

APPROVED MINUTES

MINUTES



Ridgefield Conservation Commission

Town Hall Annex, 66 Prospect Street

Ridgefield, CT 06877

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Meeting February 05, 2024 at 7PM

Present: James Coyle Jana Hogan Jack Kace Jean Linville
Jim Liptack Anthony Markert Pete Nichols Matt Sharp
Allan Welby

Absent: Roberta Barbieri, Erik Keller

Present: CEO Caleb Johnson, Joe Fossi

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 7 pm.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

UPON motion duly made (Nichols), seconded (Welby), and carried, it was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of February 05, 2024 be approved and ordered filed in Town Hall. Vote: 6:0 (Kace, Hogan and Sharp abstained)

2. 54 KETCHAM ROAD SUBDIVISION

Mr. Fossi, the property owner of 54 Ketcham Road presented his subdivision modifications. He explained that the amount of open space was increased to nearly 2.5 acres and described the access to the open space land. He further indicated that the nearly 2.5 acres would be open space in perpetuity. The RCC finds these modifications acceptable.

Mr. Fossi also suggested that any new subdivision permit application be required to come before the RCC where open space is concerned to address a preliminary plan. Mr. Coyle will follow up with P&Z.

3. LEVY PARK PRESERVE, POTENTIAL ENCROACHMENT

The CEO explained that he had been in touch with the home owner regarding the encroachment of several items (deer stands/deer feeder, large equipment, bocce ball court, retaining wall, and paved driveway on open space). He will walk the property this week and issue the NOV with a timeline and planting plan for review.

The CEO also is still waiting to hear back from IT regarding a similar online violation reporting system that the Inland Wetlands Board currently uses. Mr. Coyle will reach out to IT also.

4. FLORIDA REFUGE

Dr. Markert reported on the successful trail walk in the Florida Refuge with Dave Beers of DEEP. Mr. Beers provide a very detailed report on the site visit and expressed his willingness to conduct such review for other Ridgefield open spaces. Dr. Markert will prepare a listing of several other sites that Beers could visit in the short term and get commission concurrence before contacting Beers.

Given the Town's disapproval of the RCC's capital budget request for funds to do forestry reports as suggested in the Natural Resource Inventory, further discussion ensued to see if there was a way to jump start the process by conducting field studies of one or two properties this year based on prior Beers work. Kiah's and Sarah Bishop were suggested by commission members as potential candidates for this process. Dr Markert will review the prior forestry studies and select sites for this early work, and report back to the RCC.

5. POTENTIAL SCOUT PROJECTS

Mr. Sharp presented a list of potential scout projects and asked RCC to think of anything else that might be a great project or educational opportunity for the scouts.

6. CONSERVATION ACOUSTICS – AUTONOMOUS RECORDING UNIT

Mr. Sharp would like to conduct more research on autonomous recording units which will be put in RCC open space to record animals sounds.

UPON motion duly made (Sharp), seconded (Nichols), and carried, it was **RESOLVED** that Mr. Sharp conduct more research on which AR unit to purchase and keep the purchase under \$500. Vote: 9:0

7. WEBSITE

Ms. Hogan and her son are working on the new RCC website. The website is 90% complete and looks amazing. Ms. Hogan will email the link around to RCC members for review and comments. Mr. Coyle also has asked the Town Treasurer to look into the fees RCC is paying for online donations and other options.

8. WALK BOOK UPDATE

Mr. Coyle along with the subcommittee Mr. Nichols, Mr. Liptack and Mr. Sharp are meeting every other Friday to work through new graphics and possible additions to the book. Part 1 of the book will be submitted to the RCC for review and comments. The RCC has begun a photo contest for the front and back of the Walk Book; submissions should be in by April 1, 2024.

9. ANNUAL MEETING

The RCC will have its annual meeting at ACT on April 4, 2024. More details to come as RCC is in search of a speaker. Discussions have begun on potential recipients of the Edith Meffley award.

10. NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Nichols has cleared Ledges Park of the perk test pipes and will continue periodically removing the tires and barrels.

11. MEETINGS FOR ATTENDANCE

P&Z

February 6 – Kace
February 27 - Linville

IWB

February 8 – Liptack
February 22 – Markert

12. CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

Mr. Coyle has submitted the Thrift Shop grant. In regards to the annual appeal, donations so far total \$21,500; however, there is currently a 7% fee for the online donations and the cost of the mailing is around \$8,000. The RCC will work on how to do this more efficiently and effectively in 2024.

Middlebury Historical Society reached out to RCC seeking their opinion on 5 acres of existing open space that their town is considering selling off for private development. Mr. Coyle encouraged more open space protection and described the Ridgefield experience.

ADJOURNMENT UPON motion duly made (Markert), seconded (Nichols), and carried, it was **RESOLVED** that the meeting adjourn at 8:30P.M. Vote: 9:0.