

EAST LYME COMMISSION FOR THE CONSERVATION OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
MAY 8, 2024

RECEIVED FOR RECORD  
EAST LYME, CT

2024 MAY 14 A 11:01

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

*Concurrence*  
TOWN CLERK

Absent: Steve Dinsmore, Alternate

Also Present: Rose Ann Hardy, Ex officio

**I. CALL TO ORDER.** Ms. Heller, Chair, called the May 8, 2024 East Lyme Commission for the Conservation of Natural Resources meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

**II. SEATING ALTERNATES (IF NECESSARY)**

**MOTION (1):** Mr. Beeman moved to seat Marjorie Meekhoff in place of Mark Christensen. (4-0) Unanimous.

**III. CALL FOR ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA.** There were no additions to the Agenda.

**IV. CALL FOR PUBLIC DELEGATIONS.** There were no guests.

**V. REVIEW OF MINUTES OF April 10, 2024.** Ms. Heller asked for additions, deletions or corrections to the April 10, 2024 Minutes.

**MOTION (2):** Mr. Danila moved to approve the April 10, 2024 Commission for the Conservation of Natural Resources Regular Meeting Minutes, as presented. Seconded by Mr. Danila. Mr. Beeman and Ms. Ashburn read the minutes. (5-0) Unanimous.

**VI. NEW BUSINESS**

- a. Being proactive in our community. Mr. Danila stated he has come to the realization that it pays to be proactive. He spoke at Zoning Commission (ZC) meetings on behalf of this Commission about the 91 Boston Post Road development. He thought it helped to deny the application because it would cause an environmental impact as well as traffic issues considered by the ZC. The applicant has recently submitted a revised plan.

He plans to also be involved in the Trakas property development application to the ZC.

Mr. Christensen arrived.

- b. **Pattagansett Lake Aquatic Weed Control Issues.** Mr. Danila informed the Commission that another issue came up at Pattagansett Lake. A large area of vegetation was removed from a shoreline area along Upper Pattagansett Road. He emailed Mr. Goeschel and asked if the Inland Wetlands Agency had an application for this work. Mr. Goeschel sent an email and photos to the IWA Chair as they had not approved it.

Mr. Danila attended the May 7 IWA meeting and spoke under Public Delegations. Mr. Goeschel did issue a permit, but the owner did not understand what he was allowed to do. Mr. Goeschel will issue an order to put up haybales and plantings by the end of May. Mr. Danila went by there this morning because it had rained and did not see any erosion of the cleared area, but did observe the area that is being excavated. This area had a heavy silty run-off into the stormwater drain that went into the lake. He sent photos of this to Mr. Goeschel today.

## VIII.REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

- a. **Communications.** No new correspondence was received.
- b. **Agribusiness Subcommittee.** Mr. Christensen reported the Agribusiness Subcommittee visited Ledyard Agricultural School in April. The Ledyard faculty gave a tour. He added the subcommittee hopes to make East Lyme Junior High School students more familiar with the Ledyard program so they are more comfortable applying to it. Ms. Heller reported she has received seedlings from them.

EarthFest will be held on May 18 and flyers have been distributed. Ms. Kalal's grandson may bring chickens.

On June 8 (Connecticut Open House Day) from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. a Tractor Show will be held at the Samuel Smith Farmstead. There will be artists there.

- c. **SustainableCT Subcommittee.** Ms. Heller reported the Subcommittee is continuing to work on Designation as a Climate Leader, which is an extension of the Town's 2023 Certification with this program.
- d. **Pollinator Pathways East Lyme (PPEL).** Ms. Meekhoff met with Town Engineer Alex Klose and Parks and Recreation Director Jerry Lokken at Hole-in-the-Wall. She is assisting the Niantic River Watershed Committee (NRWC) in administering a Dominion Foundation Grant to upgrade this stormwater demonstration project. Mr.

Klose has been maintaining that property for stormwater and Mr. Lokken for general maintenance.

Ms. Heller walked the area this afternoon and it was dry.

Mr. Klose asked Ms. Meekhoff what the Dominion grant to the NRWC can be used for?

Mr. Danila reported the grant could be used for any legitimate aspect of improving this project.

Ms. Meekhoff stated that there is invasive mugwort at two of the basins and is trying to ascertain if it needs to be removed and if Rob Swan could spray it after he gets his CT Pesticide License.

Ms. Meekhoff met with Jason Pazzaglia, a Commercial Developer in East Lyme. She offered him free analysis of his landscape plan for the North Bridebrook development. He agreed to cooperate with plant changes that Ms. Meekhoff makes to the design. She showed her plan with members of this Commission.

Ms. Meekhoff informed the Commission that PPEL is removing many invasive plants behind the Community Center that are destroying the native plant species. Pollinator Pathways East Lyme is partnering with Brookside Farm Museum on this project.

Brookside, PPEL and the library are sponsoring a four-month book discussion on Nature's Best Hope by Doug Tallamy. On the fourth week, Professor Doug Tallamy will join via a live video chat.

Ms. Meekhoff stated regarding the Feasibility Study consideration is being given on adding a second story to the Community Center. Ms. Hardy stated the original architects felt it would not support a second story.

Ms. Meekhoff informed the Commission on May 3 she went with Annah Perch to UCONN School of Design. Fourteen students presented their final design. Ms. Meekhoff/ PPEL will help in choosing native plant species.

Ms. Ashburn added regarding the Feasibility Study if we are removing some plants in the parking lot, we need to put something else in. The asphalt will have run off. It will need a stormwater design.

Ms. Meekhoff stated Brookside Farm Museum will have a tea on May 19. She will speak at the tea.

She has spoken with Joe Bragaw about removing invasive trees from the Community Center parking lot. He felt he needed to speak with Bill Mullholland to determine whether or not there are zoning issues.

She distributed flyers on a book discussion on Nature's Best Hope starting on June 5, 2024 at the Brookside Farm Museum.

- e. **Chairman's Report.** Ms. Heller reported as part of the Climate Leader Program through SustainableCT and in partnership with the Connecticut Chapter of the Nature Conservancy, Town staff and volunteers participated in a Community Resilience Building Workshop. Participants included Nancy Kalal (Zoning Commission), Richard Gordon (Planning Commission), Phyllis Burger and Tom Kalal (Inland Wetlands Agency), Alex Klose (Town Engineer, Public Works), Julie Wilson (Emergency Management Department), East Lyme Police and Terri Smith (Niantic Main Street), CCNR Chair and Laura Ashburn (CCNR Sustainable CT Subcommittee, East Lyme)
- f. **Ex-Officio Report.** Ms. Hardy reported the Annual Town Meeting will be held on May 13 at 7 p.m. in the East Lyme High School Auditorium. The Budget Referendum will be held on May 23 at East Lyme Community Center from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

#### IX. ADJOURNMENT

**MOTION (3): Mr. Danila moved to adjourn the May 8, 2024 East Lyme Commission for the Conservation of Natural Resources at 8:25 p.m. Seconded by Ms. Ashburn. (6-0) Unanimous.**

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Frances Gheri, Recording Secretary**