

Town of Canaan
Inland Wetlands/Conservation Commission
Minutes of Regular Meeting
July 17, 2023

Members Present: Mark Burdick, Ellery Sinclair, Matthew Gallagher, Brant Burz, Susan Kelsey.

Others Present: Gary O'Cain

Meeting was called to order at 7:06 p.m. by Chairman Burdick. Minutes of June 20, 2023 meeting were read. Sinclair made a motion to accept minutes as presented with the following addition: that the words "with regret" be added in regards to the acceptance of Jones' resignation; seconded by Gallagher; passed unanimously. Kelsey made a motion that the New Business item "Hollenbeck Club" be heard before "Old Business" to accommodate guest O'Cain; seconded by Sinclair; passed unanimously.

New Business

1. Hollenbeck Club/Brown Brook Obstruction: O'Cain, representing Hollenbeck Club, explained that during the recent heavy rainfall, there was significant tree uprooting and subsequent streambank erosion of Brown Brook on Hollenbeck Club property. Several large trees have fallen into the brook, causing obstruction to the natural flow of water. The area of this obstruction is in proximity to Route 63, just south of where Brown Brook crosses under Route 63. In some areas, at least 10 feet of the streambank has eroded. Hollenbeck Club is seeking permission to remove the trees causing obstruction to the natural river flow and would like to stabilize the banks by staggering large rocks at the bottom of the bank and then creating steps back into the bank by adding additional rocks; said rock placement would provide bank stabilization in addition to enhancing trout habitat. O'Cain has done similar bank remediation on the Nepaug River in Bakersville as well as working with Trout Unlimited on previous projects on the Hollenbeck River for Hollenbeck Club. Kelsey reminded members that the Commission had allowed Hollenbeck Club to perform similar activity as a "non-regulated" use under Section 4.2.a. of the Town's Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Regulations (i.e. "Conservation of soil, vegetation, water, fish, shellfish and wildlife"). The project would proceed as soon as weather conditions permit. O'Cain would serve as the contact person for the project. Kelsey will monitor the project. Motion made by Sinclair to allow the project to proceed as a "non-regulated" activity; seconded by Kelsey; passed unanimously.

Old Business:

1. Railroad Herbicide Spraying: Sinclair reported that several individuals from the Housatonic River Working Group met with the Council on Environmental Quality. The CEQ recommended that the HRWG contact both the DEEP and NPS to apprise them of the HRWG's concerns. CEQ offered to write a letter in support of their efforts should it be needed. The CEQ recommended that the Group be persistent in their efforts and maintain communication with Maria Horn and other legislators. Several Working Group members are working with Congressional members.

2. Sustainable CT: No update

3. Town Plan of Conservation and Development: Sinclair requested that Kelsey email Glen Chalder requesting that the suggestion regarding herbicide usage be amended to include spraying along the railroad in proximity to wetlands and watercourses. Members are to review the Town Plan draft.

4. Elm Tree Injection: Communication was received from Bartlett Tree in which it was recommended that the elm tree on Brewster Street be treated and that both the elm and ash trees at the driveway to Kellogg School be removed. Kelsey made a motion to have Bartlett treat the elm on Brewster Street; seconded by Sinclair; passed unanimously. By consensus, it was decided that the removal of the elm and ash is the Town's responsibility, not the IW/CC. Sinclair will notify Bartlett. Kelsey will let Selectmen know of the need to have said trees removed.

New Business (continued)

2. Solar Array Proposal, Town Farm Property: Burdick informed members that the Town is considering the installation of solar panels at the Town Farm, between Route 126 and the town pool. Kelsey reviewed the Flood Maps and determined that depending on its placement it could be within the floodway of the Hollenbeck River. Burdick expressed concern that the proposed location of the solar array is on agricultural land and wondered if the panels could be placed on top of the covered landfill. Members felt that prior to commenting on the project more information would be needed (e.g. size of site, construction specifics, more detailed location of proposed site). Kelsey will send memo to Selectmen informing them of our request to receive more information prior to our endorsement of the project.

3. Fuelwood Program: Kelsey reported having communicated with Nick Zito regarding town fuelwood programs; grants are available for programs in which loggers can donate fuelwood to the bank for tax deduction. Kelsey will request additional information.

4. Housatonic River Commission Survey: The Commission completed a survey regarding the River to be used in the upcoming revision of the 2006 River Management Plan. Consensus was that access to the river was not as important as its protection from pollution and erosion. Sinclair will request that Selectmen and P&Z also fill out the questionnaire.

Routing Sheet Sign-offs:

1. S. Kelsey, 124 Route 126: 12' x 16' garden shed.

Kelsey made a motion to adjourn at 8:58 p.m.; seconded by Sinclair; passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Kelsey, secretary