



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

March 23, 2020

A meeting of the Ridgefield Conservation Commission was held via teleconference on Monday, March 23, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.

Present:	Eric Beckenstein	Carroll Brewster	Jim Coyle	Dave Cronin
	Jack Kace	Erik Keller	Daniel C. Levine	Jean Linville
	Kitsey Snow	Allan Welby		

Absent: Matt Sharp

Mr. Coyle chaired the meeting. Ms. Lake took the minutes.

Sandra Capriotti, Cece Berger, and Alan Pilch also attended via teleconference.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the March 9, 2020 meeting were reviewed.

UPON motion duly made (Welby), seconded (Cronin) and unanimously carried, it was RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of March 9, 2020 be approved and ordered filed in the Town Hall.

Mr. Coyle asked to add two items to the agenda.

UPON motion duly made (Cronin), seconded (Brewster) and carried, it was RESOLVED to add the following to the agenda:

- Trail Conditions
- McKeon Birdhouses

2. THRIFT SHOP GRANT – Ms. Capriotti, representing the Ridgefield Thrift Shop, expressed disappointment in not being able to present her news in person but was honored to present the RCC with a \$25,000 grant to assist in the purchase and improvement of a parcel of land abutting open space and the previous Garden of Ideas site. The RCC was overwhelmed, and extremely thankful for the generous grant and looks forward to creating a trail, with bridges and boardwalks that will be of particular interest to families with small children, bird watchers, seniors, and anyone interested in exploring a wetland environment along an easy walking trail.

3. CORONAVIRUS UPDATE – Mr. Coyle reported that town offices will be closed until further notice but that should not stop the RCC from continuing various activities. Trail maintenance and assessment, community outreach programs and conservation topics involving online research can, and will, continue. A number of suggestions were discussed to update our web site including putting short bios of the commissioners there.

To inspire town residents to get out and visit the trails, Mr. Levine will create an uplifting video to post online that includes short videos from commissioners talking about their favorite open spaces.

4. OPEN SPACE

DEEP OSHA Grant Application – Mr. Coyle is hoping to access previously submitted applications for reference purposes. Ms. Snow will reach out to her contact (Donna Merrill) at the Wilton Land Conservancy Trust who completed the application last year. Mr. Welby, Ms. Snow and Ms. Linville will work on writing the narrative describing the environmental and conservation value of the property. Mr. Coyle will contact Shelly Harms who has worked on OSHA grant applications in the past (per suggestion of DEEP). Based upon a conversation with DEEP (Allyson Clarke), it appears that the grant application due date of June 1 will not change but the due date for appraisals will be extended.

Projects Spring & Summer 2020 – Mr. Sharp and Mr. Cronin will prioritize, group the projects, and identify who will be needed for the work. In addition, Mr. Levine suggested assigning commissioners open space areas to walk and assess trail conditions that could be added to the project list.

Remington Woods & West Mountain Green – Mr. Levine reported a possible mowing violation and trail work needed in Remington Woods and boardwalk repair needed in West Mountain Green. He also reported a downed tree in Colonial Heights. Ms. Lake will add to the summer work list.

Summer Worker Hiring – Ms. Lake mentioned that Aras Dupkas and Ian Ferguson will begin sometime in May. They will work 8-2pm, Monday – Friday.

Cornerstone Gardens – Cece Berger presented her certificate of insurance and asked to begin work at the farm as soon as weather permits. Since the BOS meetings are on hold for the time being, the RCC approved her request. Ms. Berger would also like to bring a two-seat, transfer vehicle with flatbed to the farm. The vehicle will assist with transporting workers with limited mobility to and from the garden area, and will also help move large equipment and tools. The RCC will allow use of the vehicle.

Bird Houses at McKeon – Mr. Welby and his son installed several bluebird houses around the farm. Ms. Freeman had concerns with some of the locations. Mr. Welby and Ms. Snow will meet with Ms. Freeman to discuss concerns.

Apple Tree Planting – The six trees should arrive mid-April. Mr. Cronin, Ms. Snow and Ms. Freeman will discuss acceptable locations prior to planting.

Deed Language for Open Space Parcels – Mr. Coyle will contact Mr. Grogins about amending deeds to 70+ properties that are currently not under RCC jurisdiction and without restrictions. Mr. Beckenstein and Dr. Kace will work on developing consistent language for the deeds.

Turner Hill 8-30g Update – Mr. Pilch mentioned that the IWB found sufficient reason to ask for a preliminary wildlife study but were waiting to confirm who would pay for the study. Mr. Coyle will discuss the issue with Ms. Sesto and let her know the RCC is willing to pay for study, if needed.

UPON motion duly made (Beckenstein), seconded (Keller) and unanimously carried, it was RESOLVED to commit up to \$500 for the preliminary wildlife study.

103 Peaceable Closure – Mr. Keller met with Mr. Ritter to discuss clean-up. The clean-up will take place on Thursday, 3/26, and should be finished by the weekend. Mr. Keller will oversee the project from start to finish.

Peaceable Refuge Dumping – Ms. Peyser visited the site with Mr. Cronin and agreed that dumping had occurred. To date, no NOPV has been issued by Ms. Peyser and will be delayed further due to town shutdown.

In addition, there is potential tree cutting on Mamasasco Road and dumping on Casey Lane that should be investigated when the shutdown is over.

5. STEEP SLOPE ORDINANCE – Ms. Lake is researching which, if any, other towns in the area have regulations on steep slopes. Once the research is complete, the RCC will look into proposing a new regulation for the town based on the findings.

6. MEETINGS FOR ATTENDANCE

- a) P&Z
 - Mar 24 – Beckenstein (Canceled)
 - Apr 7 - ?
 - Apr 14 – Cronin
 - Apr 28 - Kace
 - b) IWB
 - Mar 26 – Sharp (Canceled)
 - Apr 23 – Snow
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7. EXTRA CURRICULARS –

Earth Day – April 22, 2020 – All activities will be canceled due to the virus.

Logo Contest – Mr. Levine reported there have been several excellent submissions thus far. The contest will continue through the end of April.

Annual Meeting Planning – Due to the Coronavirus, the annual meeting will be canceled this year.

8. CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

- The small conference room has a new name and sign. It will now be referred to as the Environment Meeting Room and lists RCC, FECB, IWB, APA and WPCA on the sign.
 - Future meetings will continue via teleconference until further notice.
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ADJOURNMENT

UPON motion duly made (Brewster), seconded (Levine) and unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned at 8:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted by,
Colleen Lake

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These minutes are a general summary of the meeting and are not intended to be a verbatim transcription.