



**TOWN OF WINCHESTER
CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

Town of Winchester Town Hall 338 Main Street - 2nd Floor – P. Francis Hicks

September 9, 2021 – 5:00PM

Meeting Minutes

1. CALL TO ORDER:

Chairperson Jen Perga called the meeting to order at 5:00PM.

2. ROLL CALL:

Ms. Perga noted that the following individuals were present: Marc Gizzie, Amanda Hill, Willard Platt, Renata Waldron, and John Wiarda. Additionally, Wetlands Enforcement Officer/Zoning Enforcement Officer Michael Stankov was present.

The agenda was modified to include approval of the August 19, 2021 meeting minutes.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – AUGUST 19, 2021 MEETING:

The August 19, 2021 meeting Minutes should include the following changes:

Under Item #5, Other Ideas, Initiatives, the portion of text that reads, "... Ms. Hill suggested a community garden for the town..." should instead read, "...Ms. Waldron suggested a community garden..."

MOTION: Ms. Hill, Mr. Platt second, to approve the August 19, 2021 Meeting Minutes as amended; unanimously approved.

4. SUSTAINABLE CONNECTICUT:

A. Discuss Initiatives Already Met

The consensus of the Commission was to defer most of the discussion on the Sustainable CT initiatives already achieved organically as Town Manager Josh Kelly was unable to be at this meeting and Mr. Stankov noted that he is the one most familiar with the program. A rundown of the various components of the Sustainable CT goals was reviewed.

Mr. Stankov reported that the Town did not currently have a Forestry Advisory Committee. He noted that the Town's tree warden will be contacted for more information on that in order to form one.

B. Choose Initiatives to Implement.

Mr. Stankov confirmed that a number of treatments applied at Highland Lake to address invasive species.

Discussing prioritizing initiatives, Mr. Stankov suggested the *Promotion of Night Skies* would be a good one to initially take on. Mr. Gizzie commented on the goal of *Assessment of Climate Vulnerability* as another good one. It was noted that there while there was not a large focus on the climate in the Town's Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) approved on August 23, 2021, there would still be opportunity for this Commission to make recommendations and adopt it as a priority. Mr. Platt reported that the Highland Lake Watershed Association (HLWA) had been tracking the refill rates following the drawdown each year. He noted that the date that the water level returns to the target spillway level is getting later and later each year.

The consensus of the Commission was to gain an understanding of what has already been accomplished by the Town towards meeting the criteria put forth in the Action Overview Worksheet.

Ms. Perga noted that some of the action items tied most closely with the Conservation Commission included: 5.4 *Climate Vulnerability*, 3.13 *Promote Dark Skies*, 3.12 *Enhance Pollinator Pathways*, and 3.5 *Create a Natural Resource and Wildlife Inventory*. With respect to pollinator gardens, Ms. Perga relayed how the one on Meadow Street came to be. She indicated that there are other pollinator gardens within Town that could be acknowledged formally as a means to encouraging more of them.

It was agreed that staff would review the list with other town employees to better assess what on the Action Overview Worksheet may already be completed. Ms. Perga agreed to reach out to the Northwest Conservation District to consult with them. Mr. Platt reminded the Commission that the HLWA had contracted Northeast Aquatic Research a watershed study on Highland Lake. Ms. Perga suggested inquiry be made with them about Park Pond and Lake Winchester as Mr. Knocklein may also have been retained for those two water bodies.

5. CHARGING STATIONS (PRESENT, FUTURE):

A. Consideration of Possible Locations.

Ms. Hill questioned whether there was any method of tracking for the use and hours of charging on the stations already currently in town. Mr. Wiarda was unsure. It was agreed that inquiry would be made to the Finance Department on this. Mr. Wiarda was inclined to believe that the installation was pursuant to the manufacturer's recommendations. Ms. Waldron questioned what data was available on density of a community versus the number of recommended electrical vehicle charging stations.

B. Review Approval Process for Charging Stations.

Staff explained that a charging station would not likely be a principal use of any given parcel but would instead likely be an accessory use. A modified site plan would likely include the location of the planned charging stations.

Possible locations were bandied including the brewery, Northwest Community Bank, the state boat launch, and Northwest Connecticut Community College. Mr. Wiarda indicated that several Stop and Shops in Connecticut have charging stations including the Canaan location. Ms. Perga noted that the Canaan community had sought a Tesla charging station as it then also serves to draw Tesla owners to the community.

C. Develop Citizens Guide on Purchasing Electric Cars.

The Commission discussed including a write-up for the Town's quarterly newsletters. Ms. Perga agreed to begin the draft and provide it to everyone as a working document.

Ms. Hill reported that she had confirmed with the owners of the Gilson that they would be amenable to promote the Bank of America charging station. It was noted that a blurb should also be included on the town's website and newsletter to help inform the residents that Winsted has this charging station available. Other suggestions for getting the word out included Rooted Market, Organic Cotton Plus, and Noujaimes.

Mr. Platt noted that the town owns many properties around Highland Lake in the watershed area. He suggested this commission looking into designating these as Open Space.

5. COMMUNITY GARDEN.

A. Discuss Possibility of Visits to Potential Sites.

The commission reviewed potential community garden locations in the downtown area. They agreed to schedule a Special Meeting for Thursday, September 16, 2021 at 6PM to view three sites: 82-84 Rockwell Street, 17 Birdsall Street, and 48 Bridge Street.

6. WINSTED MICROGRIDS/DIFFUSE/DISPERSED GRID.

Mr. Stankov reported that he will be seeking more information on how buildings in the downtown area would get roof-mounted solar arrays.

7. ENERGY FAIR.

A. Discounts on Led Bulbs/Water Saving Showerheads/Eversource.

Ms. Perga indicated that she had attempted to contact Eversource. She polled the commission regarding a town-wide energy fair. Ms. Hill noted that she had perused the website of Eversource and relayed the numerous resources available to educators.

8. ADJOURN.

MOTION: Mr. Wiarda, Ms. Waldron second, to adjourn at 6:10PM; unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Pamela A. Colombie
Recording Clerk