

Minutes of Conservation Commission Meeting

4:30 PM December 1, 2022

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

Guests: Lisa Hayward

Meeting called to order at 4:35 pm.

MOTION: To make Election of Officers the first item on the agenda: Approved unanimously. The terms served by Lisa Wahle and Richard Holloway had expired at the beginning of November. Both have since been reappointed by BOS and sworn in.

MOTION: To elect Lisa Wahle as Chair and Richard Holloway as Vice Chair for the coming year. APPROVED unanimously.

Minutes: The minutes of the October and November 2022 regular meetings were approved unanimously.

Audience of citizens: None in attendance

Correspondence: None

5. Old Business

a. Envirotips. Many new sources for Envirotips have been sent to **Lisa W** who is editing them and moving them to the shared Google document. It was suggested that photos be added to Envirotips to make them more noticeable. **Lisa W** will set up a shared folder for photos. **Kate** will provide a nature-oriented Envirotip for the second week each month, and a tip about how to save Christmas trees as shelter for wildlife.

b. Open Space mapping. **Margot** will add the properties newly acquired by the Chester Land Trust to the notebooks at Town Hall.

c. SustainableCT.

Pedestrian and Bike safety: A draft copy of the audit is expected to be sent to us within a few weeks.

Food Scrap collection: Still looking for site for collecting food scraps from residents. Kate suggested that if a site can be found for community gardens, this could also serve as a food scrap collection site.

Lisa W offered to set up a small visit to view the Masonicare food scrap collection program after the start of the New Year. Following this, it would be desirable to arrange a meeting and possible re-visit to include Camp Hazen, Aaron Manor, Apple Rehab, the Guest House, and Chester Elementary School representatives.

Rotary Clubs in Chester, Deep River, and Essex are all interested in tackling this problem. Chester Rotary is working on setting up a one-year pilot food composting program at Chester elementary school.

EV Charging Station: A request for cost information has been submitted to Eversource. We await a response.

Nips bottle refund: **Rick** to determine how much the town is receiving.

d. Invasive plant education/action:

December 17 deadline for submitting an article to Chester Events. **Lisa H** will prepare an article on mile-a-minute vine.

e. **Pollinator garden sign.**

Ted will submit a request to the local Rotary district to obtain matching funds for the sign and plants for Earth Day (to match Chester Rotary and Chester Conservation Commission funds). Rotary requires a plan for maintenance of any project they finance; the garden by the bus stop is maintained by volunteers and the Town Crew maintains the gardens around the building in the Water Street lot. Ted needs a statement from the Commission for its \$100 match and from the Town confirming that the Town Crew will install the interpretive sign. The plan is to unveil the pollinator sign and hand out informational flyers and pollinator plants on Earth Day, April 22, 2023. It may be possible to provide some native pollinator-friendly shrubs for nearby public access property.

f. **Refilling vacancy on Commission.**

Lisa H needs to be formally appointed by the selectmen, then sworn in,

g. **Possible grant for boat washing station at Cedar Lake.**

Discussion of the high cost of purchasing and maintaining such a device as well as where and by whom it might be used. Spread of invasive aquatic vegetation is a regional issue requiring further coordination. **Rick** to obtain an update from the Cedar Lake Watershed committee for next time.

6. New Business.

a. Update: Invasive plant management at Carini and Scudder properties by CLT stewards. The person who has been conducting knotweed control at the Carini Preserve will be presenting at the CLT Annual Meeting on December 6.

b. Dedication of Town-owned property in memory of Anna Sweeney. The dedication held at North Quarter Park was well attended.

c. The same CCC meeting schedule (Thursdays at 4:30) will be maintained in 2023.

d. Concern about excessive tree clearing by Eversource. Property owners can dispute what is to be cut within 10 days of being given notice from Eversource. The local tree warden reviews the objection and renders a decision. Chester does not presently have a tree warden. The selectmen are aware of residents' concern about this.

Adjournment at 6:00 pm.

Next meeting January 5, 2023.

Respectfully submitted by Richard Holloway