted, and the overall cost of such a project.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

A. Distribution of Water Study Report

1. Presentation to Boards and Commissions

Chairman Carlson reported that a presentation has been made to the Zoning Commission and Board of Selectmen and will be presented to the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) Sub-Committee at their next meeting. A hard copy of the Report has been/will be provided to all of the Boards and Commissions. It was unknown as to whether a copy of the Report has been made available on the Town website.

B. Work on the Goodwin Trail

Chairman Carlson reported that a letter will be sent to Parks & Recreation (P&R) Director David Putnam and a meeting will be scheduled with the Chief of Police to devise a strategy to deal with the dirt bike riders along the Goodwin Trail.

He also reported that he was approached by a non-profit organization based in Middletown, who is interested in utilizing the trail for a bicycle fundraising race on May 3. The race would begin at White Gate Farm continue through the Girl Scout Camp and, with their approval, along the Goodwin Trail. He would work with the organization to either harden sensitive areas with flat stones or place signage in those areas where the bikers would be required to walk through, rather than ride over, certain areas.

C. SustainabilityCT.org

Commissioner Heller reported that they are in the process of making preparations to apply for a grant to create bike/pedestrian trails in the following areas:

1) Black Point

It will be verified as to whether the southern portion of the proposed path is a public or private road.

2) Route joining the three Historic Houses

A brief discussion regarding Riverview Road was held. An alternative route would be for the trail go through the subdivision to Forest Road where the traffic would be slower and the cost would be more economical.

3) Route located in the north end of Town

The route would begin at Scott Road to Whistletown Road, around Grassy Hill Road, and along Aunt Ruth's Highway. Concerns regarding Aunt Ruth's Highway were raised and other possibilities, including going around Darrow Pond to Drabick Road to Route 161 and through the right-of-way leading to the High School and traveling

along Walnut Hill and Holmes Road and through the Goodwin Trail to Whistletown Road, were suggested.

The group plans to meet with the Chief of Police to discuss the proposed routes and any foreseeable issues they might pose. The first step in the plan is to create signage and pamphlets and paint the roads, designating the bike and pedestrian routes. The path will, for the most part, travel along paved roads. Each trail is approximately 10 miles. In the future, a regional bike/pedestrian trail would be created. Brief discussion ensued regarding parking.

The State's Bike/Pedestrian Plan focuses on Route 156, providing a shoreline route. To avoid the busy portion of Main Street, they are proposing routing the trail to run along Smith Avenue, Grand Street, Pennsylvania Avenue, and Hope Street. The trail would connect the two *Book Barn* locations and include the Thomas Lee House.

Another portion of the plan involves an off-road bike/pedestrian path that would begin at Brainerd Road to Ravenswood Tract (would require the permission of the East Lyme Land Trust) to Giants Neck Beach to Rocky Neck State Park (would also require permission). The area located around the Correctional Institution to Society and East Society Roads, behind the apartments and Costco and the old cemetery to the High School was also discussed as, primarily, a walking trail. Another area for consideration is the 50 acres located around the old landfill.

Most of the grants range between \$10,000.00 to \$20,000.00. It is estimated that most of the signage could be produced in-house and the painting of the roads would cost no more than \$8,000.00. As such, it is hoped that the first two paths could be completed with the grant funds.

Commissioner Ashburn is working with her students on the pedestrian aspect of the path. The students are test driving the software – *Epicollect* and *Track-It!* Preliminary work has been completed and the materials are now being collected and input. It is hoped that, working with the two software applications, they will be able to lay the information on top of a Google map. A meeting will be held with Commissioner Heller to discuss the locations for the walk audits and Parent-Student teams will be formed.

D. POCD Update

Chairman Carlson is working with Planning Director Gary Goeschel to ensure that the POCD maps are updated. Commissioner Danila reported that the Zoning Board of Appeals upheld the Cease and Desist Order for the Londregan case.

E. Solar Farm

Commissioner Danila reported that Greenskies Renewable Energy, LLC, sent a motion to reopen Petition No. 1347 to the CT Siting Council. The revised proposal reduces the project size from 55,692 to 45,976 panels or 16.78 to 15.3 megawatts, resulting in a footprint reduction from 98 to 75 acres. A revised, more detailed wildlife survey was conducted, a reassessment of the stormwater handling was conducted, and a new Engineering Consultant was hired. They are hoping to obtain the necessary approvals to begin clearing the property in

the Spring. Commissioner Danila is working with the Interveners, *Save the River-Save the Hill, Inc.*, who has submitted comments on the motion. The organization is maintaining their opinion that the project is environmentally irresponsible and requests that the CT Siting Council not issue a declaratory ruling in favor of Greenskies and require the petitioner to receive a Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need, which has more stringent requirements. They are also requesting that a Public Hearing be scheduled as part of the process. The CT Siting Council will consider the motion to reopen the application and modify the Council's decision on February 27. All of the materials are available for public viewing on the CT Siting Council website. The original application was denied, without prejudice by the CT Siting Council.

V. REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

A. Communications

Commissioner Christensen reported that Barbara Wilder will be contacting Chairman Carlson regarding the deeding of the property located adjacent to the State Forest to the Land Trust.

B. Agribusiness Subcommittee

Commissioner Christensen reported that approximately 38 people attended their recent Potluck Dinner. Attendees included Selectmen Daniel Cunningham and Roseann Hardy and State Representative Holly Cheeseman, with whom he expressed his concerns regarding the spill mitigation system. Items regarding the Town's previous stations regarding their support for agriculture, along with the State's Right to Farm clauses, were recited.

The Subcommittee is planning to share a booth with the Samuel Smith Farmstead to promote Open Farm Day on July 19, the day after Celebrate East Lyme Day.

C. Chairman's Report – *no report*

1. Executive Session – Pending Litigation – *the item was deleted from agenda*

D. Ex-Officio Report – *not present; no report*

Commissioner Danila announced that he is part of a group that is in the process of reviving the Pattagansett Lake Association. Several individuals have expressed their concern regarding the aquatic weeds in the Lake. Possible solutions were discussed.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

**MOTION (2): Motion made by Commissioner Danila, seconded by Commissioner Ashburn, to adjourn the February 12, 2020 East Lyme Commission for the Conservation of Natural Resources Regular Meeting at 8:21 p.m.
Discussion: None. Voice, vote, 5-0, all in favor. Meeting adjourned.**

Respectfully Submitted by: Agnes T. Miyuki, Substitute Recording Secretary for the Town of Salem