



**TOWN OF WINCHESTER
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Held Remotely Via ZOOM
January 13, 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: Amanda Hill, Jen Perga, Willard Platt, Renata Waldron, Joseph Ulevicus, and John Wiarda. Additionally, Wetlands Enforcement Officer/Zoning Enforcement Officer Michael Stankov was present.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – DECEMBER 9, 2021:

MOTION: Mr. Wiarda, Mr. Platt second, to approve the December 9, 2021 minutes; unanimously approved.

4. REVIEW OF LETTERS FOR SALE OF EASEMENTS:

The commission discussed the draft letters that Ms. Hill and Ms. Perga had prepared for the Planning and Zoning Commission and the Board of Selectmen regarding the proposed conservation easement over the 1300 acres on town-owned land adjacent to the Crystal Lake reservoir. The consensus of the commission was that no changes were necessary.

5. DISCUSS POSSIBLE FUEL CELLS IN WINCHESTER:

Ms. Hill queried the commission on whether former commissioner Marc Gizzie had ever had the opportunity to meet with Town Manager Josh Kelly regarding fuel cells. Ms. Perga did not think the two had ever met and was inclined to think that Mr. Ulevicus would assume that initiative. She reported having met with Department of Public Works Director Jim Rollins who was enthusiastic about the possibility. Ms. Perga suggested that Mr. Ulevicus contact either Mr. Kelly or Mr. Rollins regarding who else from the Water Department should be invited to a meeting. Mr. Ulevicus noted his appreciation, explaining that when he joined this commission, it was not with the intention of selling the Town a fuel cell. He reported having reached out to his company's business development department and had an 18-page slide deck that he hoped to share with the commission in order to provide more information on how fuel cells work.

Ms. Perga reported having spoken to Mr. Rollins about the possibility of a fuel cell and noted that he had advised that the wastewater treatment plant does collect the methane now and burn it currently for heating purposes. They, at one point, had been using it as a fuel for the police cars but that the fuel had particles in it and so it did not work well as a vehicle fuel, according to Ms. Perga. Mr. Ulevicus reviewed several instances where his company has worked with wastewater treatment facilities, such as Riverside, California, Tularie, California, Woodbridge, Connecticut, and Bridgeport, Connecticut.

6. OFFICE PAPER RECYCLING:

Mr. Platt questioned whether Town Hall recycled paper. Staff indicated that they currently do not. Mr. Platt noted that there are programs available to generate money from recycling white paper. Staff reported that Mr. Rollins is reviewing locations at the public works facility on Rowley Street in order for the Town Hall to be able to recycle. Mr. Platt noted from his own experience as a Planning and Zoning Commissioner the vast amount of paper he receives. Ms. Waldron questioned whether there was single stream recycling at Town Hall. Staff indicated that there was not.

Ms. Perga reported that the same situation had been occurring at the school that she works and that in that case, it took only a simple call to the contractor/hauler to request recycling bins. The consensus of the commission was to request that the town manager contact the waste hauler to coordinate a recycling bin for

the town hall. There was some discussion that it might be possible to add one to the municipal parking lot on Center Street. Mr. Ulevicus reminded the commission that recycling is a law in the state of Connecticut. Ms. Hill agreed to email the town manager to relay the request for an update on recycling at town hall before the February regular meeting.

7. GAS POWER PLANT:

Mr. Wiarda shared his hope to see a gas power plant for electric vehicles, possibly even run by a fuel cell or powered by solar. He noted that an elementary school in Manchester will soon have a net zero school. Mr. Wiarda questioned whether the building on Bridge Street might add solar panels to the roof. Ms. Perga noted that this might fit into the suggestion presented by Mr. Stankov in terms of suggesting to owners of south-facing buildings on Main Street to consider rooftop solar arrays. Ms. Perga questioned whether the commission might assist Mr. Stankov in that research. Mr. Stankov noted that buy-in from the property owners was necessary as when he had consulted with a solar company to come to town to do assessments, they were only interested in doing that when invited by the owner. Ms. Perga noted that the commission may be able to divide up that outreach project. Ms. Waldron questioned whether the solar company to complete the assessment would need access to the mechanical systems of the building. Mr. Stankov was unsure.

Mr. Wiarda questioned whether it might be possible to get solar charging stations on the street-side of the parking lot at the Beardsley Memorial Library. Mr. Stankov indicated that might be possible and that he would consult with former Town Manager Bob Geiger, who continues to serve on the Library's Board of Directors. Mr. Wiarda opined that it would be great to get additional EV charging stations at the former Bank of America lot, noting that Mr. Geiger had been instrumental with that effort.

8. ADD SIGNAGE FOR EV STATIONS:

Ms. Hill questioned the process for getting signage for the EV charging station at the former Bank of America. Staff explained that the Zoning Regulations regulate the amount of signage but that directional signage is generous, questioning whether any was planned for the building or freestanding. Ms. Waldron questioned whether the cars themselves identify where nearby charging stations are. Mr. Wiarda noted the directional sign on the building at the corner of Main Street and Elm Street, alerting drivers to the municipal parking available on Elm Street and Center Street.

Ms. Perga thought it was a good idea to have signs to alert people who do not already have an EV that there are charging stations right here in town.

The *Miles of Smiles* Winsted maps that the Economic Development Commission sponsored in 2017 were discussed as a potential resource to advertise the EV charging stations.

Ms. Waldron questioned whether commissioners should be submitting updates to the Sustainable CT modules. Ms. Perga questioned whether the Sustainable CT modules could be uploaded to a Google Doc.

9. ADJOURN.

MOTION: Mr. Platt, Ms. Waldron second, to adjourn at 6:19PM; unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Pamela A. Colombie
Recording Clerk