



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

Meeting
November 1, 2021 at 7 P.M.
In person

Present: James Coyle Daniel C. Levine Jim Liptack
 Jean Linville Allan Welby Kitsey Snow
 Erik Keller Matt Sharp

Absent: Dave Cronin, Roberta Barbieri, Jack Kace

Guests: Jeremy Capocci

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

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

UPON motion duly made (Sharp), seconded (Keller), and carried, it was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of October 18, 2021 be approved and ordered filed in the Town Hall. Vote: 6:0 (Liptack and Snow not present to vote.)

2. ENFORCEMENT ACTION

Mr. Hally was not in attendance to give an update.

3. CAPITAL BUDGET PROCESS

Mr. Coyle reported on the capital budget process, which is open for 2022-23 capital budget requests. He asked for suggested items to include in the capital budget request. Suggestions included another truck, a chipper, a tractor, and a burn cage.

4. OPEN SPACE

4.1 Town Wide Conservation Easement – No progress to report on this item.

4.2 Boy Scouts Property – The RCC will meet with the Boy Scouts on November 11 to discuss the purchase of the Boy Scout land. The current appraisal is acceptable. Town counsel, Dave Grogins, is reviewing the title documents. Mr. Sharp proposed a site walk. The date of the site walk TBD.

4.3 OWSA Grant – The final documents required for the grant to be paid out are with Mr. Marconi for signature.

4.5 McKeon Mowing – The fence that was broken when the field was last mowed has been fixed. Carlos still needs to fix the ruts in the field before the ground freezes over. Mr. Coyle will contact Carlos Trigueiros regarding completing this task.

4.6 McKeon Professional advice – Mr. Coyle asked if it would be a good idea to retain a professional advisor to help manage the fields at McKeon. Ms. Snow indicated that this was not necessary.

Mr. Coyle suggested retaining a maintenance assistant at \$25-\$30 per hour with a maximum expenditure of \$2,500.00, to assist in the fall/winter maintenance tasks.

UPON motion duly made (Keller), seconded (Sharp), and carried, it was **RESOLVED** to retain such an assistant on an as-needed basis. The commission approved a maximum of \$2,500.00 for these services. Vote: 7:0 (Abstained: Snow)

4.7 McKeon Well Area Planting – An Eagle Scout project is proposed to plant a pollinator garden in the well area. There were three concerns the commissioners asked the scout to address: 1) The pathway proposed is to be covered with gravel or wood chips. The commission requested gravel dust instead. 2) There is no maintenance plan in the proposal. The commission requests a maintenance plan. 3) There were not enough plants in the planting list. The commission requested additional plants that come from a group of medicinal/herbal plants.

4.8 Annual Appeal – Last week Mr. Coyle and Ms. Campbell-Gibson had a meeting with Mr. Marconi, Mr. Redmond, Ms. Brown, Ms. Berendsen-Hill, Ms. McGeehin and Mr. Neblett regarding online donations for RCC. There was a question regarding which tax exempt status the commission falls under and whether the commission is under the Friends of Ridgefield (FOR) umbrella. (It is not.) The RCC is not a 501(c)3 or 4 but is a 170(c)(1), as confirmed by Ms. McGeehin.

4.9 Fall/Winter Maintenance Projects – the commissioners reviewed the list of tasks to be completed this fall/winter.

4.10 Tree of Heaven – Mr. Sharp proposed a work party for November 12 to tackle the Tree of Heaven at McManus to cut and paint stumps of this invasive with glyphosate to kill the tree. Mr. Levine will ask the rangers to be on the lookout for Tree of Heaven in the open spaces they walk and report these to the commission. This invasive plant attracts the spotted lantern fly that is an invasive insect that decimates about 40 types of trees. Ms. Snow will coordinate the RCC response to this issue.

5. RIPARIAN BUFFERS

Dr. Kace sent information to the commissioners via email on the latest riparian buffer requirements in CT towns. Mr. Sharp attended the P&Z meeting where the new riparian buffer rules were adopted. He reports the rules handed down by the state were adopted as were implemented by the Town of Stonington. These require all towns to have a buffer of 100 feet minimum and an additional 25 feet if pesticides are used in the land abutting a waterway. This was adopted for four of Ridgefield's rivers. Many of the rivers in town were excluded and tributaries were excluded. Ms. Snow will follow up with the IWB regarding amending the adopted riparian buffer rules to include these.

6. NRV T UPDATE

Mr. Coyle reports that he had a telephonic discussion with Charlie Taney of the NRV T last week. Mr. Taney said there would be another NRV T meeting for public information on November 18. The venue TBD. This meeting will focus on the Ridgefield Ramble portion of the trail.

7. NRI Update

Dr. Linville gave an update on the NRI process. Last week Dr. Linville, Ms. Snow, Mr. Coyle, Mr. Rubbo (PACE) and Ms. Breznen (Woodcock Nature Center) and Ms. Campbell-Gibson held a very productive meeting on forwarding the process for Ridgefield.

Mr. Rubbo will set up iNaturalist Training material for us to load onto our website. At the beginning of 2022, there will be guided walks at Woodcock Nature Center. Sites have been proposed for the camera traps. The sites for the drone photography have been proposed. There will be a bio blitz in June of 2022. The NRI Update Project will be promoted in the next RCC newsletter.

8. COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Mr. Levine is working on the next newsletter.

9. MEETINGS FOR ATTENDANCE

The meeting dates for the 2022 meeting schedule was presented for a vote. Commissioners felt they would like to postpone voting on these dates until the next meeting.

No issues were reported with meetings for attendance until the end of this year.

10. CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

Mr. Coyle reports that Ridgefield received a bronze Sustainable CT award, to which we contributed documents.

A town resident on Limestone Terrace was very abusive in his dealings with the commission office when he complained about an open space sign for the open space abutting his property. The commissioners do not condone abusive interactions and suggest these situations are best handled by requesting the caller to calm down or the call will be ended by hanging up the phone.

Ms. Snow asked for larger heavier tarps for McKeon because the patchwork of smaller tarps is blown and shredded by the wind. Mr. Welby will try to source old baseball tarps or billboard sign vinyl for use at McKeon. Large tarps could be bought if there are not any we can procure for free. Ms. Snow reports these cost around \$500 for a 50X50 foot tarp.

ADJOURNMENT

UPON motion duly made (Sharp), seconded (Keller), and carried, it was **RESOLVED** that the meeting adjourn at 8:25 P.M. Vote: 8:0.