

EAST LYME COMMISSION FOR THE CONSERVATION OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
June 14, 2023

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

Also Present: Rose Ann Hardy, Ex officio  
Lindsey Rush  
Tom Kalal

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EAST LYME, CT  
2023 JUN 19 A 8:13  
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TOWN CLERK

**CALL TO ORDER.** Acting Chair Heller called the East Lyme Commission for the Conservation of Natural Resources of June 14, 2023 to order at 7:05 p.m.

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

**I. PUBLIC DELEGATIONS.** Ms. Rush, a resident of Grassy Hill, wondered how a concerned citizen should comment on development. It was suggested that the Planning Commission is the meeting to go to.

Ms. Rush referred to Sec. 10.5 and Sec. 20.6 of the current Inland Wetlands Agency Regulations. She felt the scope seemed to be too narrow. She was advised that the Inland Wetland Agency Regulations are being revised and that this Commission will review them and give its input to the Inland Wetlands Agency. Ms. Rush was asked to come back to the July meeting of this Commission to discuss use of the CT DEEP Natural Diversity Data Base (NDDB).

**MOTION (2): Ms. Ashburn moved to add use of the NDDB prior to development to the July Agenda under New Business. Seconded by Ms. Heller. (4-0) Unanimous.**

**Commission member Mark Christensen arrived.**

The Commission was asked by ex officio Rose Ann Hardy for nominations for Chair of the Commission for the Conservation of Natural Resources.

**MOTION (3): Ms. Ashburn moved to appoint Penny Heller as Chair of the Commission for the Conservation of Natural Resources for the remainder of 2023. Seconded by Mr. Danila. (5-0) Unanimous.**

There were no other nominations for Chair of the Commission for the Conservation of Natural Resources.

**A vote was taken and Ms. Heller was unanimously elected Chair of the Commission for the Conservation of Natural Resources for the remainder of 2023.**

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

**MOTION (4): Ms. Ashburn moved to nominate Don Danila as Secretary of the Commission for the Conservation of Natural Resources for the remainder of 2023. Seconded by Mr. Christensen. (5-0) Unanimous.**

There were no other nominations for Secretary of the Commission for the Conservation of Natural Resources.

**A vote was taken and Mr. Danila was unanimously elected Secretary of the Commission for the Conservation of Natural Resources for the remainder of 2023.**

**II. REVIEW OF MINUTES OF MAY 10, 2023.** Ms. Heller asked for additions, deletions or corrections to the May 10, 2023 Minutes.

The following correction was noted on page 3, the first sentence of the second paragraph to be revised as follows: "Mr. Christensen reported the Agribusiness subcommittee would like to submit an Agribusiness Viability Grant."

**MOTION (5): Mr. Danila moved to approve the May 10, 2023 Commission for the Conservation of Natural Resources Regular Meeting Minutes, as amended. Seconded by Mr. Beeman. (5-0) Unanimous.**

## **II. NEW BUSINESS**

**a. Swearing in of Commission Officers.** Ms. Hardy swore in Ms. Heller and Mr. Danila.

**MOTION (5): Mr. Danila moved that Harvey Beeman be installed as a full member of the Commission for the Conservation of Natural Resources. Ms. Hardy informed Mr. Beeman that the installation process includes a letter he needs to send to the Board of Selectmen noting this request. Seconded by Ms. Ashburn. (5-0) Unanimous.**

**b. Discussion of the subcommittee review of Inland Wetland Agency regulations. On page 1,** Mr. Danila suggested that ELCCNR be spelled out and the acronym follow in parenthesis. Mr. Danila referred to Sec. 6. and suggested "licensed" should be "permitted". He suggested in Sec. 7.6 (e) "permitted" be changed to "urged" and recommended that the Agency require that all applicants be subject to more rigorous requirements. He suggested in Sec. 7.6(g) that impacts be defined that are to be evaluated for submission to the Agency. He recommended better oversight of projects and that site work should not proceed until any violations are corrected. Mr. Danila would like to have better communications between the Agency and this Commission. This Commission is only an advisory commission but can be beneficial in Inland Wetland decisions. He added the Commission for the Conservation of Natural Resources members have expertise in many areas.

We suggest that the Inland Wetland Agency place ELCCNR on its monthly Agenda when appropriate so we might give comments.

**MOTION (6):** Ms. Ashburn moved to accept the Commission's comments on the revisions of the East Lyme Inland Wetlands Regulations, effective October 1, 2023. Seconded by Mr. Christensen. (5-0) Unanimous.

**III. OLD BUSINESS**

**a. Discussion of Erosion Issues at the Noble Gas Construction Site.** Mr. Danila reported they have paved the area and hopefully the erosion issues are now moot. He expressed concern about stormwater and septic discharges going into the Niantic River.

**IV. REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS**

**a. Communications.** Mr. Danila attended a meeting of the Fishery Advisory Council. A graduate student of Dr. Eric Schultz of UConn is studying alewife in Bride Lake. East Lyme has had one of the largest alewife populations in New England. Because of the drought this past summer, the water outflow from the lake was very low. The flow gradually sunk into sediment. The student showed photos of many dead alewife on the dewatered streambed. Mr. Danila plans to meet in July with Dr. Schultz, his students, another professor at UCONN, and Ben North of town staff to discuss how the town might better utilize its water resources.

Some time ago, Mr. Danila participated in a remote Zoning Commission Public Hearing concerning the North Bride Brook Road multi-family housing development. He commented about protecting the alewife in Bride Brook. The development is presently in the construction phase. Early on there was a large plume of sediment coming off the site into Bride Brook. Mr. Goeschel, the IWA Agent, moved to rectify this issue. There is always an issue when you have storm water if it is not treated properly. If there is no drought this summer it will help the alewife.

**b. Agribusiness Subcommittee.** Mr. Christensen reported on June 10 the subcommittee had its second Annual Farmstead Vintage Tractor and Truck Show at the Samuel Smith Farmstead. There were 120 visitors.

Some commission members participated in EarthFest at McCook Point Park in May, which went well. A new CCNR banner was displayed at the booth which increased the commission's visibility with the public and many engaged in discussions about composting, chicken and bee keeping, and ways everyone can lessen their impact on the natural environment.

Terry Yuhas is currently working with Middle School and High School students to get youngsters interested in agriculture.

The East Lyme Giving Garden is doing well and an Open House is planned for Saturday of Labor Day Weekend.

**c. Pollinator Pathway East Lyme (PEL).** Ms. Meekoff reported she attended EarthFest and received many contacts. She contacted the Chair of Zoning and plans to give a 15-minute presentation at the July 6 Zoning Meeting. She asked Commission members to review documents that were distributed to them. She recommends that the Town use 85% native plantings when landscaping town property. Pollinator Pathway policies such as this are included in the Plan of Conservation and Development. Commission members will review the documents and give their input at the July meeting of this Commission.

**d.Chairman's Report.** Ms. Heller reported she attended an Open Space meeting on June 10 with Gary Goeschel and Kyle Casiglio of Southeast CT Council of Governments (SCCOG). They discussed the regional SCCOG Open Space Plan. Mr. Goeschel updated the open space map that Mr Casiglio will include in the final Plan.

**e.Ex-Officio Report.** Mr. Christensen asked Ms. Hardy if there is an open space fund? Ms. Hardy replied the Town will be getting money from the state. He felt if we could establish a permanent open space fund it would be in a better position to acquire open land when it became available.

#### **V.ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION (7): Ms. Ashburn moved to adjourn the June 14, 2023 East Lyme Commission for the Conservation of Natural Resources at 8:20 p.m. Seconded by Mr. Christensen.**

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Frances Gheri, Recording Secretary**