

EAST LYME COMMISSION FOR THE CONSERVATION OF NATURAL RESOURCES
REGULAR MEETING - VIA ZOOM
NOVEMBER 11, 2020

FILED

Present: Penny Heller, Acting Chair
Don Danila
Laura Ashburn
Harvey Beeman
Mark Christensen

Nov 16, 2020 AT 12:30 AM/PM
Brooke Peterson ATC
EAST LYME TOWN CLERK

CALL TO ORDER. Ms. Heller called the East Lyme Commission for the Conservation of Natural Resources to order at 7:09 p.m.

MOTION (1): Mr. Danila moved to seat Harvey Beeman for Arthur Carlson. Seconded by Ms. Ashburn. (3-0) Unanimous.

- I. **PUBLIC DELEGATIONS.** There were no guests.
- II. **MINUTES -October 14, 2020.** Ms. Heller asked for additions, deletions or corrections the October 14, 2020 Minutes of the East Lyme Commission for the Conservation of Natural Resources.

MOTION (2): Mr. Danila moved to accept the October 14, 2020 East Lyme Conservation of Natural Resources Minutes, as presented. Seconded by Ms. Ashburn. (4-0) Unanimous.

III. **NEW BUSINESS**

- A. Review of updates to the POCD.** Ms. Heller felt the POCD Committee has done a very good job and included the highlights of the Open Space Plan and the Water Report and suggested the Streetscape. Mr. Danila agreed.

Ms. Ashburn asked if the Water Report was on the Town website? Ms. Heller agreed to check with Mike Mainz. Mr. Christensen reported photos were taken of birds that come to East Lyme. He suggested including trees in East Lyme.

Ms. Heller asked what is the deadline for comments to the POCD? Mr. Christensen responded the POCD had a hearing on November 10; that was most likely the last opportunity to comment.

- B. 2021 Meeting Schedule.** The Commission reviewed the proposed meeting schedule as follows: January 13, February 10, March 10, April 14, May 12, June 9, July 14, August 11, September 8, October 13, November 10 and December 8. All meetings will begin at 7 p.m.

MOTION (3): Ms. Ashburn moved to accept the proposed meeting schedule for the East Lyme Commission for the Conservation of Natural Resources. Seconded by Mr. Beeman. (4-0) Unanimous.

Commission member Mark Christensen arrived.

Ms. Heller informed the Commission that Mr. Carlson recommended not having the December 2020 meeting.

MOTION (4): Mr. Christensen moved to cancel the December 2020 East Lyme Commission for the Conservation of Natural Resources Meeting. Seconded by Mr. Danila. Ms. Heller abstained from voting. (4-0-1)

IV. OLD BUSINESS

- A. Waterford Solar Farm Project.** Mr. Danila reported that at the November 5, 2020 Siting Council meeting the Waterford project was approved. The vote was 3-1. Two Council members abstained and one recused, so less than one-half of the Council approved this project, but it is going forward requiring a DEEP Storm Water permit. Construction will begin as soon as possible. As an intervener Save The River-Save the Hills (STR-STH) did not prevail, but did make a difference as far as the design and hope it will give more protection to the environment. Mr. Beeman asked did they require additional monitoring? Mr. Danila stated they did not. There is a D&M Plan still required. STR-STH did ask for monitoring. However, it was not included in the final approval. Mr. Christensen asked if Mr. Danila knew what the original clear-cut area was? Mr. Danila replied 90 acres were reduced to 75 and the number of panels were reduced. They found panels that could produce more power per unit. The project could still do a better job of handling storm water. It did increase the distance from Oil Mill Brook. We hope that it will work to reduce stormwater damage to the streams and Niantic River. Connecticut DEEP's website states it is one of the only areas that have brook trout in the coastal towns of the state.
- B. SustainabilityCT Program: EL Giving Garden Funding Start.** Ms. Heller reported that the East Lyme Giving Garden is now up.. Donations can be made on line. The website highlights what they are doing. An Open House is planned for November 28 from 10 a.m. to-1 p.m. on the Baptist Church grounds. Flyers will follow. Mr. Christensen reported the Baptist Church is on Church Lane in East Lyme. They plan to have 13 teams of oxen and a mule team. They will demonstrate how lands were plowed. They will use leaves to compost.

Ms. Heller stated there is \$7500 available through this program. We plan to also apply for \$2,500 next winter to add a Pollinator Pathway to the same property. There crowd funding from the SustainabilityCT Program that matches one to one. The SustainabilityCT Program employees have been very helpful. All produce from the garden will go to St. John's Episcopal Church. We would also plan an educational component involving adults and school programs when Covid-19 restrictions ease. Ms. Heller is working on a Bikeway Plan but Covid-19 issues have prevented progress on a grant for that program. She also asked Ms. Ashburn to resume the pedestrian component when her students are able to participate again.

- C. RBV Sampling.** Mr. Danila reported we had a successful sampling during October 23-24. He thanked Mr. and Mrs. Heller and Steve Loomis for their help. We did the same four sampling sites as last year. We thank Mr. and Mrs. Kalal for allowing access through

their property to Cranberry Meadow Brook. Other sites were Latimer Brook at IGA Plaza and Colony Road bridge and Four Mile River at Spring Brook Road. Behind IGA at Latimer Brook we had three of the most wanted and seven moderately and at Colony Road we had one most wanted forms and seven moderately wanted. At Four Mile River there were one-two moderately wanted. The streams showed good water quality. Mr. Danila looked at the 2019 DEEP Report 2019 for Cranberry Meadow Brook and it showed results that did not match our field sheets There is a Cranberry Meadow Brook in East Haddam, and he suspects there was a clerical mix-up asked Megan Lally from DEEP to look into it to see if the stations were mixed up in their report and she agreed. Mr. Danila stated the drought had reduced the insects this year. Ms. Ashburn asked for actual data because she would like to use it with her students, and Mr. Danila agreed to send it to her.

- D. **Discussion of Forestry Report.** Ms. Ashburn's students will work on a project on forestry using a slide presentation and videos. Ms. Heller felt sensitive trees should be highlighted. There is a pitch pine park at Oswegatchie Road which Greg Decker has done a great job developing. Recently she and Mr. Danila helped plant six adult pitch pines in the park. A planting bed for seedlings has also been added. Mr. Decker made benches. Matt Smetana located all the pitch pines that stand in the reserve on a GIS map. Our thought is to map it over time to see how the trees change. Ms. Heller commented trees are the best way to sequester carbon.

V. REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

- A. **Communications.** Mr. Christensen read a letter of thanks to Ms. Heller for her assistance in setting up the SustainableCT grant for the East Lyme Giving Garden.
- B. **Agribusiness Subcommittee.** Mr. Christensen reported we submitted comments on the POCD and they were accepted. We hope to pursue a grant next year to carry out a survey documenting the cost of community service supplied to the town by agricultural activities. Ms. Ashburn suggested including the cost of natural resources you would need to replace. Ms. Heller suggested asking the SustainabilityCT Program's employees any question you may have.
- C. **Chairman's Report.** Mr. Carlson was unable to be present and there was no report.
- D. **Ex-Officio Report.** Ms. Hardy was unable to be present and there was no report.

MOTION (5): Mr. Danila moved to adjourn the November 11, 2020 East Lyme Commission for the Conservation of Natural Resources Regular Meeting at 7:50 p.m. Seconded by Mr. Christensen. (5-0). Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Frances Gheri, Recording Secretary