

Conservation Commission
Town of Willington

Minutes

Wednesday January 18, 2023 at 7:00 PM

[Remote Meeting via Zoom]

- I. **Call to Order:** Meeting was called to order @ 7:04 pm by Chairman Kathy Demers
- II. **Roll Call / Seating of Alternates:** Regular members present included: Kathy Demers, Carol Jordan, Bob Shabot and Jackie Kulig. On a motion by BS/CJ: *"Alternate Nora Jones be seated for Marilyn Schreiber"*. Unanimously approved.
- III. **Approval of Minutes:** (No meeting was held in December 2022).
On a motion by BS/NJ: *"The minutes of the November 16, 2022 meeting be approved as written."*
Ayes: KD, CJ, BS, NJ; JK abstained. Motion passes.
- IV. **Present to Speak:** None
- V. **Treasurer's Report/Finances:** CJ reported that to date a total of \$312.84 has been expended from the budget; Balance available: \$1187.16.
-**'23-'24 Budget Request:** Due by Feb 9th. The commission discussed upcoming funding needs related to commission activities. On a motion by BS/JK: *"The Conservation Commission will request \$1500 in budget funding for FY 2023-2024."* Unanimously approved.
-**CIP request:** KD and BS attended the CIP meeting earlier today to present the CC's CIP request for \$30,000/year x 5 years.
- VI. **Old Business**
 - A. **Talmadge Estate Property: -**
 - DEEP OS Grant:** DEEP has reviewed the survey and is requiring more information be added related to NAD83 coordinates. Our surveyor can do the additional work for \$1500. First Selectwoman Wiecenski has confirmed that funding can come from already appropriated OS funds for costs associated with the land purchase.
 - The boundaries have been marked with metal signs. The old truck frame, tires, and fencing were removed from the new property with help from Public Works.
 - Signage:** Members reviewed/approved photo of draft sign for the new property which identifies the property as the: "Daniel W. and Eleanor L. Talmadge Conservation Tract". CJ noted during the purchase and sales negotiations, the Talmadge family also requested that the sign on the original Daniel W. Talmadge parcel be changed to include "Eleanor L". The CC reviewed two sign quotes: Signs of All Kind: \$100 per sign; Fast Signs: \$185 per sign. On a motion by CJ/BS: *The Conservation Commission authorizes the purchase of DEEP required signage for the addition to the Talmadge Tract and replacement signage for the original portion of the Talmadge Tract to add Eleanor L. Talmadge's name.*
 - New Trail:** Proposed trail was flagged and reviewed by KD and JK. JK will use GPS to calculate mileage and add the new trail to the Town's Mason Road OS properties map. Trail to be brushed out and blazed (?April). Trail color will be "yellow". Members will identify a name for the new trail at next meeting. On a motion by BS/NJ: *"The Conservation Commission authorizes the expenditure of \$100 for the purchase of paint for trail blazing and hardware to mount signage."* Unanimously approved.
 - Public Dedication:** The Talmadge family will be contacted to determine which weekend day works best for them this spring.

B. Properties Management

1. Fenton-Ruby Park / Drobney Sanctuary:

- 3 trail signs were noted missing at FRP in December. Volunteer Chris Demers made and installed new signs.
- Public works will be using a brush mower to remove invasive plants around the hayfield perimeter when the ground refreezes. Plan to do annually.
- An abutting property owner reported that some people using the Park were trespassing on his posted property. KD has posted signs in the kiosk and along Julia's Trail asking park users to avoid trespassing.
- Mark Drobney donated a plaque for the bench on Julia's Trail that recognizes Peter Andersen's service on the Willington Conservation Commission, 1998-2022.
- 2 hybrid Chestnut trees planted in FRP 2018 are growing well. CC plans to add 2 more in the spring and will discuss costs and ordering process at next meeting.

2. Knowlton Preserve / Talmadge Tract:

- Maintenance/Trail report: Trail stewards plan to install hardware cloth on one of the Talmadge Spur Trail bridges to reduce risk of slipping in wet/icy conditions.
- Parking Lot Signage: Tabled
- Connwood Forest Management Plan: Fieldwork in progress.

C. **Town Development:** BS reported on several PZC meeting items.

D. **Collaborative Organization News & Communication:** Information about the new Talmadge Estate property purchase and DEEP Open Space grant award has been shared with the Thames River Basin Partnership. Willington is a member and the new property is in the Fenton River/greater Thames River Watersheds.

E. **Regional Pollinator Pathway Initiatives:** The Regional PP group meets online and is starting to plan their spring projects. Last year they gave away native plant seeds and seedlings. The CC will share regional news about 2023 activities with residents.

F. **Open Space Opportunities:** Members discussed the 7 acre parcel on Burma Road, its estimated market value as well as potential costs to remove an old camp and have the dam inspected by our Town engineer. The Town has determined that the eastern section of Burma Road has been unmaintained for many years, but was not formally abandoned. Property owner will always have right-of-way use of the road. KD will follow up with the First Selectwoman and Tax Assessor to discuss issues further and report back to the CC.

G. **Meeting Schedule 2023:** On a motion by BS/NJ: *"The CC approves the proposed meeting schedule dates for 2023 which would set meetings for the 3rd Wednesday of each month at 7 pm via Zoom."* Unanimously approved.

H. **Election of Officers for 2023.** On a motion by BS/JK: *"Nominate Kathy Demers as Chairman and Carol Jordan as Treasurer."* Unanimously approved.

VII. **New Business**

A. **Communications:** None.

B. **Willington Wire:** KD submitted an article for the 2023 winter edition. Other members will consider writing the next article for the spring edition due March 17th.

VIII. **Next Scheduled Meeting:** February 15, 2023

IX. **Adjournment:** Meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:48 pm.

Minutes submitted by Kathy.Demers, Chairman and secretary pro tem

TOWN OF WILLINGTON, CT
Received for record January 20, 2023
At 9:40 am RKH