



**APPROVED MINUTES**  
**Ridgefield Conservation Commission**  
Town Hall annex, 66 Prospect Street  
Ridgefield, CT 06877  
(203) 431-2713 • [conservation@ridgefieldct.org](mailto:conservation@ridgefieldct.org)

**September 2, 2020**

A meeting of the Ridgefield Conservation Commission was held via Zoom on Wednesday, September 2, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.

Present:	Carroll Brewster	Jim Coyle	Jack Kace	Erik Keller
	Jean Linville	Matt Sharp	Allan Welby	Eric Beckenstein
	Dave Cronin	Dan Levine	Kitsey Snow	

Absent:

Guests: Stefano Zandri, Paul Payne, Joey Archer, and Jordan Mooney also attended via Zoom.

Mr. Coyle chaired the meeting. Ms. Campbell-Gibson took the minutes.

---

## 1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the August 17, 2020 meeting were discussed.

UPON motion duly made (Brewster), seconded (Keller), and carried, (Beckenstein, Cronin, Levine and Snow abstaining due to absence from the August 17 meeting), it was RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of August 17, 2020 be approved and ordered filed in the Town Hall.

---

## 2. DEER HUNT 2020/21

Five properties were approved as per the 2019 agreement between the Deer Committee and the Conservation Commission:

- Shadow Lake (archery, shotgun, and muzzleloader)
- Laurel Lane (archery, shotgun, and muzzleloader)
- Linden Lane (archery)
- Silvermine Ridge (archery) ·Bobby's Court (archery)

UPON motion duly made (Welby), seconded (Kace), and carried, (Snow abstaining), it was RESOLVED that the five properties be approved for the 2020/21 deer hunt with methods of hunting as per agreement for each property.

---

## 3. OPEN SPACE

### Eagle Scout Presentation – Jordan Mooney

Jordan is a Life Scout from Troop 19. She discussed her project to build two bridges in Hemlock Hills on the Green Trail. The bridge design was presented and there was discussion about adherence to the guidelines regarding bridges. The budget for her project was discussed and a sum of \$500 was agreed.

UPON motion duly made (Cronin), seconded (Kace), and carried, it was RESOLVED that Jordan Mooney's project to build two bridges in the Hemlock Hills on the Green trail be approved and that the sum of \$500 be approved for the completion of the project.

#### Eagle Scout Project Final Presentation – Joseph Archer

Joey Archer presented his completed project. The final cost was \$774 and was completed with some of the wood donated by his father. The commission thanked Joey for his work and requested he convey thanks to his dad for the donation and assistance.

#### Accessway on Gay Road.

This is an unused gravel section of Gay Road leading to the Woodcock Nature Center property. The section beyond the gate has two large fallen trees covered in brush. A neighbor has requested this be cleared to allow access to the center. The commission will solicit the help of Parks and Recreation to cut and remove the trees and clear the brush. Mr. Keller and Mr. Sharp will assist. The work would be done in two 4-hour shifts on Saturday September 12 and Saturday September 19. Ms. Campbell-Gibson must arrange at least 3 days prior to work with Parks and Recreation for the work to be done.

#### The Old Blue and White Trail

This was a 5-mile "trail" that ran from Route 33 to Gay Road, along non Conservation Commission land and along town roads. The commission decided there is no reason for it to work on this trail. The resident is obviously free to work on this trail if she so wishes.

#### McKeon Farm - Prairie Management Summary

Mr. Welby read a report he wrote with details of the meeting with Peter Picone of DEEP. The Lauzen field is a good candidate since it is not grazed - Mr. Picone recommends doing half of the field to begin with. The conversion to prairie grass is a 3-year process that involves cutting the field very low in May, applying a herbicide, seeding with a no-till seeder in June and mowing again in each of the following springs; thereafter mowing half the field each year.

Several commissioners had reservations about the use of herbicides because of the destructive effect on insects and birds, especially the endangered bee that was found at McKeon Farm. Mr. Coyle suggested the RCC proceed by gathering more information first:

- What alternatives could be used instead of Roundup?
- What chemical application methods are effective instead of spraying?
- More clarity is needed on the situation with the bees at McKeon.
- Further research into prairie conversion is needed by visiting other locations where prairie conversion has been done.
- Speak to organic farmers to find out how they keep invasives under control without the use of Roundup.

Mr. Welby was tasked with setting up visits to other prairie locations, and to invite Peter Picone to our next meeting.

#### Pollinator Garden

Ms. Snow reports that the NRWA hired an entomologist and a landscape gardener to create pollinator gardens in the area, including McKeon Farm. They recommend plants suited to the diversity of bees found at a site. They monitor the bees over a 3-year period by doing a count of bees and their diversity periodically. The end result may confirm an increase in the number and diversity of bees found on the site. To do this Ms. Snow requests money from the commission and will provide an estimate of the funds required. Maintenance would be minimum and would be requested of volunteer Eagle Scouts and others. The plan is to plant a hedgerow this fall; mow the meadow in spring; remove sod, and seed and plug in the spring. This McKeon pollinator project is one about which we should write an article for the Ridgefield Press to make more people aware of commission activities.

#### Lauzen Mowing Redux

The hayfields might be mowed in the late fall - this depends on the research done on the endangered bees living near the McKeon farm barn. Otherwise, this mowing would occur next May.

#### **4. AMENDMENTS TO ZONING REGULATIONS REGARDING STORMWATER MANAGEMENT**

A draft set of regulations for Stormwater management have been prepared. Mr. Welby attended the P&Z meeting held on Sept 1 - the documents for this meeting are all online. The regulations differ from town to town, but Ridgefield now has one of the better regulations regarding stormwater management.

---

#### **5. COMMUNITY OUTREACH**

The STEAM backpacks are almost ready. All supplies have been ordered and will arrive in two weeks. After a meeting with the library, Ms. Linville reports that they are interested in doing more of these because there will be more homeschooling and hybrid learning situations taking place.

---

#### **6. MEETINGS**

Nobody had any conflict with the upcoming meetings they are required to attend.

---

#### **7. CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS**

Mr. Coyle requests that more press be released regarding projects done by the RCC to get the word out to the public.

Attorney Linda Francois, an expert on open space tax abatements is prepared to attend a RCC meeting to explain concepts such as tax abatement can be used to enhance our process of open space acquisition. A sum of \$1000 had been approved for consultation with her, but if she attends a Zoom meeting rather than in person meeting, the fee should be less.

The RCC should highlight five-six of our best properties - enhanced maps, videos, and more photos could be developed for our web site. Commission members were tasked with this effort.

Our online presence needs to improve: The website needs attention - old outdated documents need to be replaced with current material, the look and feel of the website need to improve; more use of the Facebook page; more press releases.

Ms. Snow mentioned that a bear has been seen on the trails in Hemlock Hills/Pine Mountain area. The commission agreed that "bear aware" information needs to be sent to the press and put onto our website to inform residents of what to do should they encounter a bear on one of the trails. Mr. Levine was tasked with writing a press release and getting it published.

UPON motion duly made (Brewster), seconded (Cronin), and carried, it was RESOLVED that the meeting adjourn at 8:49 pm.