



**TOWN OF WINCHESTER
CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

Town Hall, 338 Main Street, 2nd Floor – Lee Ann LaClaire Room

March 10, 2022 – 5:00PM

Meeting Minutes

1. CALL TO ORDER:

Amanda Hill called the meeting to order at 5:00PM.

2. ROLL CALL:

The following individuals were present: Leeane Marvin, Jen Perga, Willard Platt, Renata Waldron, and John Wiarda. Joe Ulevicus was absent excused. Staff members Alison Pierce and Michael Stankov were also present.

MOTION: Ms. Waldron, Ms. Perga second, to amend the agenda to take up *Approval of Minutes* ahead of *Discussion with Budget Analyst Alison Pierce - EV Charging Station & FY23 Budget*: unanimously approved.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: JANUARY 13, 2022 AND FEBRUARY 10, 2022.

The February 10, 2022 Minutes should include the following changes:

- Mr. Platt is indicated as being present and should instead be reflected as absent excused; and
- Mr. Platt was indicated as having seconded the *Motion to Adjourn* when instead that should be reflected as being made by Ms. Waldron.

MOTION: Ms. Perga, Ms. Hill second, to approve the February 10, 2022 Minutes as amended; Motion passed with Ms. Perga, Ms. Hill, and Ms. Waldron voting in favor while Mr. Platt and Mr. Wiarda abstained.

MOTION: Ms. Perga, Ms. Hill second, to approve the January 13, 2022 Minutes; unanimously approved.

5. DISCUSSION WITH BUDGET ANALYST ALISON PIERCE - EV CHARGING STATION & FY23 BUDGET:

Town of Winchester Budget Analyst Alison Pierce introduced herself explaining that one of the tasks she was charged with upon being hired was to review expenditures and to seek areas to adjust. She shared her observations regarding the popularity of the Center Street electric vehicle (EV) charging station. Ms. Pierce explained that options should now be reviewed and considered and then put forth to the Town Manager. When the charging station was first installed and prior to many knowing about it, there was only a base monthly charge of \$40. Beginning in August, there was an uptick in the utility costs to \$250 per month and has now grown to \$800 per month, according to Ms. Pierce. She explained that there had been no budget included for these costs.

Ms. Pierce requested the commission consider whether the EV charging station is something that ought to be offered for free to the town's residents, to retrofit the EV charging station with a credit card machine, or implement a time limit feature that would limit or cap the usage. Ms. Pierce reported that the cost for this station is approximately \$10K annually to provide charging services to 3 cars in town.

Ms. Hill questioned the cost to retrofit the unit with a credit card machine. Ms. Pierce indicated the cost to be \$8K and explained that it would carry a 10% fee for every transaction along with a 2% fee from the credit card company for every kW. She explained that the Town would have to set its own rates, likely between \$7 to \$10 per kW, in order to pay for the electricity and also cover the administrative costs associated with the unit.

Ms. Waldron questioned how a time limit could be added to the EV charging station and whether it would only allow charging for a certain span of time or it would only be open a certain time. Ms. Pierce explained that town staff was envisioning the station only be open for a certain period of time, such as 9AM to 3PM, and would have a lock box installed. Ms. Perga questioned whether the Town could reach out to a company to retrofit a credit card machine to charge for the use. Ms. Pierce explained that there is a cost for the contractor

to do that. Ms. Hill explained that typically the equipment needed for a retrofit must be purchased from the vendor who sold the unit. It was noted that an electric vehicle energy specialist, Adam Sinclair, from XL Fleet, an independent contractor who partners with Eversource on energy efficiencies, was meeting with Mr. Rollins on Tuesday, March 15th at 11AM to consult on a retrofit as well as discuss/review other possible locations for EV charging stations in town. Commissioners were welcome to attend this meeting.

Ms. Waldron encouraged signage be added to inform users on the change in operation policy. Discussion ensued about cars being left charging at the station overnight. Ms. Waldron questioned the typical charging time necessary. Ms. Pierce indicated it typically takes 4 to 6 hours. Mr. Wiarda noted that it depends on the make and model of the vehicle. Ms. Waldron noted that it might be good to use that as an emergency charging station, where a half hour of charging is all that is permitted. Ms. Pierce explained that had been considered but noted the workarounds where a user could unhook and re-hook for another half hour of charge for free.

Mr. Wiarda recalled that the charging station was grandfathered for the first three years. He also recollected that Eversource had special rates if a user has charging stations such as a residential user would enjoy discounts off the price paid per kW. Ms. Waldron questioned whether signage could warn users that overnight charging was prohibited. The problem with enforcing such a policy was pointed out.

Ms. Pierce noted that as next year's budgets were being prepared, it was important to quickly decide who is going to pay for the charging station, how it is going to be paid for, and how much should be budgeted. Mr. Wiarda questioned whether any funds from the Biden administration's Build Back Better program could be utilized. Ms. Pierce explained that program had not passed and didn't appear likely to pass.

Ms. Waldron questioned whether Eversource had any programs that would allow the Town to cap the monthly use and to cut off the supply once the threshold is met. Ms. Pierce noted that with a monthly cap, there should be some consideration given to the response/reaction from the public who has enjoyed free charging for a year and the sudden shift to something else. It was noted that people knew this when they purchased an electric car. Ms. Pierce reported that most municipal charging stations and stations located at libraries, grocery stores, and universities are free. Mr. Platt indicated that Tesla charging stations have a cost passed onto the user.

There had been discussion about whether the Center Street charging station might be faulty and not working correctly which might be why it takes so long to fully charge a vehicle.

Ms. Waldron suggested reaching out to a representative from the company that sold this one so that it can be checked on whether there might be something wrong with it. Ms. Hill reported having already reached out to Dan Shanahan at EVSE, LLC and had received a quote from them for the unit to be upgraded for a credit card but had stepped back once she learned that the Town was handling it. Ms. Waldron questioned whether they were surprised when they learned how much the station was costing to operate. Ms. Pierce and Ms. Hill indicated that they would not be as it may be attributable to that particular model opted for by the Town. To retrofit an older model and the cost associated to do that was not a surprise to them, Ms. Hill explained. Ms. Waldron questioned whether anyone had sought a price on a newer model with a credit card option. While Mr. Stankov suggested that it would likely cost even more, Mr. Platt disagreed, noting that all of the mechanicals are already in place including the wires in the panels thereby only requiring changing the power heads outside and incidentals in the building.

Mr. Wiarda suggested that contact be made with members from the EV website, noting that there are a lot of towns involved who may have already come across this type of issue. He also suggested contacting DEEP, who does a lot of charging stations for the state's colleges. An additional suggestion of Mr. Wiarda was to reach out to Torrington as they were given a charging station from Eversource about eight years ago located on Riverside Drive and is available to users at no cost.

6.. FOLLOW UP ON ACTION ITEMS:

A. Updating EDC Maps.

Ms. Perga reported having consulted with Selectman Candace Bouchard, who is also associated with Friends of Main Street (FOMS) who had indicated that they would consult with their map people on a possible update. Ms. Perga indicated that FOMS may be inclined to order an update as there are so many new businesses. She noted that she had come to learn that it was definitely FOMS, and not the Economic Development Commission as originally thought, who had contracted the *Miles of Smiles* map.

B. Recycling White Paper for Profit.

Mr. Platt noted that blueprint paper was not recyclable and was unsure whether site plans could be recycled. Ms. Perga questioned whether that might only apply to the old style, noting that current site plans are regular paper with regular ink.

C. EV Sign on 398 Main Street/EV/Charging Mapping App.

Ms. Hill explained that the unit installed by the Town does not have the capability to be added to a network. She explained that ChargePoint does not support these Center Street machines. Ms. Hill reported that the owners of 398 Main Street were amenable to a temporary sign after they have had a chance to review it.

D. Updating Sustainable CT Grid.

Mr. Stankov reported that he had no update for the Sustainable CT Grid. Ms. Waldron questioned whether commissioners could update the worksheets themselves. Mr. Stankov confirmed that commissioners could indeed complete updates and reported that new part-time Economic Development Director Ted Shafer may be able to work on this, too, as he has experience with Sustainable CT from his former role as Town of Burlington First Selectman.

7. CLEAN RIVER INITIATIVE/TOWN CLEAN-UP/GRANTS:

Leeane Marvin reviewed a power point presentation, noting that she was currently working at the Northwest Conservation District. She reported that NWCD partners with local environmental groups and noted her previous past experience working as a river steward. Ms. Marvin explained that she was seeking support from the Town in applying for a grant to implement a Business – River Smart Pledge. She noted the areas near the river behind CVS and their site's activity proximity to the river. Ms. Marvin explained that she was envisioning additional river clean-up days and planting of trees along the area where the two rivers converge.

Ms. Marvin noted that she had been collaborating with Laura Hart of the Farmington River Coordinating Committee and projected the clean-up to occur during the fall and the planting to occur during late summer/early fall. Ms. Waldron questioned the type of planting planned. Ms. Marvin explained the planting may be a raingarden or trees. Ms. Waldron questioned the amount of the grant and what it could be used for. Ms. Marvin indicated the grant as \$10K. Ms. Perga noted that she had partnered with Ms. Hart on a pollinator garden on town property on Meadow Street and explained that designating a particular location had been the most challenging part of the process.

8. FUEL CELL PRESENTATION RECAP DISCUSSION:

No business discussed.

9. BRIEF SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY RESILIENCE BUILDING WORKSHOP:

No business discussed.

10. ADJOURN:

MOTION: Ms. Waldron, Ms. Perga second, to adjourn at 6:13PM; unanimously approved.

Town of Winchester Conservation Commission
March 10, 2022 Meeting Minutes

**Respectfully submitted,
Pamela A. Colombie
Recording Clerk**