

Minutes of Conservation Commission Meeting

4:30 PM March 2, 2023

Members: (Meeting was held on Zoom): Lisa Wahle, Rick Holloway, Sandy Prisloe, Margot Burns, Ted Taigen*, Kate Hair, Lisa Hayward (* = not in attendance)

Meeting called to order at 4:35 pm.

Motion (LW, 2nd RH) to adjust the agenda to entertain item 5a and 4b first to accommodate people who had to leave early. Passed unanimously

1. **Minutes:** The minutes of the February 2023 regular meeting were approved unanimously.
2. **Audience of citizens:** First Selectwoman Charlene Janecek, Chester Tourism contact Rebecca (Bekah) Wright, citizens Richard Sattler and Mark Borton
3. **Correspondence:** emails concerning item 5a and 5b
4. **Old Business**
 - a. **Envirotips.** New tips on native plants and animals are going well. **Sandy** suggested some tips that feature local areas of natural interest such as Great Cedar Swamp, Cockaponset SF, Chester Creek, etc. He will work on a Great Cedar Swamp tip.
 - b. **Open Space mapping.** Since the last meeting, Lisa W sent a 2020 draft map that Margot had made, and Margot sent a 2022 version. There was discussion about what constitutes open space. The four categories in the legend = state land, land trust, municipal and water company. There was general consensus that open space should have some conservation value. It also would be good to know what town parcels are permanently protected. **Kate** will look through the open space inventory to see if this info is included. **Margot** will revise the map and remove parcels with little or no conservation value (e.g., elementary school). There is still an issue with Chester's parcels being inconsistent with surrounding towns and the state GIS layer for town boundaries. But, the open space map can still be uploaded to the town GIS website and submitted for credit to Sustainable CT.
 - c. **SustainableChester (SuChest).**
Follow up on Road Safety Audit to continue.

SuChest and a rep from Chesterfields will tour Masonicare's food scrap collection effort. A tour of the Guest House (a certified green lodging facility) will be arranged at a later date.

EV charging station - Sandy explained that the town may need to hire a local electrician to hook up the station and that the town Finance Commission has concerns about the town assuming long-term maintenance. **Sandy** will talk to Ed Meehan to see where we stand.

Kate is still very interested in developing a community garden and will contact the synagogue to find out more about their gardens.
 - d. **Invasive/native plant education/action:** A few remaining fact sheets need to be uploaded to our website, and we need to continue to create fact sheets.

- e. **Pollinator garden / Earth Day.** The subcommittee met on Feb 25 to plan details for Earth Day. The interpretive sign post and frame arrived; the actual sign is on its way. We plan to have plant giveaway, educational materials and activity table (Jan Taigen) set up around noon in the Water St parking lot to be ready when folks come back from the town-wide cleanup. **Lisa H** will make a poster design for publicity and agreed to be person of the week in the Valley Courier to promote the event. The plant order changed slightly: 100 plants, 4.5 inch pots, 25 each of black-eyed susan, mountain mint, butterfly weed, and beebalm. We are trying to arrange a native plant talk on April 16 at the Meeting House

Bekah Wright told us that there will be many Earth Day activities downtown between 10 AM and 2 PM. She will be promoting all of these including our native pollinator plant activities. We need to keep her posted.

- f. **Cedar Lake.** No new report.
- g. **Management of invasives at Carini and Scudder preserves.** Chester Land Trust ran a notice in the town-wide email explaining what was going on with invasive removal and plans to replant. Some shrub planting outside of the knotweed area can begin this spring; but no shrubs in this area until the knotweed is all dead - could be 3-5 years. There are plans to put down some conservation mix there in the meantime.
- h. Review of Chester Conservation Commission website. Sandy added some comments and suggested that all of the Energy information be moved to the Energy Team page. **Lisa W** will compile our comments and fact sheets, and send to Jenny Watrous and Kate to update the CCC webpage

5. New Business.

- a. Essay about work around waterfalls by Richard Sattler, who had done some clearing and trail work near the Pattaconk Brook dam downstream of Wig Hill Rd. We appreciate his enthusiasm, but emphasized that he needs to get permission from the First Selectwoman prior to work on town land and from Inland Wetlands for work near wetlands/watercourses. Guest Mark Borton expressed concern about the problem of ATVs and bicycles damaging trails throughout Cockaponset. This is a long-recognized issue and needs more state enforcement. Lisa W suggested contacting DEEP and legislators to insure adequate funding.
- b. The Laurel Hill Cemetery to N Quarter Park Trail Committee is moving forward to develop a trail plan. **Lisa W** asked to be kept in the loop as the Commission has an interest in this project.

Adjournment at 6:05 pm.

Next meeting April 6, 2023

Respectfully submitted by Richard Holloway & Lisa Wahle