

APPROVED MINUTES

**Ridgefield Conservation Commission
Flood and Erosion Control Board**
Town Hall Annex, 66 Prospect Street
Ridgefield, CT 06877 (203) 431-2713
May 2, 2011

A meeting of the Ridgefield Conservation Commission was held at the Town Hall Annex, 66 Prospect Street Ridgefield, Connecticut 06877 on Monday, May 2, 2011 at approximately 7:30 p.m.

The following members were present:

Susan Baker
Carroll Brewster
Dave Cronin
Ben Oko
Alan Pilch
Kitsey Snow
Beth Yanity

Dr. Oko chaired the meeting. Nancy McDaniel was present to take minutes. Monnie Newman and Terry McManus were present to observe as candidates for the open position on the commission. Greg Smith was present to observe as a new resident of Ridgefield.

MINUTES

The minutes of the April 11, 2011 meeting were reviewed.

Upon motion duly made, seconded and unanimously carried, it was

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of April 11, 2011 be and hereby are approved and ordered filed in the minute book of the Commission and the Town Hall minute book.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Mr. Brewster reported that the following bill had been paid: \$70.09 – Kitsey Snow

OPEN SPACE

Maintenance/Posting/Projects – An Eagle Scout project was completed in the last week, and another is to start shortly. There was some concern that the bridges built and installed last week are not sturdy enough and may require modifications. A comment was made that traditionally Eagle candidates appear before the commission to present detailed plans of their projects and receive authorization from the commission before doing any work. This procedure had not been followed for the two most recent candidates. It was agreed that they

both must come to a meeting to describe their projects and that all future Eagle candidates must make presentations as a first step in the process in order to receive RCC approvals of their work.

Three high school senior interns will work for a month starting on May 17.

Connwood Forestry Report – Dr. Oko circulated the forest stewardship plan, which focused on Ridgefield lands in the New York City watershed. The extensive report included the kinds of trees studied, their health and recommendations on what might be done to improve the forested properties. Written recommendations were distributed. There is a possibility that New York would fund some of the recommendations. Members were asked to decide what to implement. Mr. Cronin agreed to store the report on the RCC computer and make CD copies for members.

Ranger Program – Six of the 70 Rangers submitted reports on conditions on their assigned properties.

Summer Workers - Eight individuals applied for summer positions. Interviews will take place starting on May 9.

SHARING SESSIONS

26 Tackora Trail – Ms. Snow reported that the swimming pool was approved. The owner agreed to carry out mitigation.

PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION, INLAND WETLANDS BOARD

Meetings for Attendance

May 3 – Ms. Baker

May 10 – Mr. Brewster

May 17 – Mr. Cronin

May 24 – Mr. Pilch

NEW BUSINESS

George Orlan's Retirement – Dr. Oko thanked Mr. Brewster for hosting a delightful dinner party to celebrate Mr. Orlan's years of dedicated service to the commission. Mr. Brewster thanked Ms. Snow for her help with the dinner.

On a motion by Mr. Brewster, seconded by Ms. Yanity and approved unanimously, it was

Resolved that Mr. Orlan be made an honorary member of the commission for life and as such receive agendas and minutes.

Energy Conservation – Neighbor to Neighbor Program – Dr. Oko explained that a representative from the Neighbor to Neighbor Energy Challenge Program would like to meet with the commission to explain their energy efficiency program. The implication is that RCC would get involved with promoting the program. It was decided that a representative should be invited to appear before the commission.

McKeon Farm – Dr. Oko reported that Hunter Harrison’s farm manager had made a request to rent a portion of the open space to be used to pasture retired horses. Because the terrain is rough and unsuitable for horses, he would bring in topsoil to be tamped down, seed it, install drainage measures to remove water from the parcel and install a three-rail fence. He conveyed a willingness to pay rent. Noting that there were cows on McKeon open space, he wondered if horses could be allowed too.

Discussion followed about the appropriateness of giving up control and introducing a new use for the land. A fence would be a visual barrier that does not exist at present. Could the renters be required to remove the invasives now growing on the property? How could the commission be assured that the land would be maintained properly? Members decided that the farm manager should submit a detailed plan about the proposal. They planned a site walk for May 20.

Dr. Oko then addressed the existing rental of McKeon land for cows. He noted that a wide gravel entry way with a double gate leading to a corral had been installed. There is an electric icebox with a sign offering eggs for sale. None of the changes had been brought to the commission for approval. There was agreement that the two farmers must appear before the commission before any changes are introduced. There was particular opposition to the icebox and the selling of eggs on open space.

OPEN SPACE ACQUISITIONS AND DONATIONS

Cell Tower Update – May 25 vote – On May 3, Dr. Oko will make a statement about the commission’s role in acquiring the property. A hearing on the tower is scheduled for May 4. Dr. Oko asked members to support the land purchase and encourage others to come out to vote on May 25.

OTHER BUSINESS

Ridgebury School – The King’s Mark Program will survey the school grounds and adjacent open space for an environmental review. Dr. Oko will be present to represent the commission.

Candidate Interviews – Monnie Newman and Terry McNamara individually presented their credentials and discussed their interest in serving on the commission.

Norwalk River Valley Trail – Dr. Oko distributed flyers about the upcoming informational workshops in the local area.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy McDaniel