



UNAPPROVED MINUTES
Ridgefield Conservation Commission
Town Hall annex, 66 Prospect Street
Ridgefield, CT 06877
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October 19, 2020

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

Absent: Dan Levine, Allan Welby

Guests: Linda Francois, Ben Oko.

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

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the October 5, 2020 meeting were approved.

UPON motion duly made (Brewster), seconded (Cronin), and carried, it was RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of October 5, 2020 be approved and ordered filed in the Town Hall.

2. PRESENTATION BY LINDA FRANCOIS – Being Proactive in Land Protection

Ms. Francois is an attorney who focuses on natural and working lands preservation. She represents landowners, land trusts and municipalities in land protection transactions, conservation restriction (easement) donations, bargain sales and purchases, and open space initiatives throughout Connecticut.

Ms. Francois discussed the basic tools to use in procuring open space land, incentives and funding; and how to approach landowners in order to persuade them to sell or donate land for open space conservation.

3. POLLINATOR GARDEN

Ms. Snow will send the final planting list to the commissioners for their information. The cost will be \$1,400.00. Plants will be protected using deer netting and tomato casings. Ms. Snow asked if anyone has deer netting to donate. Money from the Richardson Grant can be used for plant protection. Some of the work will be carried out by volunteers and where necessary paid help from Parks and Recreation will be requested.

UPON a motion duly made (Kace), seconded (Keller), and carried, it was RESOLVED to increase the previously approved funds of \$1,200 to \$1,400 for the plants required for the pollinator garden at McKeon.

4. OPEN SPACE

Lake Windwing ADA compliant trail

Mr. Keller explained the proposal to make a portion of the trail around Lake Windwing accessible to wheelchairs and walkers for an investment of less than \$50,000. Approximately 1200 feet of trail will be created with ADA compliance in mind. The commission will request funding from the town's capital budget

for this. The commission will discuss this with the IWB and get an accurate estimate to support this budget request from the town.

Open Space Potential for Town of Ridgefield Properties

Portions of five town owned properties have been identified for potential open space suitability. The total acreage that could be added to open space this way is 107 acres. This is an inexpensive option to bring the percentage of open space in Ridgefield closer to 30%. Three parcels at the Golf Course totaling 41 acres are ideal for open space, as are two parcels at the Parks and Recreation location at 195 Danbury Road totaling 25 acres, an undeveloped parcel of the Schlumberger property of 22 acres, a 13-acre parcel at Ridgefield High School and a 6-acre parcel at Ridgebury Elementary School.

McKeon Farm – Prairie Management

Ms. Snow heard back from Evan Abramson about the burn proposed at McKeon in the Lauzen Hayfield. The USFWS are very interested in the project. Mr. Beckenstein spoke to fire marshal Guy Miglinas about the proposed burn. Mr. Miglinas is positive this could go ahead with a burn plan showing fire, as well as sign off from the state. Mr. Abramson will approach the USFWS for the burn plan.

Mr. Abramson will design a seed mix for the prairie. The commission will request funds for the seeds from a Ridgefield Thrift Shop Grant.

McKeon Farm – Mowing

Mr. Cronin asked about mowing at McKeon. Ms. Campbell-Gibson will reach out to Parks and Recreation to mow the upper and lower meadows.

5. MEETING ATTENDANCE

P&Z	Oct 27 -	Keller	IWB	Oct22 -	Keller
	Nov 4 -	Linville		Nov 9 -	Snow
	Nov 10 -	Sharp		Nov 23	Welby
	Nov 24	Snow			

No issues were reported with any of the required meeting attendance.

6. CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

Mr. Levine has posted six stories regarding Conservation Commission activities and other conservation issues on Facebook. These posts have received 350 views and have been shared on Facebook. Mr. Levine suggests putting the Annual Appeal letter on Facebook too.

We have had entries to the "Fun Fungi" competition. The winners are Zoe Guerrero and Liza Kraft. They will receive a swag bag with Conservation Commission items.

Mr. Coyle thanked Mr. Cronin for the photo he took at McKeon farm. This will be blown up, framed and hung on the wall in the conference room.

Mr. Cronin reported that the Goodwill trail is finished and should be promoted on social media. He also reports that the new Bear Mountain Trail will be finished by next week.

The next RCC meeting will be held on Monday, November 2, 2020 at 7:00 P.M.

ADJOURNMENT

UPON motion duly made (Brewster), seconded (Beckenstein), and carried, it was RESOLVED that the meeting adjourn at 9:20 P.M.