

EAST LYME COMMISSION FOR THE CONSERVATION OF NATURAL RESOURCES
REGULAR MEETING
JANUARY 12, 2022

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

FILED

Absent: Ron Nichols, Alternate
Harvey Beeman, Alternate
Don Danila

Jan 18 20 22 AT 12:01 AM (PM)
Brock Peterson ATC
EAST LYME TOWN CLERK

Also Present: Rose Ann Hardy, Ex-officio
Ben North

CALL TO ORDER. Chairman Carlson called the meeting of January 12, 2022 to order at 7:05 pm.

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

The following correction was noted: On page 2 under V. the third paragraph to be revised as follows: Ms. Ashburn reported an AT environmental and sage student interviewed Joe Bragaw on recycling.

MOTION (1): Mr. Christensen moved to accept the December 8, 2021 East Lyme Conservation of Natural Resources Minutes, as corrected. Seconded by Ms. Ashburn. (4-0) Unanimous.

III. **NEW BUSINESS**

- a. Election of Officers for 2022. The Commission was asked for nominations for Chairman of the East Lyme Commission for the Conservation of Natural Resources for 2022.

MOTION (2): Ms. Heller moved to nominate Art Carlson as Chairman of the East Lyme Conservation of Natural Resources for 2022. Seconded by Mr. Christensen.

There were no other nominations.

A vote was taken and Mr. Carlson was unanimously elected Chairman of the East Lyme Conservation of Natural Resources for 2022.

The Commission was asked for nominations for Secretary of the East Lyme Conservation of Natural Resources for 2022.

MOTION (3): Mr. Christensen moved to nominate Penny Heller as Secretary of the East Lyme Commission for the Conservation of Natural Resources for 2022. Seconded by Ms. Ashburn.

There were no other nominations.

A vote was taken and Ms. Heller was unanimously elected Secretary of the East Lyme Commission for the Conservation of Natural Resources.

- b. **Ben North.** Mr. North reported he worked with Brad Kargl for a few years. They discussed the needs of the Water & Sewer Department. There have been many challenges and opportunities that the town has had in securing quantity and quality water. Mr. North worked in New London for ten years and he worked with Mr. Kargl on the New London interconnection. He stated we discussed how to manage the systems together. He added we are continuing to work with New London and trying to improve the quality of the water in East Lyme. The largest problem is iron and magnesium. It has gone from .05 to .03. There is still magnesium in Well #2. All the other wells are now treated through a pressure filtration process. We are trying to get Well #5 to its former capacity by drilling a new wellhead and hope to be able to use American Rescue Funds. We are embarking on this new well in a few weeks. Ms. Heller asked if the well production has declined because of iron? He replied the physical well has been deteriorating. Well #5 has a very high iron concentration. We are working with a well drilling contractor and trying to wash and dissolve deposits. We have done that over several seasons. Within 200' of the original registered zone area we will build a new well. We had two other wells rehabilitated this year.

We are working on increasing the water quality this winter. Mr. Carlson asked does it still have the original piping and how far will the new opening be from the old? Mr. North stated it will be 75' from the original well. Mr. Carlson asked how much capacity? Mr. North replied we will be looking at capacity of 600 gallons a minute. Mr. Carlson asked how will you be handling salt? Mr. North replied that is one of our biggest issues is salt from the highways. We have looked at the best management practice. He talked to Public Works to ask that salt be minimized on the roads. He feels the next step is looking into a brine system. You can apply a brine solution up to 48 hours before. By pretreating you can limit the salt on the road. Mr. Carlson asked if this treatment has no salt? Mr. North replied it uses less. Sodium chloride is still one of the best materials. Most recently the price of salt has increased 30%. If new trucks are purchased, they have a counter system the amount of salt is reduced. He stated sand isn't used anymore. The problem with sand is TSS which greatly increases maintenance of catch basins and storm water run-off. Ms. Heller stated we need well-specific information over a couple of years in order to work on a plan to identify areas where salt is leaching into groundwater at greater concentrations. Mr. North agreed to provide that data to this Commission. He added we do bi-weekly sampling that includes salt. Well #5 has the best water in town and produces the least amount of sodium. Ms. Heller asked what can we do to help solve the problem at the other well sites. Mr. North replied wells #1 and #6 are his biggest concern. Mr. Carlson asked where does the water from each well go and is leaching from the landfill a problem? Mr. North stated we do not have monitoring of the landfill. Mr. North stated he is more concerned with gas stations which have the most hazardous materials. Mr. Christensen felt a spill mitigation system is needed for I-95. Exit 74 will be re-done in the future. AT CCNR's request, the BOS sent a letter to DOT asking that spill mitigation be included in the design. If there was an accident at that site we would be in big trouble. He asked Mr. North to find out if DOT plans to put in a spill mitigation system. Mr. North agreed to contact DOT. Ms. Heller expressed concern with the plans for demolition of the Mobil Station and Starlight Motel that is very close to our main drinking water supply, as well as Costco which is nearly over it. Mr. North stated we receive monitoring reports from COSTCO. Mr. Christensen stated there are no requirements for a spill mitigation system. They are working within our aquifer's protection area. Mr. North stated well #1 and #6 would have to come off-line temporarily or permanently if there was a large spill from a tanker accident on I-95. We should

put in monitoring. Ms. Heller felt 50% of our water is at risk and buffer zones would be a less expensive way to lower the risk of contamination. Salt is already in our water. She would like to see a rain garden or swale but we need the town's backing. Mr. North felt salt is a slow burning issue. He felt the gasoline issue is bigger. Ms. Heller felt if we can use American Rescue Funds it would help. Ms. Hardy felt DOT will pay attention to this area. The issue of a new gas station at Exit 75 with 16 gas pumps is coming pending approval by DOT. Ms. Ashburn felt signs are needed to tell the public where their drinking water aquifers are and realize we need to pay attention to salt. Ms. Hardy asked if brine materials are readily available? Mr. North stated we need a spreader, trucks and brine system mechanism on site. Ms. Hardy asked why can't we use our trucks? Mr. North replied the volume needs different trucks to retrofit. Ms. Ashburn asked if Public Works has the funding for it? Mr. North replied we have discussed regionalization. Mr. North added he has begun working with DOT. Ms. Hardy agreed to follow up with Mr. Bragaw on it. Ms. Ashburn felt this is a perfect topic to bring together aquifer protection and to get together to share information. Ms. Hardy added we have a new Chairman on the Zoning Commission. Ms. Hardy agreed to contact the Aquifer Protection Commission. Mr. North was asked do we have to renegotiate with New London? Mr. North replied he likes the ability to give water and get it back. He felt it is a good system. He felt we have the potential to receive 1,000,000 gallons of water. Ms. Ashburn said the Town does not exist without its own water source. We need to protect it. Mr. Carlson asked are we doing anything about the Four Mile Watershed? He felt it would be a good back-up system. He added we need to secure some open space to protect future water sources. Mr. North felt the high-risk areas need to be mitigated. Ms. Heller suggested a protection plan and an overlay of the high-risk areas. Ms. Hardy asked what is the approximate cost of a new well? Mr. North replied close to \$1 million. It will cost \$500 a foot for new water main additions. Mr. North stated we are under restrictions with Well #5. Mr. North felt it was a great area for aquifer protection, but we need to understand what the state will allow. Mr. North stated 25 years ago the town had problems with wells #2 and #3. Ms. Ashburn stated she would like to see an Aquifer Protection Zone. Ms. Heller asked has there been any thoughts on Public Works making larger buffer zones around all wells. Mr. North felt Planning and Zoning use mapping to determine buffer areas. He spoke to Mr. Mulholland regarding the need for protection earlier. Any activity has a risk. It's better to have open space with no activity on it. Mr. North stated we have increased sampling data for sodium. He agreed to share the information with this Commission.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

- a. **SustainabilityCT Program: Start of 2022 Recertification Process.** Ms. Heller reported the January workshop has been postponed until May due to Covid concerns. The February workshop on invasive species will take place unless Covid restrictions increase. Ms. Ashburn suggested that it be held on Zoom. The March and April workshops on sustainable farming and pollinator pathways are still scheduled.

V. REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

- a. **Communications.** No communications were received.
- b. **Agribusiness Subcommittee.** Mr. Christensen reported the January 8, 2022 meeting for Preservationists has been cancelled.

A seminar on organic gardening for the backyard is tentatively scheduled for March.

There will be discussion on beginner beekeeping.

The subcommittee is looking for new members. If anyone you know has interest have them contact Mr. Christensen.

- c. **Chairman's Report.** Mr. Carlson suggested that the name of this Commission be shortened. Ms. Hardy stated that would require a Charter change.

Mr. Carlson reported there are four acres bordering on Darrow Pond land that have been donated to the EL Land Trust. There are areas of the Darrow Pond property where he would like to re-create open habitat suitable for pollinators. Ms. Heller suggested that he contact Ms. Mekoff for design ideas. Mr. Christensen added the town has a brush hog which could be used to clear invasive shrubs. Ms. Hardy asked if he has contacted Public Works to do the work? Mr. Carlson replied he has.

Ms. Heller stated Ms. Mekoff is interested in becoming an alternate on this Commission. Ms. Hardy agreed to contact her, as will Mr. Carlson regarding pollinator work on the four-acre field.

- d. **Ex-Officio Report.** Ms. Hardy reported this Commission needs to submit its Annual Report.

A grant has been received by Rosemary Osfelt for developing farmer's market stands and winter time distribution. Ms. Heller added this connects consumers with farmers. Software will be developed to advertise it more broadly.

There have been negotiations on the Hathaway property.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

- MOTION (4): **Mr. Christensen moved to adjourn the January 12, 2022 East Lyme Commission for the Conservation of Natural Resources Regular Meeting at 8:45 p.m. Seconded by Ms. Ashburn. (4-0) Unanimous.**

Respectfully submitted,

Frances Gheri, Recording Secretary