



Special Meeting of the Conservation Commission - Minutes
Town Hall 1:00 PM, February 16, 2024

In attendance: Lisa Wahle, Richard Holloway, Sandy Prisløe, Ted Taigen, Kate Hair, and Nancy Byrne - Chair of the Cedar Lake Watershed Committee

1. Open Space Map and Inventory. The Commission reviewed the list of open space parcels and the attribute table LW had populated based on the table provided by SustainableCT. There was discussion about whether some parcels should be considered because they were privately owned by organizations (e.g., Chester Fairgrounds, Camp Hazen). The commission looked at the levels and types of protection provided in the dropdown menus. There is a column for legal protection with a Yes, No and Uncertain options. Conservation easements, other than one known land trust parcel, will be addressed in the future. Vacant private land, is not being considered at this time.
2. Develop guiding questions for a Natural Resource Inventory. The Commission decided to use the same 5 questions as Andover with an additional question regarding threats:
 1. What important natural resources occur in town and where?
 2. Where is the open space in town and how well is it protected?
 3. How do valuable natural resources and open space align?
 4. What are the goals and priorities of OS acquisition and/or management? (protect air, water, plants and animals)
 5. How do we achieve these goals through an NRI?
 6. What are the threats to valuable natural areas and resources (e.g., invasive plants, development)?
3. Preliminary list of GIS layers to consider: soils, wetlands, surficial materials, drainage basins, waterbodies. SP said he had most of these layers clipped for Chester and would put them together in an ArcGIS map to share. He would also link the parcel layer to the Open Space attribute table.

Nancy Byrne noted that for a Cedar Lake watershed plan, they would mostly be interested in invasive plants, runoff, and road drainage. But, she would give more thought to how other NRI information could inform a watershed plan. She noted that vernal pool species are active on Cedar Lake Road this time of year. Commission members will begin to identify vernal pools from aerial photography and/or Google Earth to put into another layer

4. The commission looked briefly at the contents of the open space inventory notebooks that are kept in the Town Hall vault.

The next special meeting will be March 1st at 1 PM to continue NRI discussion.
Respectfully submitted by Lisa Wahle