



APPROVED MINUTES
Ridgefield Conservation Commission
Town Hall annex, 66 Prospect Street
Ridgefield, CT 06877
(203) 431-2713 • conservation@ridgefieldct.org

Meeting
October 04, 2021 at 7 P.M.
Via Zoom

Present: James Coyle Dave Cronin Daniel C. Levine
 Jean Linville Allan Welby Jack Kace
 Erik Keller Matt Sharp

Absent: Jim Liptack, Roberta Barbieri, Kitsey Snow

Guests: Varsha Basker, Shannon Capocci, Jeremy Capocci, Matt Hicks

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

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

UPON motion duly made (Sharp), seconded (Cronin), and carried, it was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meetings of September 20, 2021 be approved and ordered filed in the Town Hall. Vote: 7:0 (Abstained: Levine, not in last meeting.)

2. SCOUT PRESENTATION – Varsha Basker

Ms. Basker is a life scout from Troop 19. For her Eagle Scout project, she proposes to remove the single plank bog crossing in Barrack Hills, and build and install a double plank bog bridge using six 2X10X12 wood secured to 4X4 cross planks with 3" screws. Her aim is to have the project finished by the end of October. The completed bog bridge will be 36 feet in length.

Mr. Keller asked Ms. Basker to use the 4X4 cross planks every six feet instead of every 12 feet as she had planned to do, to make the bog bridge more stable. Mr. Cronin said that the commission could provide screws for the project.

UPON motion duly made (Sharp), seconded (Linville), and carried, it was **RESOLVED** to approve expenditure of \$300.00 for Ms. Basker's project to install a 36-foot long, double plank bog bridge in Barrack Hills Preserve. Vote: 8:0

3. OPEN SPACE

Before requesting approval for the various projects to be done in open spaces, Mr. Coyle updated the commission on the finances. The expenditures for Q1 are about \$5,000.00 under budget. He then discussed the balances of the Open Space Fund and the Discretionary Fund.

3.1 Land donation of parcel G08-0012: The Phase 1 study is still outstanding. Until this is done, acceptance of this potential land donation cannot move forward through the Town approval process. Formal acceptance of this land donation will come before the BOS as soon as the results from the Phase 1 study have been received from Jake Muller.

3.2 McKeon mowing: Lauzen Field and the upper meadow will be mowed next week by Carlos Trigueiros. The cost is \$1,200.00 to mow and remove the hay. Three quarters of Lauzen will be mowed, leaving one quarter unmowed per recommendations for the conservation of bee habitat.

UPON motion duly made (Keller), seconded (Welby), and carried, it was RESOLVED to approve expenditure of \$1,200.00 for Mr. Trigueiros to cut and remove the grass on three quarters of Lauzen field and the entire upper meadow Vote: 8:0

3.3 McKeon signage: Mr. Keller and Dr. Linville have received a quote of \$4,613.00 from Sign-o-rama for the printing, and installation of ten signs for the trail at McKeon Farm. Mr. Coyle said \$3,000.00 of the RTS grant would go towards the cost of these signs, leaving the remainder to be taken from the Discretionary Fund.

Dr. Linville said the project should be complete by the end of October. Mr. Cronin asked that the signs be installed in such a way that they do not hamper mowing on the trails and near walls and fences. Mr. Keller said that the commission will supervise installation, and anyone is welcome to assist in this supervision.

UPON motion duly made (Keller), seconded (Kace), and carried, it was RESOLVED to approve expenditure of \$3,000.00 from the RTS grant and \$1,613.00 from the Discretionary Fund to pay for the manufacture and installation of ten signs at McKeon Farm. Vote: 7:0 (Abstain: Cronin)

3.4 Town wide conservation easement on open space properties: Mr. Coyle, Dr. Kace and Mr. Keller are still working on this project with Mr. Grogins. The decision has not been made as to the appropriate legal vehicle to use to achieve a town-wide conservation easement. Mr. Coyle will give another update at the next meeting.

3.5 Boy Scout Property: The issue that deals with ownership is still under investigation. Mr. Grogins is reviewing the deeds for the three parcels the commission wish to purchase. These total 17 acres. The remaining 42 acres has a deed restriction that states that if the scouts do not use the land, it must pass to the Town. Mr. Coyle asked the commission to approve funds for an appraisal on the three parcels. A quote from Kerin & Fazio LLC came in at \$4,500.00. An appraisal done by the Scouts eight months ago included the land with the deed restriction.

UPON motion duly made (Keller), seconded (Sharp), and carried, it was RESOLVED to approve expenditure of \$4,500.00 from the Open Space Fund to pay for Kerin & Fazio LLC to do the appraisal of 17 acres of land, in three parcels, of the Boy Scouts property. Vote: 8:0

3.6 Annual Appeal: Mr. Coyle asked the commission the approve funds to pay for the printing and distribution of the 2021 Annual Appeal.

UPON motion duly made (Keller), seconded (Sharp), and carried, it was RESOLVED to approve expenditure of \$5,300.00 from the Open Space Fund to pay for the 2021 Annual Appeal printing and mailing. Vote: 8:0

Dr. Kace said the commission should look into electronic donations. Mr. Coyle said our electronic mailing list is 966 contacts, whereas the paper mailing goes out to 10,750 homes. If a donations portal is programmed for our website, this entails the lengthy process of programming by the IT Department. Mr. Levine suggested using PayPal. Mr. Cronin suggested using GoFundMe. Ms. Campbell-Gibson will investigate electronic donation options.

4. NRI Update

Dr. Linville gave an update: the NRI is going forward slowly. Woodcock Nature Center organizers canceled a proposed iNaturalist workshop due to lack of support. The next scheduled event is this Saturday at Bennet's Farm. She thanked Mr. Welby for the bird-counting weekend he hosted at RHS.

Dr. Linville will nominate a date for the next meeting of the NRI subcommittee.

5. COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Mr. Levine said there were many compliments for the Fall Newsletter that went out at the beginning of September. He said he is always willing to put content on Facebook and send eblasts when needed.

6. MEETINGS FOR ATTENDANCE

No issues were reported.

7. CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

Mr. Coyle said he and Ms. Snow will be meeting with Charlie Taney on Thursday to discuss the list of concerns from residents regarding the Ridgefield portion of the NRV, but added that most of the issues can only be adequately addressed once the construction documents are available.

Mr. Coyle proposed a return to in person meetings. The next meeting by the commission will be in person.

ADJOURNMENT

UPON motion duly made (Cronin), seconded (Keller), and carried, it was **RESOLVED** that the meeting adjourn at 7:59 P.M. Vote: 8:0.