



APPROVED MINUTES
Ridgefield Conservation Commission
Town Hall annex, 66 Prospect Street
Ridgefield, CT 06877
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Meeting
August 16, 2021 at 7 P.M.
Via Zoom

Present:	James Coyle	Dave Cronin	Daniel C. Levine
	Jean Linville	Jack Kace	Erik Keller
	Kitsey Snow	Matt Sharp	Allan Welby
Absent:	Roberta Barbieri	Jim Liptack	
Guests:	Stefano Zandri	Paul Payne	Judd Zusel

Jim Coyle chaired the meeting. Ms. Campbell-Gibson took the minutes.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

UPON motion duly made (Cronin), seconded (Kace), and carried, it was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of July 19, 2021 and August 09, 2021 be approved and ordered filed in the Town Hall.

2. DEER HUNT

Mr. Zandri and Mr. Payne of the Deer Management Implementation Committee were present at the meeting to discuss the 2021-22 controlled deer hunt in Ridgefield. Mr. Zandri requested the addition of the Bear Mountain property to the list of properties to be hunted in the 2021-22 season. He also presented the 2020-21 harvest results.

The commissioners felt it was better to keep the properties to be hunted this year as scheduled and to consider adding the Bear Mountain property to the list next year when the properties are chosen for the upcoming hunt seasons.

UPON motion duly made (Kace), seconded (Levine), and carried, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the 2021-22 deer hunt and send a letter to the Board of Selectmen in support of the hunt. Vote: 9:0 Abstained: 1 (Ms. Snow was not yet at the meeting to vote.)

3. NORWALK DAM No.2 DEMOLITION

A subcommittee of the commission, including Dr. Kace, Ms. Barbieri and Ms. Snow, have worked on a draft letter to submit to NRCS (Natural Resource Conservation Service) as a response from the commission to the proposed removal of Dam No.2 on the Norwalk River.

UPON motion duly made (Keller), seconded (Sharp), and carried, it was **RESOLVED** to approve letter of response to the NRCS as written. Vote: 9:0 Abstained: 1 (Ms. Snow was not yet at the meeting to vote.)

4. ENFORCEMENT ACTION

4.1 25 Tanglewood Court A revised Notice of Violation has been drafted by Mr. Halley, the Conservation Enforcement Officer. In the notice, the dumping violation is dropped, the mowing violation is upheld and the placement of boulders to mark the border of 25 Tanglewood Court is requested. Mr. Halley was not present at the meeting to give input.

Mr. Zusel was present at the meeting. He wanted to discuss his response to the notice of Violation sent to him on July 24, 2021. Mr. Coyle told Mr. Zusel that his proposal was not accepted and would not be discussed at this meeting in Mr. Halley's absence. Mr. Zusel was unhappy with this response, and reiterated the request he had made in his response to the NOV he had received. Mr. Coyle told Mr. Zusel again that his proposal was not accepted. The commission is not prepared to spend money to assist someone to rectify their violation of open space. The commission does not want a row of Thuja "green giant" trees planted on open space. Commission would prefer to see true native trees used on the Open Space. Straight-line plantings are not natural features to consider when returning land to its natural state. Mr. Zusel was not happy with this outcome. He left the meeting.

The commissioners continued to discuss the violation at 25 Tanglewood court. Mr. Keller agreed to type a paragraph that sums up the considerations the commission are willing to give to Mr. Zusel as well as stating the minimum conditions that need to be met. This write-up will be sent to Mr. Halley for him to add to the revised NOV, which will be sent to Mr. Zusel.

No other enforcement actions were discussed in Mr. Halley's absence.

5. OPEN SPACE

5.1 BOS meeting regarding easements

Mr. Coyle, Dr. Kace and Mr. Keller have been working on a proposal to protect open space with deed language. A global easement is the vehicle to achieve this. This proposal is being set aside until a later date when everyone has more time to devote to completing this project.

5.2 OSWA Grant update – Bear Mountain purchase

The documentation required in order for the commission to receive the grant awarded by OSAW, is almost ready for submission. The required documentation included a new survey, which will be completed by next week; a title search, which has been completed; along with other forms Mr. Coyle has completed. The complete package of data will be ready to be sent by mid- to end-September.

5.3 Boy Scout Property

There are 10-15 acres of the Boy Scout property that the commission would like to purchase from the Boy Scouts depending on the results of a title search. The rest of the Boy Scout property on Pine Mountain Road is under a deed restriction such that it should go to the commission. There is much confusion over the ownership of certain parcels of land in the 15 acres for sale, which is delaying the entire process. The commission would have liked to apply for an OSWA grant to purchase this property, but time has run out for an application to be ready by the deadline for submissions this year.

5.4 Henny Penny Lease

Mr. Coyle reported that he and Dr. Freeman of Henny Penny farm has gone before the BOS on Wednesday August 11, 2021. The format of their discussion was supposed to be remarks given by Mr. Coyle, a presentation by Dr. Freeman and a discussion. However, the meeting turned into a Q&A before full remarks or a presentation could be delivered by the commission and Henny Penny. The outcome of the BOS meeting is that a public hearing is set for September 1, 2021 and a Town Meeting is set for September 22, 2021 to address the lease.

Mr. Welby sent new comments to the commissioners today via email. Mr. Coyle proposed to have a special meeting on August 23, 2021 to discuss revisions to the previously approved lease given the length of the agenda for this regular meeting.

UPON motion duly made (Kace), seconded (Keller), and carried, it was RESOLVED Hold a special meeting on August 23, 2021 at 7:00PM to discuss the issues surrounding the Henny Penny lease. Vote: 7:0 Abstained: 2 (Ms. Snow, Mr. Cronin.)

Mr. Coyle mentioned that a FOIA request had been made by Mr. Kirk Carr for documents and leases at McKeon farm since 2002. The commission will consult the town attorney regarding this FOIA request.

5.5 Potential donation

Parcel G08-0012 was offered to the commission as a potential donation. This is a seven-acre parcel on Rt 7. It is heavily wooded, wetlands and is industrially zoned. It is near a business that handles chemicals and the commissioners expressed concern over possible ground water contamination in the wetlands. Mr. Cronin was tasked with looking at the historical aerial views of this parcel over time. Ms. Campbell-Gibson was asked to get tax records for the parcel. The commissioners were asked to do a site walk of the property in their own time before the next regular meeting on September 8, 2021.

6. OPEN SPACE MAINTENANCE

6.1 West Mountain Green

Mr. Cronin has done some repair work to the boardwalk where a tree fell down and damaged the boardwalk. Further work is required.

6.2 Other

Mr. Sharp reported another damaged boardwalk in Florida Refuge. This is earmarked to be a possible Boy Scout project. Mr. Sharp also reported that the summer workers employment was now at an end, but that the trail at McKeon still needed to be mowed every two weeks. He asked for volunteers to assist.

Mr. Keller reported that he, Mr. Sharp and Mr. Cronin has met to discuss the parking lot at McKeon. Some wood is required to complete the fencing but the project is relatively easy to complete. The commission will consider putting down some gravel, should the grassy parking lot become waterlogged and muddy

Mr. Liptack and the summer workers completed a staircase on the Pine Mountain trail. They did this enormous job by hand. The end result is commendable.

Ms. Snow will contact Carlos Trigueros regarding haying Lauzen field. Mr. Coyle said would like the haying done while the hay is still viable so that the cut grass is removed as hay and not left lying in the field.

7. COMMUNITY OUTREACH

There was nothing to report on this matter.

8. MEETINGS FOR ATTENDANCE

Some commissioners have swapped meeting attendance to ensure coverage of meetings they could not attend. There are no other issues.

9. CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

Mr. Coyle had no remarks.

ADJOURNMENT

UPON motion duly made (Keller), seconded (Kace), and carried, it was **RESOLVED** that the meeting adjourn at 8:56 P.M. Vote: 8:0. (Mr. Levine was no longer in the meeting after his device disconnected earlier.)