



APPROVED MINUTES
Ridgefield Conservation Commission

Flood and Erosion Control Board

Town Hall Annex, 66 Prospect Street

Ridgefield, CT 06877 (203) 431-2713

October 17, 2016

A meeting of the Ridgefield Conservation Commission was held at the Town Hall Annex, 66 Prospect Street, Ridgefield, Connecticut 06877 on Monday, October 17, 2016 at 7:30 p.m.

The following members were present:

Susan Baker
Eric Beckenstein
Tim Bishop
Carroll Brewster
Jim Coyle
Dave Cronin
Jack Kace
Kitsey Snow
Dan Levine, Voting Alternate
Ben Oko, Alternate

The following member was absent: Alan Pilch

Beth Peyser, Cheryl Ann Cook, and Chris McQuilken were also in attendance. Mr. Coyle chaired the meeting. Colleen Lake was present to take minutes.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the September 26, 2016 meeting were reviewed.

UPON motion duly made, seconded and carried, it was RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of September 26, 2016 are approved and ordered filed in the minute books of the Commission and the Town Hall.

2. TREASURER'S REPORT - No report.

3. OPEN SPACE

a) Enforcement Issues

Conservation Hearing Officers – Three applicants were interviewed by the Board of Selectmen. The Board appointed all three applicants for one year and the

commission will implement a three-judge panel for one year to handle citation appeals.

Brief Update on Enforcement Cases

- **795 North Salem Road** – The town rejected the \$10,000 settlement offer from the property owner's insurance company in a letter dated October 4, 2016. The town intends to bring a lawsuit against the owner.
- **20 Mopus Bridge** – A letter and maps outlining the proposed 2:1 easement swap were sent to the property owner. The owner has until Friday, 10/21/16 to respond to the letter before violation proceedings begin.
- **55 Canterbury Lane** – The First Selectmen has turned the matter back to the RCC. Town Attorney Grogins will send a letter to the homeowner describing the new ordinance and the violation process.
- **82 Canterbury Lane** – Three PNOV's were sent to the homeowner. There has been no response. The homeowner has been asked to appear at the 11/14/16 RCC meeting.

b) McKeon Farm

- **Apple Tree Pruning** – John Pinchbeck was consulted about pruning. It was his opinion that pruning the apple trees will not prolong or enhance their lives. It was noted that there is only about \$14,000 in the McKeon Farm account.

UPON motion duly made, seconded and carried by a vote of 4 to 3 (with one abstention), it was RESOLVED not to spend \$4000 to prune the trees this year because it will not improve the life of the trees and it is too late in the season for pruning. The matter may be revisited next year.

- **Mowing** – Mowing the fields at McKeon was discussed. Mr. Cronin will visit the fields to determine whether it is necessary to mow this fall and report back at the next RCC meeting.
- **Henny Penny Lease** – A separate addendum to the lease needs to be done based on request from the NRCS. Mr. Coyle will speak to Messrs. Marconi and Grogins about getting this resolved.

c) **Deer Committee** – Ms. Snow will draft a letter to the Board of Selectmen recording the RCC's dissatisfaction with the deer committee's failure to personally notify abutting neighbors about the open forum prior to the hunt, as promised.

d) **Ranger Recognition** – The RCC would like to provide hats to the rangers. Mr. Levine will design a logo and Ms. Snow will contact local businesses for costs and options.

e) **Walk Book Sales Locations** – Mr. Levine will create a poster to be used at locations where the book is offered. Ms. Lake will contact Weir Farm about selling the book in their gift shop.

f) **Wooster School** – Dr. Oko indicated that he had been approached by the school's head master, Matt Byrnes, regarding the creating of a program where the students would do stewardship activities like trail maintenance and invasive removal on open space. Commission members thought that was a good program to implement. Dan Levine, Dave Cronin and Ms. Snow will start discussions with the school.

4. PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION, INLAND WETLANDS BOARD

a) **Meetings for Attendance**

Oct. 18 – Mr. Bishop
Nov. 1 – Mr. Brewster
Nov. 9 - Mr. Coyle
Nov. 15 – Mr. Cronin
Nov. 22 – Mr. Kace

b) **New & Continued Business**

(None)

5. ISSUES BEFORE THE COMMISSION

a) **Tree Committee Candidate** - Ms. Cheryl Ann Cook discussed her interest and credentials for becoming a member of the Tree Committee.

UPON motion duly made, seconded and unanimously carried, it was RESOLVED to enthusiastically endorse and appoint Ms. Cheryl Ann Cook to the Tree Committee.

b) **2016-17 Annual Appeal Letter** – Mr. Coyle asked for comments on the draft letter from commission members within a week. The revised letter will be discussed and voted on at the next meeting.

c) **Dr. Oko FCRCP Presentation** – Dr. Oko presented a Strategic Conservation Map for Fairfield County created by Fairfield County Land Trusts and Conservation Commissions. After examining, collecting and plotting numerous variables that are important to the ecology of Fairfield County, the story map pinpoints the most important areas to protect within the county, and town.

6. WHITBECK ESTATE

The trustee anticipates completing renovations and putting the house on the market October 31, 2016. Mr. Coyle and Attorney Maini will schedule a visit to the house to check on status of completion. Attorney Maini filed a *Petition for Interim Accounting* on September 27, 2016 with the probate court for an accounting of monies spent to date.

7. NEW BUSINESS

- **Town Website** – Mr. Coyle and Mr. Cronin will meet to revise the RCC site to fit the new layout.
 - **CACIWC Conference** – Interested commissioners can register for the November 12, 2016 annual meeting in Rocky Hill, CT.
 - **Forestry Survey** – Ms. Snow and Mr. Cronin will look into completing the survey.
 - **NRI** – Ms. Lake will find out when the town's Plan of Conservation and Development is scheduled to be updated. The NRI should be updated within the same timeframe.
 - **Land Conservancy** – Mr. Brewster indicated that the conservancy was getting close to final approval of its application for accreditation from the Land Trust Accreditation Commission. He suggested that the RCC and the conservancy should seek to work closer together in the future, such as by inviting their chairperson to one of our meetings and having a joint meeting of both the RCC and the conservancy. Mr. Brewster will follow up with Joan Corley, the conservancy's new chairperson.
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8. FLOOD & EROSION CONTROL BOARD

Mr. Bishop will attempt to schedule a meeting with the Town Engineer.

ADJOURNMENT

UPON motion duly made, seconded and unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Colleen Lake