

APPROVED MINUTES

MINUTES

Ridgefield Conservation Commission

Town Hall Annex, 66 Prospect Street

Ridgefield, CT 06877

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Meeting March 27, 2023 at 7PM

Present: James Coyle Jack Kace Eric Keller Jean Linville
Jim Liptack Peter Nichols Benjamin Nissim Kitsey Snow
Allan Welby

Absent: Roberta Barbieri

Chairman Coyle called the meeting to order at 7 P.M.

UPON motion duly made (Keller), seconded (Linville), and carried, it was RESOLVED to add encroachment on Barrack Hill Refuge and beaver trapping on Turtle Pond as agenda items. Vote: 9:0

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

UPON motion duly made (Sharp), seconded (Linville), and carried, it was RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of March 13, 2023 be approved and ordered filed in Town Hall. Vote: 6:0 Keller, Nichols and Snow Abstained

2. NRI PRESENTATION FROM LUKAS KERAS AND VIC DEMASI

Mr. Keras and Mr. DeMasi presented their findings from the butterfly study conducted for the NRI. Four new species recorded that are new for both Ridgefield NRI and iNaturalist and 14 new species recorded for the Ridgefield NRI. Mr. DeMasi informed the RCC of a new CT pesticide reform, which the commission will review and begin to implement.

3. ENCROACHMENT ON BARRACK HILL

Mr. Nichols noticed trees that look to have been cut down and pushed into open space. Mr. Coyle will inform the CEO and consult for further investigation and follow up.

4. BEAVER TRAPPING ON TURTLE POND

Mr. Welby was alerted that neighbors are setting traps on Turtle Pond to trap beavers, which are not licensed trappers nor have any of the neighbors involved DEEP, animal control, RCC or the Land Conservancy. The beavers are creating a possible flooding issue for some of the neighbors. Mr. Welby will work to get in touch with DEEP and work with the neighbors on a solution.

5. TREE COMMITTEE VACANCY

The RCC has asked to have a response from Ms. Dunnington by the next meeting, April 10.

6. TREE CUTTING ON OS

The RCC has been contacted regarding a complaint of downed trees on open space. It is the RCC's policy to rely on natural forces to manage the forest. The RCC will consider cutting up of trees that have fallen and or removal of hanging branches at the owner's expense. All work in any incident must be done by a licensed arborist and approved by the Commission. In the cutting up, no heavy equipment can be brought onto open space property. No live branches or trees can be cut. Dead branches can be cut into smaller pieces and distributed on open space; no chipping or removal of material is allowed.

7. CT TRAILS DAY

The RCC will host a couple of trail walks to recognize CT Trails Day on June 3rd and June 4th. Mr. Nichols will organize the logistics.

8. MCKEON VISION COMMITTEE (MVC)

The MVC presented a number of recommendations for the following items:

- Chestnut Restoration Project - The MVC will meet the Chestnut Restoration representative onsite to review potential location, process and logistics.
 - Upper Meadow - The NRWA may contribute to the costs of tarps. The MVC will mow the area first and begin to place tarps and then follow with seed.
 - Lauzen - Ultimate goal is grassland. Mowing a 6-acre section of the field scheduled for August 1st.
 - Stream between Ridgebury Pasture 2 and Lauzen field - Maintenance of invasives will require aggressive cutting and removal to free stream for viewing. MVC will continue to do as much as possible before summer.
 - Apple Orchard - **UPON** motion duly made (Sharp), seconded (Keller), and carried, it was RESOLVED to spend \$3,000 plus or minus on a mixture of trees to be planted in the Spring. Vote: 9:0
 - Education - Coordination and more thought into how McKeon can be utilized as an educational resource for the Town.
 - Cottontail - MVC will reach out to DEEP to see if Lauzen restoration or other pastures could also include re-introduction of Connecticut Cottontail (CT endangered species).
 - Goats - MVC is exploring alternatives for invasive removal. The goats are effective, however cost may be prohibitive in the long term. MVC will provide an update at next meeting.
 - Wire/Post Cleanup - MVC asked whenever any RCC members are at McKeon to clean up any old wire and posts, may explore cleanup days.
 - Bee Hives - MVC explored the addition of bee hives, however introducing new species will out-compete our native celebrity bumble bee.
 - Stone Wall Maintenance - Continue to monitor and maintain.
 - Parking lot - ADA compliant parking lots is not a viable option for the parking area.
 - Compost - MVC is working on definitive composting areas.
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9. COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Commissioners are working on details for the event set to take place May 24.

UPON motion duly made (Keller), seconded (Kace), and carried, it was RESOLVED to spend \$400 on the speaker for our annual meeting. Vote: 9:0

Ms. Snow is working on quotes for 1-gallon trees to give to attendees.

UPON motion duly made (Coyle), seconded (Kace), and carried, it was RESOLVED to award the Woodcock Nature Center the Edith Meffley award this year at the RCC's annual meeting. Vote: 8 yes, 1 no.

10. CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION

8.1 Flood and Erosion Control Board

Mr. Nissim presented findings from searching through surrounding town minutes to get an understanding of current work being performed, which is highly technical and very individual. Mr. Nissim's recommendation is to find a new home for the Flood and Erosion Control Board.

Mr. Coyle will follow up with the First Selectman for recommendations on the placement of the Flood and Erosion Control Board.

11. NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Keller is working on the Spring newsletter to be sent out mid-April.

Mr. Sharp and Mr. Nichols inspected the mowers, clear of mice for now. Cub scout groups will be inspecting trails.

UPON motion duly made (Kace), seconded (Sharp), and carried, it was RESOLVED for Mr. Nichols to spend \$227 on identification signs for old tools at McKeon. Vote: 6 yes, 3 no.

12. MEETINGS FOR ATTENDANCE

P&Z

April 04 – Keller
April 18 – Linville

IWB

April 13 – Liptack
April 27 – Nichols

Ms. Snow will cover for Ms. Linville on April 18.

13. CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

Mr. Coyle will not be at the meetings in April; Mr. Keller will head the April 10th meeting and Mr. Kace will head the April 24th meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

UPON motion duly made (Keller), seconded (Sharp), and carried, it was RESOLVED that the meeting adjourned at 8:58P.M. Vote: 9:0.