

Minutes of Conservation of Natural Resources Commission

June 10th 2015 Meeting

FILED IN EAST LYME
CONNECTICUT
July 2, 2015 AT 1:15 AM/PM
Travis Tatham, Jr.
EAST LYME TOWN CLERK

Members Present:

Penny Heller, Marv Schutt, Mark Christensen

Members Absent:

Art Carlson, Laura Ashburn, Ron Nichols

Public Delegation/Niantic Watershed member: Don Danila,
Webster Rd., East Lyme

The meeting was called to order at 7:09p.m. as there was a quorum. It was noted that no Agenda had been received, however the schedule of meetings voted on in Dec., 2014 included a meeting for this evening and the town Bulletin Board indicated there was a meeting scheduled and no cancelation of this scheduled meeting was posted or received by members in attendance. Secretary Penny Heller was acting Chairman, Mark Christensen acting recording secretary.

-Approval of Minutes of May meeting were tabled, as no copies minutes were received by members.

-REPORTS: Penny Heller reported that the newspaper had reported that the Board Of Selectman approved the idea of

contributing money towards the purchase of the Harney property (Niantic Headwaters land). The issue will ultimately be decided at a referendum later this year. There is cost sharing from other groups for this proposed purchase.

-Mark Christensen reported that he sent an e-mail to Kevin Nursick of ConnDOT regarding spill mitigation piping/systems along I-95/exit 74. The response from Mr. Nursick (from January, 2015) stated that the DOT would not retro-fit any spill mitigation piping in or along the highway. They would, however, include such a system design in a re-design project. In a subsequent (Feb., 2015) phone call between Mark Christensen and Kevin Nursick, Mr. Nursick stated that to his knowledge, there had been no conversations between DOT and the developers of the Gateway project regarding the exit 74 proposed re-design since 2008, and that any re-design of exit 74 would be very costly because the power substation must be relocated. The DOT did not have funds for this potential re-design or relocation, according to Mr. Nursick. Additionally, Mr. Nursick stated that a highway design would take about 5 years to complete, and that process had not yet begun, and there was no projected date to begin the re-design of the highway. Copies of the e-mails were forwarded to Commission members earlier. Mark has sent another e-mail to Mr. Nursick in June, to inquire about any updates regarding I-95/exit 74 work. Mr. Nursick tried to call, but was unable to reach Mark.

Penny Heller reported that some changes are needed to the RGB study. The DEEP advised that we not bother testing sites that continually test sub-standard (the worst sites). We should find another brook, or move upstream. We should continue testing intermediate sites. We may wish to sample an un-named Cranberry meadow tributary near the Bialowans property, near the Solar power station.

Don Danila, Niantic Watershed Group reported that there are thermal and erosion issues along an un-named tributary of Cranberry meadow Brook. The temperature of at least part of this un-named brook is/was cold water that supports trout.

Agribusiness Report: Mark Christensen reported that the Agribusiness sub-committee entered a beekeeping float as well as 3 John Deere tractors in the Memorial Day Parade. The purpose was to highlight the need and value of honeybees in agriculture as well as in town and it was well received by the public. Also, Open Farm Day will be held on Sunday, July 19th, from 11-3pm. The 3 farms included this year are: Brubaker's Victory Garden (Rickety Pickets Garden, near Dairy Queen Parking lot); Samuel Smith Farmstead (82 Plants Dam Rd.) with Missy Miko's milk goats, and old fashioned Narragansett turkeys; McTurk's Donkey herd, (252 Whistletown Rd.) featuring their miniature Donkey's. Brochures to these venues will be handed out the day before, at Celebrate East Lyme,

where there will be an Agriculture/Conservation booth(s). Also, a biking event is being planned for fall 2016 with help from other groups to highlight farms, open space, water bodies and trails in East Lyme. The next biking meeting will be July 28 at the Olive Chendali Room, 6:30pm. Parks and Rec will offer some assistance.

DISCUSSION, Item 1: Don Danila reported that although he was asked quite some time ago if he would be willing to serve on this commission, he has received no official notice from this commission, town planner or selectman. He is becoming frustrated and will soon move onto other venues rather than wait. We need to get the appointment formalized, and get Don sworn in so he can participate. Don is a Marine Biologist, and would be a valuable member of this commission.

DISCUSSION, Item 2: Mark will sign up for an Agriculture booth and a Conservation booth for Celebrate East Lyme Day. A wetland display is planned for the Conservation booth, Penny Heller will try to get the display from the DEEP.

Motion to adjourn made by Mark Christensen, seconded by Marv Schutt. Vote was 3-0 to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 8:09 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Christensen