



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

January 20, 2021 at 7 P.M.

Present: Carroll Brewster Jim Coyle Allan Welby Erik Keller
 Jean Linville Matt Sharp Daniel C. Levine
Joined later: Kitsey Snow (7:33PM) Jack Kace (7:20PM) Dave Cronin (7:45PM)

Guest: Jim Liptack

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

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

UPON motion duly made (Brewster), seconded (Keller), (Not present at this time: Snow, Kace, Cronin, Abstained: Levine) and carried, it was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of January 4, 2021 be approved and ordered filed in the Town Hall.

2. TREE COMMITTEE

Mr. Roths was invited to attend the meeting but he was not in attendance. Ms. Campbell-Gibson to follow up with him regards attending an upcoming Conservation Commission meeting.

Mr. Brewster asked that the commissioners think about what the commission wants the Tree Committee to accomplish over the coming year, to be discussed at the next RCC meeting. Mr. Brewster added the Conservation Commission had a close relationship with the previous Tree Warden, John Pinchbeck, getting valuable information and advice on trees when needed. Mr. Coyle mentioned that Mr. Pinchbeck had passed away on December 15, 2020. The Conservation Commission offers our condolences to the Pinchbeck family and expressed thanks for the advice, assistance, and hard work Mr. Pinchbeck has given in support of the preservation of trees of Ridgefield.

3. COMMISSION MEMBERSHIP

One application was received for an alternate position on the Conservation Commission by the deadline date from Mr. Jim Liptack.

Mr. Liptack was present at the meeting. His application to serve on the commission was received with much praise. Mr. Liptack introduced himself. He has been actively working with the Appalachian Mountain Club, as trail crew since 1978 and trail section manager since 1984. He has been a trail maintainer for the Connecticut Forest and Parks Association since 1984. For the last ten years, Mr. Liptack has also been the overseer of trails for the Connecticut Appalachian Mountain Club, scheduling and overseeing all maintenance and construction on the trails. He has been an open space ranger for the Conservation Commission since 1990 and has worked as a volunteer sawyer under the direction of Mr. Cronin and Mr. Sharp since 2019.

Mr. Coyle expressed his appreciation for all the volunteer work Mr. Liptack has done for the Conservation Commission over the years and thanked him for his application. Mr. Liptack is an outstanding candidate for the commission. Mr. Coyle asked the commissioners if they had any questions.

Mr. Keller asked if Mr. Liptack had any advice regarding the trails in Ridgefield. Mr. Liptack answered that the trails were well maintained and in good condition. He added, that trails that experience high traffic, should undergo small relocations to prevent soil erosion and to keep the trail easily maintainable for a long time. He mentioned Pine Mountain trail as one that experiences heavy foot traffic.

With the Town's goal of achieving 30% open space, Mr. Keller asked Mr. Liptack if he thought the commission should continue to strive to achieve this goal. Mr. Liptack agrees with this goal, saying that undeveloped land is scarce, thus preserving open spaces, though costly, is a must.

Mr. Coyle explained the requirement of attending meetings of the Conservation Commission and taking a turn to attend Planning and Zoning and IWB meetings on behalf of the commission.

UPON motion duly made (Brewster), seconded (Keller), and carried, it was RESOLVED that the Conservation Commission recommend to the Board of Selectman the appointment of Jim Liptack as an alternate member to the Conservation Commission.

4. OPEN SPACE

Posting on Open Space

Mr. Cronin sent a list of open spaces for each commissioner to check for signs. Feedback has indicated many signs need to be posted. The plan is to place signs on all open spaces where there are no signs over the next few months.

Dr. Kace joined the meeting at 7:20PM after attending tonight's BOS meeting to be reappointed as member to the Conservation Commission. He mentioned at the BOS that he was enthusiastic about the new efforts in RCC to move towards the goal of 30% open space and that RCC may need some political help from BOS regarding DOT owned lands. A discussion followed that indicated the BOS was very supportive of the goal especially by acquisition or donation rather than "relabeling" land like DOT land that is already open. They asked to be updated as we proceed. Mr. Brewster added, in the past the commission had bought land through funding from the BOS. Mr. Keller said that there are six properties the commission could pursue if extra funding is made available.

The commissioners discussed pursuing the Boy Scout property again. Mr. Coyle will reach out to the Scouts once more, since he has not heard back from them regarding his last enquiry to purchase a 52-acre parcel the Boy Scouts no longer use. Mr. Sharp said there was a change in leadership within the Boy Scouts organization, which is most likely why there had been no response.

5. THRIFT SHOP GRANT APPLICATION

Mr. Coyle has received input from four commissioners and has compiled the application document. The application is ready to be submitted to the Thrift Shop.

6. PUBLIC OUTREACH

Mr. Keller will submit an article on the green growth one can expect in the forest at this time of the year.

Mr. Levine was unable to connect to audio to give input on the progress of the RCC Newsletter. Mr. Coyle explained to Mr. Liptack that the commission plans to create an electronic newsletter a couple of times each year with input of articles from the commissioners.

7. MEETING ATTENDANCE

No issues were reported with the required meeting attendance.

8. CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

Mr. Coyle has no new business to discuss.

Mr. Welby asked if anyone knows what the plans for development are at the Boys and Girls Club in Ridgefield and who owns the land adjacent to the Boys and girls Club. This need to be determined.

Mr. Welby also asked if anyone knew about the no trespassing signs on High Pastures. Mr. Cronin will go there to determine if the signs are on open space land (parcel D11-0052) or private property (D11-0053).

There was a discussion of the town GIS. This system is still very out of date with a lot of incorrect information. Mr. Cronin has tried for over ten years to get the GIS date fixed. Ms. Snow asked if the Tighe and Bond Town GIS or the WestCOG GIS were preferred. Mr. Coyle said that the WestCOG GIS is more up to date and has links to the Assessors Field Cards, which contain the most up to date records of property in the town. Mr. Cronin will check the data on the WestCOG GIS against the data list of errors he has found on the Tighe and Bond GIS to ascertain which is most up to date.

The next RCC meeting will be held on **Monday** February 8, 2021 at 7:00 P.M.

ADJOURNMENT

UPON motion duly made (Brewster), seconded (Keller), and carried, it was RESOLVED that the meeting adjourn at 7:56 P.M.