1. **Call to Order/Roll Call**

Vice Chair Renee Waldron calls the meeting to order at 5:03PM. In attendance are commission members Jen Perga, Willie Platt, LeeAnn Marvin, Tom Carter, Lance Hansen (Town Planner), Sally Chesney (41 Lewis Street), Bill Hester (BOS Liaison). Absent excused – Amanda Hill.

2. **Agenda Review**

None

3. **Minutes Approval**

Jen Perga makes a motion to approve the Conservation Commission meeting Minutes from the February 8th, 2024, meeting. LeeAnn Marvin seconded the motion, and the motion was unanimously approved.

4. **New Business**

   A. Town Planner Lance Hansen led a discussion about the upcoming native plant sale by the Northwest Conservation District. The brochures haven’t been printed yet, but there is a web link that Lance will ask Communications Coordinator, Alexa Hinton to place on town social media and website. Jen will put the information on the Winchester Land Trust social media. [Plant Sale – Connecticut’s Conservation Districts](conservect.org)

Lance explained that USA Hauling (as part of a new building project) hopes to plant native species of trees and shrubs beneficial as pollinator plantings along the Sue Grossman Greenway, but USA Hauling needs permission from Eversource who own the land. Sally asked who might maintain the garden. Lance stated that the plantings for trees and shrubs would be maintained/pruned by USA Hauling with the potential for volunteer opportunities for future pollinator garden plantings in the vicinity. Lance also mentioned that there will be a family bike day organized by Fit Together on the Greenway on Saturday May 4th from 12:00 noon – 4:00pm. (rain date – Sunday May 5th) Renee asked if the town could promote the event on social media and the town website. Renee wondered if the calendar of events existed for 2024 and asked who created the calendar in the past. EDC / Friends of Main Street?

   B. Earth Day Cleanup on April 27. CC members will coordinate with Candace Bouchard to determine what refreshments are needed. Possibly coffee/tea and treats from Railway Café and/or donations of cheese pizza from area restaurants. CC members may need to speak with restaurants to line up donations. Jen will speak with Jim Rollins to confirm a town truck will be parked behind town hall for the garbage.

   C. April 28 12:30-5 Lance reminded everyone of Barkhamsted Nature Day celebration at the Peoples State Forest with many activities.

   D. Beekeeping presentation with Dan Watkins will be on May 9, at 7pm in the Hicks Room. The presentation will take the place of the regular Conservation Commission meeting. Lance will reserve the room and Renee will work with Lance on technology to make the presentation available by Zoom.

   E. Master Gardener lecture by Sarah Bailey will be scheduled in August or September. Sally says that it’s a very busy time for Master Gardeners and by Aug, Sept, Sarah Bailey can encourage people to sign up for the Fall Master Gardener classes.

Sally explained that she volunteered on a Pollinator Trail in Collinsville with Master Gardeners. They have worked very hard to eradicate invasive knotweed and replace it with native pollinator plants. Jen
wondered if it might be possible to do this eventually along the Sue Grossman where there are some knotweed problems.

**F.** Fall Foliage Festival is scheduled for Sept 28. The Conservation Commission isn’t necessarily involved, but the 28th might be the official day for River Cleanups across the State of CT. To avoid overlap, the Fall River Cleanup will be on Saturday, October 5.

**G.** Fall River and Main Street Cleanup – October 5, 9:30am – noon.

**H.** Town Website – Commissioners viewed the town website where there is a link for “Tourism and Attractions”. Alexa Hinton maintains this website and the Tourism section has great photos, a short description of attractions and links to websites for further information. Jen will get Winchester Land Trust information to Lance and Alexa so that it can be added to this section of the website. Renee wondered if there is any way to alert people to upcoming events. For now, the FOMS Weekly Wednesday email blasts and Town social media sites are the best way to spread news.

**I.** Lance described in more detail the new USA Hauling maintenance building that will be built soon. He stated that there may be a wall dividing the Greenway and the USA Hauling property where recycling information could be displayed. This is also the approximate location of the planned pollinator garden.

**J.** Tatro Park – Lance explained that playground equipment from Batcheller School is sitting in a pile at Tatro Park but hasn’t been set up yet. The pavilion is ready, as is a short trail and bridge around the pond. The dam needs to be reconstructed. The Elks Fishing Derby is scheduled for Sunday May 19 and on April 15, the Park officially re-opens. The Friends of Tatro Park have been hard at work!

**K.** Mad River Recreation Area – Lance and Tom have submitted a grant requesting $500,000 to improve parking, trails, a bridge and signage. Lance explained the location of possible trails and coordination for an organized hike on Connecticut Trails Day – June 1st 2024

**L.** Prospect Trail – Lance explained that this project is on the back burner while Town staff are working on the budget. However, there is grant money available for planned signage.

**M.** Resurrection of “Winsted Trails” group – Tom tentatively agreed to possibly lead this group. Goals might include organizing teams to maintain trails, organizing hikes for the public and promoting trails in Winsted.

**N.** Resha Beach Rain Garden and Hurlbut/Birdsall Street Pocket Park – Lance maintains contact with Laura Hart at FRWA and Jim Rollins to keep these projects moving forward.

5. **Old Business**

None

6. **Communications**

None

7. **Other Business**

Jen brought a brochure from RRDD1 about the new Food Waste Collection. Residents of Winsted, New Hartford, Barkhamsted can use the recycling facility (which includes food waste but no garbage) on Wednesdays from 4pm to 7pm without paying for a sticker. You can dump organic waste into bins from a container or place the waste in a special biodegradable green bag available for purchase at RRDD1.

8. **Adjournment**

LeeAnn Waldron makes a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:56 PM. Jen Perga seconded the motion, and the motion was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Jennifer Perga