

Minutes of Conservation Commission Meeting

4:30 PM September 7, 2023

Chester Town Hall and via MS Teams

Members: Lisa Wahle, Rick Holloway, Sandy Prisloe*, Margot Burns*, Ted Taigen, Kate Hair, Lisa Hayward (* = not in attendance); Guests: Kim Price – Chester Fair Zero Waste, Cindy Lignar - Chester Sustainability Team

Meeting called to order at 4:30 pm.

1. Minutes: The minutes of the August 3rd meeting were approved unanimously.

2. Audience of citizens: None

3. Correspondence:

(1) Letter from CCC to the Chester Fair Board thanking them for their support for the Zero Waste program.

(2) Correspondence with IWWA regarding erosion issues along Great Brook. Situation partially corrected.

4. Old Business

a. Envirotips. Suggested future topics: Canada Geese (LH), Murmuration of Tree Swallows – ways to view this (KH), Recycling program for Main Street (LW).

b. Open Space mapping. Free ArcGIS program makes data entry easy, but retrieval may pose a problem.

b. SustainableChester (SuChest).

- Zero Waste Chester Fair: Kim Price reported results known so far. Collection of recyclables was greatly increased over last year. Light rain on Friday adding to the weight probably had no measurable effect on this number. Weight of trash reported by All Waste was discouragingly high. This may be the result of the placement of the trash dumpster near the fairground exit, where it became a catch-all for garbage not related to the Fair itself. Still awaiting report from Blue Earth re-compostables. All persons who served as sorting station monitors reported overwhelmingly positive response from fairgoers.

- Lobster Fest (Sept 9) food scrap collection. Deep Hollow Farm is going to accept all corn husks. Due to a shortage of personnel, it is not possible to collect other food wastes this year. This will definitely be part of planning for next year. The Sustainable Team may be able to tie this in to food waste recovery at the Essex Lobster Fest which takes place within a week of Chester's. Ted T noted that being able to go to local compost sites avoids the expense of having Blue Earth haul it to Southington.

- Waste reduction downtown Chester. This is a work in progress. Better graphics and signage are in the works. A container borrowed from Little House Brewing worked well as a collection container for pizza boxes at last Sunday's Market. Discussion about the importance of making the physical appearance of the various containers more apparent - color, shape, labeling. **Lisa or Cindy** will see if DPW can refashion the tops of the

recycling containers such that the shape (circles) and orientation (vertical) will make it obvious that they are for bottles and cans. This will also make it less likely that they will be used for trash.

- Silver status application. This has been submitted with way more points (590) than required (500). There should be news of success within a few weeks.

- Electronics recycling event Oct 28th. This is scheduled for the parking lot of the United Church. Deep River rejected Chester's request to share the electronics waste trailer at the shared transfer station. The United Church can probably host repeated events, but this is really a regional issue and should be addressed as such.

d. Invasive/native plant education/action: Lisa submitted article on Autumn Olive to Chester Events magazine for the 4th quarter issue. An occurrence of the Spotted Lanternfly has been reported in Chester. Lisa H reported spread of Mile-a-minute vine down Bokum Rd.

e. Cedar Lake. Weed mats were very successful. This year, the mats will be left in place over the winter as there is no place to store them on land.

f. The Laurel Hill Cemetery to N Quarter Park Trail. The CCC supports the addition of dense vegetation to screen the trail from neighbors, as well as some invasive plant control and plantings for habitat. Although the CCC will not endorse this project, it will highlight certain issues which must be addressed if it is to go forward. LW will send comments to IWWA.

g. Natural Resources Inventory. Nothing to report

k. CCC Website. Nothing to report

5. New Business.

a. Future projects:

- The pollinator seedling giveaway on Earth Day was very successful. Various groups involved hope to make similar programs available each year.

- publish a booklet of the top ten invasive plants for distribution at Town Hall.

- High water use at Town Hall. \$1000 to water the lawns there. The Energy Team (**Rick**) is preparing some recommendations.

- **Lisa** is preparing the Annual Report for the CCC.

- Sadly, Margot will be resigning from this Commission. Keep looking for candidates.

- Lisa and Kate will check to see whose terms need to be renewed in November.

Adjournment at 6:00 pm

Carry-overs: Mowing of Knotweed along Straits Road may be facilitating propagation.

Lisa to talk to DPW regarding effectiveness of various control measures.

Next meeting October 5, 2023

Respectfully submitted by Richard Holloway & Lisa Wahle