

EAST LYME COMMISSION FOR THE CONSERVATION OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
May 10, 2023

Present: Art Carlson  
Don Danila  
Laura Ashburn  
Penny Heller  
Mark Christensen  
Marjorie Meekoff, Alternate  
Harvey Beeman, Alternate

Also Present: Rose Ann Hardy, Ex officio

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EAST LYME, CT  
2023 MAY 17 P 12: 14  
Caulfield  
TOWN CLERK

**CALL TO ORDER.** Chairman Carlson called the East Lyme Commission for the Conservation of Natural Resources of May 10, 2023 to order at 7:05 p.m.

**MOTION (1): Mr. Danila moved to seat Harvey Beeman for Mark Christensen. Seconded by Ms. Ashburn. (4-0) Unanimous.**

- I. **PUBLIC DELEGATIONS.** There were no guests.
- II. **MINUTES -March 8 and April 12, 2023**
- III. **March 8, 2023.** Mr. Carlson asked for additions, deletions or corrections to the March 8, 2023 Minutes of the East Lyme Commission for the Conservation of Natural Resources.

**MOTION (2): Ms. Heller moved to accept the March 8, 2023 East Lyme Conservation of Natural Resources Minutes, as amended (See attached) Seconded by Ms. Ashburn. Mr. Beeman and Ms. Heller abstained from voting. (3-0-2) Motion carried.**

**April 12, 2023.** Mr. Carlson asked for additions, deletions or corrections to the April 12 Minutes of the East Lyme Commission for the Conservation of Natural Resources.

**MOTION (3): Mr. Beeman moved to accept the April 12, 2023 East Lyme Conservation of Natural Resources Minutes, as presented. Seconded by Ms. Heller. Mr. Danila abstained from voting. (4-0-1) Motion carried.**

**IV. NEW BUSINESS**

A. **Discussion of Erosion Issues at the Noble Gas Construction Site.** Mr. Danila reported after a rain storm on April 23 the area was videotaped, and it showed erosion not properly contained on the Noble Gas construction site. He visited the site on April 30 after a heavy rain. Although Noble Gas attempted to put up hay bales and fences there was much sediment going down towards the river.

Mr. Danila attended the May 2 Inland Wetlands meeting and made them aware of the situation. In his opinion large developments are not being properly managed, including the 2016 Antares Solar Field, last March's North Bridebrook Road Brookside Apartments construction, as well as Noble Gas. The IWA

Chair asked him if this Commission would review the Inland Wetlands regulations now undergoing revision. Mr. Danila felt this Commission should.

**Commission member Mark Christensen arrived.**

Ms. Ashburn agreed we need oversight once the project begins. Mr. Carlson agreed this Commission should review the draft regulations of the Inland Wetlands Agency. Ms. Heller felt the project needs to be visited after heavy rain storms. Mr. Danila reported the state is working on new guidelines. We need designs that can handle a heavy rainstorm now common because of climate warming.

**MOTION (4): Mr. Danila moved that this Commission review the Inland Wetlands Agency regulations presently under revision and submit any comments we have to the Inland Wetlands Agency. Seconded by Mr. Beeman. (5-0) Unanimous.**

Mr. Danila agreed to be responsible to review the latest draft. The Chair of the Inland Wetlands Agency informed him it will be a lengthy process because it is being done in steps.

Ms. Hardy stated you can have a subcommittee of this Commission or the committee as a whole give input. She added we have three major development projects in town. Many trees have been removed.

Mr. Danila agreed to Chair the subcommittee. Ms. Heller and Ms. Ashburn agreed to be on the subcommittee.

**MOTION (5): Ms. Heller moved that this Commission set up a Subcommittee to review the current Inland Wetlands Regulations for the Town of East Lyme. The subcommittee will consist of Mr. Danila, as Chair, and Ms. Heller and Ms. Ashburn as subcommittee members. Seconded by Ms. Ashburn. (5-0) Unanimous.**

**V. OLD BUSINESS**

- a. Discussion of participation in upcoming Earth Day and other spring/school events. (L. Ashburn). Ms. Ashburn reported Earth Fest will be held this Saturday at McCook's Park. It is a regional event. Newsletters have been sent out with students. East Lyme and Waterford High School students will attend.

**VI. REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS**

**a. Communications.** There were no new communications.

**b. Agribusiness Subcommittee.** Mr. Christensen reported the Agribusiness Subcommittee will participate in Earth Fest. They plan to have honeybees, and chickens.

He distributed a flyer on the second annual Farmstead Vintage Tractor and Truck Show at the Samuel Smith Farmstead to be held on June 10, 2023 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. They plan to have live music and an Open House.

He added the East Lyme Pollinator Pathways Garden at Darrow Pond is coming along. By June the flowers will be in bloom. ATVs have destroyed some of the plantings. Mr. Carlson feels there should be an ordinance limiting or prohibiting ATVs on the property. New London has an ordinance and gives

a \$500 fine for improper use. He has spoken to the Chief of Police and he stated cameras are needed. Mr. Carlson also shared a New London Day article with the First Selectman on this matter. He felt fines would have a large effect on this matter.

Mr. Christensen reported the Agribusiness subcommittee would like to submit an Agribusiness viable grant. Ms. Hardy informed him of a 15 hour a week grant writer the Town has hired who he could seek to help write such a grant.

**c. Pollinator Pathway East Lyme (PPEL).** Ms. Meekoff reported she and Ms. Heller met with Jerry Lokken, Director of Parks and Recreation, to discuss the possibility of writing a grant and having a Crowd Fundraising event to raise money for native plants for Bridebrook Park. The area in need of vegetation is along Bridebrook Road and is 300 yards long and 25 feet wide. Fundraising could take place in late 2023 or early 2024. The potential amount received could be \$15,000 to cover the expense of native plants.

PPEL was interviewed by the tv producer of the Boston show, "The Chronicle" about the organization's partnership with York Correctional Institution. The show aired on Channel 5 last week. Two people from the Massachusetts area have contacted Ms. Meekoff to learn about meadows.

PPEL has permission from the East Lyme Public Works Department to install signs at the Industrial Park Island. The signs inform passerbys about the work being done in the roundabout.

Ms. Meekhoff would like to have invasive plants removed from the Community Center property. She will start a dialog with Michelle Williams, Chairwomen of the Planning Commission.

Adam Boone, Landscape Architect for DOT will come to East Lyme during the winter months to address tree removal along state highways and his highway "bowls" of native plantings. Mark Christensen suggested he be invited to be a guest speaker at one of the Agribusiness seminars.

Ms. Meekhoff will meet with Susan Fiedler, Landscape Designer for DOT to discuss the native plants that will be used at the new Rt. 161 Exit 74 project.

**MOTION (6): Ms. Ashburn moved to add to the next Agenda under New Business, Discussion of Invasive Species at the Community Complex, as proposed by Pollinator Pathways East Lyme. Seconded by Mr. Danila. (5-0) Unanimous.**

**d. Chairman's Report.** Mr. Carlson informed the Commission that he will resign from this Commission after this meeting. He felt this Commission has had good ideas, and good reports that are scientifically correct. He began on this Commission in 1972 and formed the East Lyme Land Trust in 1972. He was particularly pleased with the Open Space Report and how it was used extensively in the new POCD, and the very good eight question guide that was used to evaluate open spaces in this report.

Ms. Hardy stated Mr. Carlson and Mr. Schutt worked together to obtain the Samuel Smith Farmstead. She was sorry Mr. Carlson will leave the Commission.

**e. Ex-Officio Report.** Ms. Hardy reported we had a Town Meeting on Monday and only eight residents attended. The Referendum will be held next week from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. at the Community Center.

She will ask that Noble Gas be on the next Board of Selectmen Meeting Agenda. She has delivered a Memo to First Selectman Kevin Seery.

She suggested that a member of Planning, Zoning, Inland Wetlands Agency, and this Commission form a subcommittee to coordinate mutual activities.

Ms. Hardy will discuss the Solar Farm with the Board of Selectmen.

Mr. Danila reported the Friends of Oswegatchie Hills Nature Preserve are dealing with trail damage done by people riding electric bikes. Some trails are not wide enough and it's a safety issue.

Ms. Hardy suggested that the remaining commissioners nominate a new Chairman. Next meeting this Commission will have a vacancy. This Commission can move up an alternate.

Ms. Hardy stated several concerns about the newest Main Street development which will replace three small buildings with one very much larger one. This development will be abutting the beach area and cause the eviction of individuals living in the white house to be demolished.

**f. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION (7): Ms. Heller moved to adjourn the May 10, 2023 East Lyme Commission for the Conservation of Natural Resources Regular Meeting at 8:40 p.m. Seconded by Ms. Ashburn. (5-0). Unanimous.**

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Frances Gheri, Recording Secretary**

## Pollinator Pathway East Lyme

Ms. Meekhoff reported that PPEL has partnered with Linda Lille of Sprigs and Twigs for acquiring native plants for PPEL Pledge members. Linda Lille will also advise June Hoy, who runs the Trees for Tomorrow program under the East Lyme Public Trust Foundation that all future tree specimens planted under the Trees for Tomorrow program must be native according to The Pollinator Proclamation signed by First Selectman Kevin Seery in August 2022.

PPEL Board of Directors voted not to participate in Celebrate East Lyme Day.

Ms. Meekhoff met with Jerry Lokken, Director of Parks and Recreation regarding the 300 yard woodland that the Public Works Department cleared of invasive plant species. Mr. Lokken is looking for assistance. She has a meeting planned with him.

The spring 2023 Events catalog published The Pollinator Proclamation for all residents to have the opportunity to read.

