

EAST LYME COMMISSION FOR THE CONSERVATION OF NATURAL RESOURCES
REGULAR MEETING
October 13, 2021

Present: Art Carlson, Chairman
Penny Heller
Don Danila
Laura Ashburn
Mark Christensen

FILED

Absent: Ron Nichols

Also Present: Rose Ann Hardy, Ex-officio
Harvey Beeman, Alternate

OCT 25 20 21 AT 1:30 AM/PM
BROOK HOLLOW ATC
EAST LYME TOWN CLERK

CALL TO ORDER. Chairman Carlson called the meeting of October 13, 2021 to order at 7:05 pm.

MOTION (1): Mr. Danila moved to add to this evening's Agenda, under New Business
b. Darrow Pond Motorized Craft and c. Need for a New Alternate Member
to this Commission. Seconded by Ms. Ashburn. (5-0) Unanimous.

- I. **PUBLIC DELEGATIONS.** There were no guests.
- II. **MINUTES of September 8, 2021.** Mr. Carlson asked for additions, deletions, or corrections to the September 8, 2021 Minutes of the East Lyme Commission for the Conservation of Natural Resources.

MOTION (2): Mr. Danila moved to accept the September 8, 2021 East Lyme Conservation of Natural Resources Minutes, as presented. Seconded by Ms. Ashburn. Mr. Christensen abstained from voting. (4-0-1) Motion carried.

III. **NEW BUSINESS**

- a. **Recommendation by the Commission for the Town to purchase the Hathaway Farm.** Mr. Carlson recommended that this Commission write a letter of support to the Board of Selectmen.

MOTION (3): Mr. Danila moved to authorize the Chairman to draft a letter on behalf of the Commission to the Board of Selectmen supporting the purchase of the Hathaway property. Seconded by Mr. Christensen. (5-0) Unanimous.

- b. **Darrow Pond Motorized Craft.** Mr. Danila informed the Commission the Friends of Oswegatchie Hills met last night. The Friends have been asked by the Town to annually inspect the tract. They realized that there were some communications about a resident that has had a boat with a motor on it, and they felt it was not proper use for the lake. A small section of the northeast corner may be out of the conservation easement area.

The conclusion as far as the Friends were concerned when they have an inspection, they look for any structures in the conservation easement area that should not be in there. Kris Lambert, its President, saw a survey by the task force and felt that it is unclear whether or not this type of vessel can be in the lake. Mr. Danila felt a small non-motorized canoe or paddleboard is allowed. Mr. Carlson stated the depth of the lake is 13'. Mr. Danila felt it should be sampled for nitrate. Mr. Danila felt we should give

our support that there can be a non-motorized use in the lake. Ms. Hardy felt a small canoe or rowboat can be used. He also did not feel boats should be launched from Mostowy Road, because it is a narrow road.

- c. **Need for a New Alternate to this Commission.** Mr. Carlson spoke to Mr. Nichols who felt he may no longer be able to be an alternate to this Commission. Ms. Hardy suggested that Commission members submit their recommendations for a new alternate to the Selectmen after Mr. Nichols submits his resignation.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

- a. **Follow-up on Discussion of Newly Published East Lyme Annual Water Quality Report, Rising Salt Levels.** Mr. Carlson spoke to Ben North, the Town Water Engineer, about this Commission's desire to have more information on the salt content in our drinking water. Ms. Heller was interested in seeing well specific data from 2015 up to the most recent data.

Mr. Carlson felt because there are no roads in the area where Well #5 is, and there is half as much salt there is a connection with salting the roads.

- b. **Follow-up on Potential Composting Project.** Ms. Heller reported on three suggestions: 1. The East Lyme Giving Garden; 2. Private farms; and 3. The Town dump. Ms. Heller was asked by Susan Thompson if there can be an area where invasive plants can be managed so that it can be composted? Mr. Danila felt this could be done if all invasive plants were put in plastic bags.
- c. **SustainabilityCT Program: Start of 2022 Recertification Process.** Ms. Heller gave Ms. Hardy a copy of actions for an appropriate COVID-19 response. Ms. Hardy has placed it on the next Board of Selectmen Agenda.

Ms. Heller informed the Commission we are moving forward with the 2022 recertification process. There are a number of individuals willing to help. She spoke with Elisabeth Dowd about the successful Indigenous People's Day event held at McCook Point Park on October 11, that Ms. Dowd developed for the East Lyme Historical Society. It brought attention to the town's history with the Nehantic Indian Tribe, one of the many marginalized communities in town which the SustainableCT program hopes to address

V. REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

- a. **Communications.** Mr. Danila attended a Zoning Commission Meeting a few weeks ago. There was discussion on a proposal to put a highway rest stop and gas station not far from the lower end of Latimer Brook. Stormwater was discussed. Mr. Danila was concerned about septic and urged the developer to use nitrogen reducing septic technology. It meets with Town construction regulations. He felt they need to have input from Ledge Light. DEEP will have oversight because of the proximity to water. Mr. Danila asked if anybody from Town staff will be reading the Storm Water Plan. Mr. Christensen didn't know if Noble Energy was rescheduled. Ms. Hardy stated they wish to have attorneys involved and to determine how much access they are able to have. The access road goes to the cemetery and they wish to use it for access. An agreement was reached and the historical cemetery individuals are satisfied. Ms. Hardy felt there are many problems with this project: 1. Traffic (This went to the state and they felt it was ok.) Ms. Hardy felt it was too small an area. Mr.

Danila stated he mentioned people travel with pets, and there will be pet waste. He felt a dedicated pet area is needed. Ms. Hardy felt this is an inappropriate use of this property.

- b. **Agribusiness Subcommittee.** Mr. Christensen reported at our last meeting we had a woman from FEMA and had discussion about Sustainability. In Connecticut we have a three-day supply of food. The idea came up about what we do if something happens and how do we support ourselves. We discussed preserving farmland and reserving some for farmers.

Mr. Christensen suggested improving Zoning Regulations for farmers. We could probably use new members for the agricultural group. Some members have resigned. Ms. Metkoff wanted to account for the farms. There were 58 farms in 2008. She will look for information on that. She is with the Pollinator Pathways group. She is interested in water quality. There are 1. Commercial farmers; 2. Part-time farmers; 3. Hobby farmers. The farmers are interested in making money, keeping the land open. Commercial farms had more acreage. Mr. Danila and Ms. Heller may be contacted.

- c. **Chairman's Report.** Mr. Carlson reported another Eagle Scout project was completed. Four more benches were built and placed along the Goodwin Trail. The scouts had to carry in cedar logs.

Mr. Carlson informed the Commission we are about to put up the signs regarding motorized vehicles. He has been working with Mr. Goeschel. The state has \$3 million in trail maintenance. We had a wash out on the Goodwin Trail. There was 8" of rain in four hours. Mr. Carlson will be printing up the Forestry Report on Darrow Pond. It will also be put on the Town website. Mr. Danila added the Niantic Watershed will compile five years of precipitation related sampling. They would like to write a report.

- d. **Ex-Officio Report.** Ms. Hardy asked Mr. Danila to forward his email to Ledge Light Health District to her. She requested the Zoning Commission to have a meeting with the Aquifer Protection Commission. She was told they have not had any pressing issues. She stated that commission is supposed to meet four times a year. She suggested that they be on the next Zoning Commission Agenda as long as Zoning does not have too many applications.

She added Parks and Recreation has sent a letter requesting that the Town turn Darrow Pond over to them. There has been no discussion on it. Ms. Hardy felt they should come forth with proposals of what they would like to take on. The Board of Selectmen had an earlier presentation. She expressed concern over clearing for 40-50 parking spaces. She was told neighbors have complained individuals are parking on the road. She visited the area eight times at different times and only saw two cars parked. Ms. Hardy expressed concern on the number of things they are proposing, e.g., disc golf and a dog park. The Board itself is divided. She would not object to hearing specific proposals not in favor of turning it over to them. She felt the property is not being maintained. She will have it put on a Board of Selectmen Agenda and have discussions with Parks and Recreation. Mr. Carlson reported he has had a lot of discussions with Parks and Recreation and they wish to keep it a nature-based recreation area. Help is needed from the Town crew to restore a washout on the Goodwin Trail. Mostoway Road would be a good place for a Dog Park. Ms. Hardy stated the Board of Selectmen suggest using American Rescue Funds for the following: 1. \$20,000 to Niantic Main Street to have a Yale Charrette which would include Flanders and Niantic. Eighty percent of what was recommended in the last study has been accomplished. 2. \$920,000 to replace Well #5. The present well will remain at the site but will not be used.

There is much infrastructure improvement by Water & Sewer. In talking with Old Lyme and Old Saybrook, they pay more in user fees than East Lyme. The rate payers pay for the user fee. This has been needed for some time. She personally feels this is a good use of American Rescue Funds. Ms. Ashburn asked if there has been any conversation about increasing the fees? Ms. Hardy replied it has been suggested. Mr. Christensen stated the Water & Sewer Commission rates will increase. It is being discussed with the First Selectman. Ms. Hardy hopes the Board of Finance will approve it. Materials are available.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION (4): Ms. Heller moved to adjourn the October 13, 2021 East Lyme Commission for the Conservation of Natural Resources Regular Meeting at 8:35 p.m. Seconded by Mr. Danila. (5-0) Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Frances Gheri, Recording Secretary