



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

**Meeting**  
**November 15, 2021 at 7 P.M.**  
**In person**

Present:           James Coyle           Dave Cronin           Roberta Barbieri  
                  Jack Kace           Allan Welby           Kitsey Snow  
                  Erik Keller           Matt Sharp

Absent:           Daniel C. Levine, Jim Liptack, Jean Linville

Guests:           J. Capocci, R. Restaino, K. Carr, M. Schmer, V. Bayer, B. Hebert

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

**UPON** motion duly made (Kace), seconded (Barbieri), and carried, it was **RESOLVED** to add as item No 8 a discussion of Old Growth Forests at the request of Mr. Levine Vote: 8:0

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## **1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**UPON** motion duly made (Cronin), seconded (Keller), and carried, it was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of November 1, 2021 be approved and ordered filed in the Town Hall. Vote: 6:0 (Abstained: Kace, Barbieri)

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## **2. ENFORCEMENT ACTION**

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

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## **3. EAGLE SCOUT PROJECTS**

3.1 Petru Zubek Project Presentation – For his Eagle Scout project, Mr. Zubek proposes the installation of a pollinator garden in the well area at McKeon Farm. He will plant pollinator friendly plants and herbs along the fence of the well area and in the center. These plants will be sourced from a local native plant nursery. A circular pathway will provide access to visitors and will separate the outer and inner planting areas. He proposes that the pathway is covered with either grass, mulch or stone dust. His work team will consist of six to eight scouts from his troop.

The commissioners discussed the best covering for the pathway and decided on grass by way of vote: In favor of grass: 4. In favor of mulch: 2. In favor of stone dust: 2. (Mr. Cronin abstained from this vote.)

Mr. Keller will work with Mr. Zubek on the plant list to ensure adequate plants to fill the area, the height and placement of the plants give a cascade look with smallest plants in the front and to ensure plants chosen flower at different times to prolong the presence of flowers for pollinators.

Maintenance of the pollinator garden is a concern. Mr. Zubek was asked to approach all the troops in town regarding conservation hours. Mr. Sharp will coordinate the maintenance work with the troops in future.

Mr. Zubek was asked to include small informational signs in his project.

**UPON** motion duly made (Keller), seconded (Barbieri), and carried, it was RESOLVED to approve funding to a maximum of \$1,000 for the creation of a pollinator garden in the well area at McKeon using native plant plugs, surrounded by mulch, with a grass pathway and informational signs. Vote: 8:0

3.2 Increased funding requested for Varsha Basker Eagle Scout Project to install a bog bridge in Barrack Hills. The scope of the project has increased from a 36-foot bridge to a 72-foot bog bridge. The funding needs to increase from the original \$300 to \$600.

**UPON** motion duly made (Sharp), seconded (Keller), and carried, it was RESOLVED to approve additional funding for the installation of a 72-foot bog bridge in Barrack Hills. The maximum funding for this project is now \$600. Vote: 8:0

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#### **4. CAPITAL AND ANNUAL EXPENSE BUDGET**

The deadline to apply for FY2023 capital budget is December 01. Mr. Coyle will only submit \$4,500 for additional fencing repair costs unless there are any other large ticket items submitted by the commissioners before the deadline. The deadline for the expense budget package is December 15. Mr. Coyle is working on the budget, which will be about a 3-5 percent increase from the FY2022 budget.

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#### **5. OPEN SPACE**

5.1 Boy Scouts Property – The RCC met with the Boy Scouts on November 11 to discuss the purchase of the Boy Scout property. Mr. Coyle submitted a summary of this meeting explaining the history of the land and the current deed restrictions on parcel E03-0019.

The price agreed at the meeting is \$8,000 per acre. The parcels to be purchased are former Demrick parcels A (F04-0009), B (F04-0001) and C (E04-0034) on the Demrick map 8951. The actual size of land to be purchased based on a recent survey is 17.384 acres. The total purchase price is \$123,070. The parcel to be deeded to the town for conservation is E03-0019. This is the former Tuccio/Leffert parcel shown on map 1815, described as more or less 40 acres. The actual size of this parcel from a survey is 42.556 acres. The purchase land is contingent on parcel E03-0019 being deeded to the town for conservation purposes.

**UPON** motion duly made (Sharp), seconded (Welby), and carried, it was RESOLVED by an 8:0 vote:

The Conservation Commission approves the purchase of approximately 15 acres of land (Demrick section) from the Connecticut Yankee Council (CYC) of the Boy Scouts of America for the sum of \$123,072 from the commission's Open Space Conservation Fund.

This purchase is contingent upon the CYC deeding to the town the Tuccio/Leffert section of the original property of approximately 40 acres at no cost.

Furthermore, these properties shall remain as open space in perpetuity for passive recreation use under the management of the Conservation Commission.

5.2 Land Donation, Parcel G08-0012 – This is on the agenda of the next BOS meeting. The Town is negotiating with the donor to subdivide the land to donate 2 acres of the parcel to the Town for commercial/low cost residential use and the rest (5.5 acres) to the Conservation Commission.

5.3 OSWA Grant – After a new survey, a new title search and a new property description were submitted at DEEP's request. DEEP now requires a resolution for the First Selectman to sign a contract with the state to accept the terms of the grant. The adoption of this resolution is on the next BOS agenda.

5.4 Tree of Heaven – The work party to cut and treat an outcrop of Tree of Heaven at McManus was cancelled on Friday due to rain. This will be done next week – the day TBD.

5.5 Prospect Ridge – There are four parcels of land collectively called Prospect Ridge Open Space that the Affordable Housing Committee is considering for affordable housing development. This is another example of land managed by the Conservation Commission with no deed language specifically protecting

the land as open space in perpetuity. A number of residents were present at the meeting to express their concern over the loss of this open space. The commissioners decided a letter should be submitted to the BOS regarding this situation.

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## **6. SIGNAGE**

6.1 McKeon Trail Signs - Mr. Keller reports that the signs for the educational trail at McKeon are printed and will be installed by Thanksgiving.

6.2 McKeon Entrance Sign – Mr. Levine designed an entrance sign for McKeon Farm. The sign can only be ordered once the Tax Assessor has given the commission a street number corresponding to the McKeon entrance on Old Stagecoach Road. The preferred signpost is a standard colonial signpost. Mr. Sharp will confirm the best location of the signpost for the safety and visibility of the sign from both directions when travelling along Old Stagecoach road.

6.3 Bear Mountain Sign – As part of the OSWA grant a sign must be installed giving credit to DEEP OSWA program for the purchase of the property. The proposed sign names the trail the Cronin Trail to honor Dave Cronin for his 16 years of dedicated service to the trails and open spaces of Ridgefield. The final sign language still needs to be confirmed. Mr. Welby asked that the sign also mention the Ridgefield Thrift Shop for their donation towards purchase of the property.

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## **7. COMMUNITY OUTREACH**

Mr. Levine was unable to call in to the meeting as planned. This item will be discussed at the next meeting.

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## **8. OLD GROWTH FOREST**

Mr. Levine was unable to call in to the meeting as planned. This item will be discussed at the next meeting.

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## **9. MEETINGS FOR ATTENDANCE**

The meeting dates for the 2022 meeting schedule was presented for a vote. Commissioners decided to request that the calendar move by one week, with the starting date for 2022 meetings to begin on January 10.

**UPON** motion duly made (Keller), seconded (Sharp), and carried, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the 2022 Meeting Schedule with all dates moved up by one week. Vote: 7:0 (Abstain: Cronin)

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

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## **10. CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS**

Mr. Coyle thanked Dave Cronin for his service to the Conservation Commission. Mr. Cronin has resigned after 16 years of dedicated service.

Ms. Snow will draft a letter to the IWB in response to the Planning and Zoning discussion to adopt the new riparian buffer regulations for the town. Her concern is that only four of Ridgefield's rivers are noted in the regulations and none of the tributaries.

Ms. Snow asked if anyone attended the CACIWC meeting. None of the commissioners had attended.

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## **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.