

APPROVED MINUTES
Ridgefield Conservation Commission
Flood and Erosion Control Board
Town Hall Annex, 66 Prospect Street
Ridgefield, CT 06877 (203) 431-2713
May 9, 2016

A meeting of the Ridgefield Conservation Commission was held at the Town Hall Annex, 66 Prospect Street, Ridgefield, Connecticut 06877 on Monday, May 9, 2016 at 7:30 p.m.

The following members were present:

Susan Baker
Eric Beckenstein
Carroll Brewster
Jim Coyle
Dave Cronin
Jack Kace
Alan Pilch
Dan Levine, Voting Alternate

The following members were absent:

Tim Bishop
Ben Oko
Kitsey Snow

Mr. Brewster chaired the meeting in Ms. Snow's absence. Colleen Lake was present to take minutes.

MINUTES

The minutes of the April 18, 2016 meeting were reviewed.

UPON motion duly made, seconded and carried, it was
RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of April 18, 2016 are approved and
ordered filed in the minute books of the Commission and the Town Hall.

TREASURER'S REPORT - No report.

OPEN SPACE

a) Enforcement Update

4 Encampment Place – There has been no response from the homeowner after receiving the certified letter in April. The RCC will ask Ms. Peyser to issue a Warning to the homeowner when she has the authority from the First Selectman to do so.

20 Mopus Bridge – No change.

Laurel Hill Road – Ms. Peyser will ask the homeowner to stop mowing in the open space. Hunt Master Zandri will remove the illegal deer stand. There is debris left on open space that needs to be picked up if summer interns/workers are available.

55 Canterbury Lane – No update from the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Beckenstein will contact Mr. Marconi to discuss turning the issue over to the RCC.

795 North Salem Road – No response from homeowner after numerous attempts to resolve the issue. The RCC will ask Ms. Peyser to issue a Violation Citation to the homeowner when she has the authority from the First Selectman to do so..

359 North Salem Road – Mr. Beckenstein and Ms. Peyser inspected the property after a complaint was received from a neighbor. Upon inspection, it was determined that there was tree cutting, dumping of leaves in the open space wetland and debris and a shed, at least partially on open space. The Commission will schedule a walk of the property and put it on the 5/23/16 agenda for discussion. The person allegedly responsible for the encroachments will be invited to appear.

- b) Walk Book – Mr. Coyle reported that the project is moving along. Mr. Cronin has provided color trail maps, Ms. Baker is editing text and the photo contest has been extended to July 1st. Ms. Lake will send NRI (Natural Resource Inventory)volunteers the photo contest information.
- c) RHS Interns – 3 high school interns, Rafael Atunes, Jack O'Connor and Joe Irwin, started today and will work with Mr. Cronin for the week.
- d) Rangers – Mr. Levine noted that 15 new rangers have been added since he began his recruiting program. They received a welcome packet and have been invited to the Annual Meeting on 5/12.

PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION, INLAND WETLANDS BOARD

Meetings for Attendance

May 17 – Mr. Coyle (509 Main)

May 24 – Mr. Cronin

June 7 – Mr. Kace/Mr. Levine

June 21 – Ms. Snow

New & Continued Business

4 Wooster Street – Tabled by P&Z until a new engineering report is provided by the homeowner.

Crescent Beach - Ms. Snow attended the P&Z/IWB meeting of 5/3/16 and submitted the following comments:

“Susan spoke on our behalf regarding the Crescent Beach application. The applicant agreed to tear down the wall (the lake will be lowered next week, which will give him the opportunity to tear it down. Alan Pilch can lend some guidance on how to best accomplish that) and replant the area with a vegetative buffer. All but one of the IWB members said that because this was a public area, it should be held to the highest standards of what the lake shoreline should look like. John Katz said he had learned a great deal about appropriate shoreline management practices since the last application (157 Mountain Road) and even regretted their ruling on that application. Rebecca Mucchetti suggested the IWB and the RCC work together with the RLA to come up with appropriate guidelines for the lakes.”

Clean Fill & Stormwater Regulations– Mr. Kace mentioned that P&Z/IWB agreed with RCC recommendations and will incorporate them into the next version. A subcommittee,

made of P&Z/IWB & RCC members, Ms. Peyser and Mr. Baldelli, will continue working on the regulations. Ms. Snow provided comments from the 5/3/16 P&Z/IWB meeting:

“The proposed new Sections to the Stormwater, Impervious Surfaces and Erosion and Sediment Control passed unanimously. The proposed amendments to the Excavation, Filling and Grading Section passed unanimously.

The IWB/P & Z Commission agreed (unanimously) to adopt Joe Fossi's suggestion that a subcommittee of members of P & Z and RCC and Beth Peyser and Richard Baldelli will get together over the summer to strengthen and amend wording in the above-mentioned Sections, understanding that the amendments passed last night are just a beginning. A date for those discussions will be set at the May 17 meeting.

Jack Kace spoke on our behalf on the Stormwater Sections. Tim Bishop spoke on the Excavation and Fill section. There was little opposition from the public--only on the limit of the amount of fill because of the difficulty of measuring and controlling that.

Steve Trinkaus spoke at length. He has been hired by Casagmo homeowners to consult on their behalf at applications that could affect the property. He argued that the stormwater amendments weren't significantly aligned with LID (low impact development) practices, and that stormwater runoff volume was more important than Peak Rate Attenuation. He offered to volunteer his time to participate in future sub-committee meetings. Richard Baldelli and Betty Brosius mentioned that Charles Fisher has some funding in his budget to address stormwater runoff in the downtown area.

Jack Kace was handed a memo at the beginning of the meeting--from Charles Fisher to Betty Brosius--regarding new state guidelines for stormwater management, which I will ask Betty Brosius to share with us. These will be part of the subcommittee discussions.”

Conservation Enforcement Officer appointment – The RCC discussed nominating a Conservation Enforcement Officer as part of the new Ordinance.

UPON MOTION duly made, seconded and unanimously carried, it was RESOLVED to nominate Beth Peyser as Conservation Enforcement Officer and recommend her appointment to the Board of Selectmen.

Ms. Snow will send Mr. Marconi a letter recommending Ms. Peyser as Conservation Enforcement Officer and also request the appointment of a Citation Hearing Officer.

ISSUES BEFORE THE COMMISSION

New Ordinance – The new ordinance passed at the Board of Selectmen meeting on May 4, 2016. Below are Mr. Coyle's comments submitted at the hearing on the RCC's behalf.

“The Town of Ridgefield has seen a variety of intrusions onto its open space in the last few years including placement of privately owned structures, use of Town land for private purposes, cutting down of trees, and disposal of debris. In addition, violators have ignored pleas by the BOS and the Conservation Commission to resolve those violations, taking months and years for resolution.

The Ridgefield Open Space Use ordinance (Chapter 262) included a fine provision that was never used, partially because we were able to negotiate resolutions in some cases (which is always our first choice) and partially because the process was cumbersome involving the BOS and reliance on the courts, an expensive proposition. Thus, the ordinance has been modified, as follows:

- In order to clarify the process of issuing violations and citations, and to make it more efficient, we have incorporated the notice and public meeting procedures in the recent Ridgefield Blight Ordinance because that has successfully resolved numerous blight issues in a timely manner.
- The ordinance needed to be updated to specifically clarify how the cutting down of trees on open space is handled in order to be consistent with CGS §52-560a, which outlines how the value of the trees cut down should be calculated, along with the costs for replanting.
- In order to make the process of issuing citations consistent with the Town Code, an amendment to Chapter 24 (Citations) was also adopted. This makes the process of issuing conservation citations consistent with that of issuing citations with respect to zoning violations.
- The overall procedure established is that should the Conservation Commission determine that a violation has occurred, and if a negotiated resolution fails, the fine would be issued by a Town official (Conservation Enforcement Officer) at the recommendation of the Conservation Commission."

Annual Meeting – The supply list will be resent to the Commissioners.

IWB Comprehensive Training: Mr. Coyle and Mr. Pilch will take the Training Program. Mr. Coyle will let the Commission know the estimated time it takes to complete the Program.

Weir Farm Bio Blitz – The program will take place on Saturday, May 21, 2016.

Whitbeck Estate – Ms. Lake has asked for a copy of the will.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion duly made, seconded and unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned at 8:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Colleen Lake