

Conservation Commission

Town of Willington

Minutes

Wednesday October 18, 2023 at 7:00 PM

[Remote Meeting via Zoom]

- I. **Call to Order:** Meeting was called to order @ 7:01 pm by Chairman Kathy Demers
- II. **Roll Call / Seating of Alternates:** Members present: Bob Shabot, Patty Phillips, Marilyn Schreiber Kathy Demers and alternate Nora Jones. Excused: Carol Jordan. On a motion by B. Shabot and P. Phillips: *Nora Jones was seated for Carol Jordan.* Motion carried unanimously. Jackie Kulig joined the meeting at 7:03 pm.
- III. **Approval of Minutes:** On a motion by B. Shabot / N. Jones: *"The minutes of September 20, 2023 be accepted as written."* 5 ayes; 1 abstention by M. Schreiber. Motion carried.
- IV. **Present to Speak:** None
- V. **Finance:** K. Demers noted that Treasurer C. Jordan had reported earlier to her that there were no new expenditures and the budget balance remained the same as reported last month.
- VI. **Old Business**
 - A. **Properties Management**
 1. Fenton-Ruby Park / Drobney Sanctuary:
 - Steward's Report/Property & Trail Maintenance:* B. Shabot replaced one of the boardwalk boards on Taylor Pond Trail and several bridge treads on Julia's Trail. K. Demers made a list of materials to repair other boardwalks and bridges on FRP Work Day. The metal trail sign is missing at the start of the Ruby Trailhead; K. Demers will look into cost of purchasing a new one. P. Phillips noted seeing broken automobile glass in the parking area. Members also discussed a report of two individuals repeatedly seen sitting in their car drinking alcohol in the Park's parking lot. This issue has been discussed with the State Police and they advised that they should be contacted if this is noted again.
 - Fenton-Ruby Park Work Day:* To be held Saturday, October 28 from 9:30 am to 12 noon (rain date October 29). A good number of volunteers have responded that they will be coming. Work tasks will include boardwalk/bridge repair and brushing out narrowed trails. Refreshments will be served after work is completed.
 2. Knowlton Preserve / Talmadge Tract:
 - *Stewards' Report:* No major trail issues reported.
 - *Kiosk:* Will be finished this fall.
 - *Rock pile:* Public Works staff removed the rock pile near the parking lot and restacked rocks along existing stone walls. The Conservation Commission is very appreciative of their help.
 - *Permanent Trail Map Signs:* Will be mounted this fall.
 - B. **Town Development:** Members discussed the opening of the cannabis retail shop at Phelp's Plaza and how the 3% town revenue can be used for projects that improve residents' wellbeing.
 - C. **Collaborative Organization News & Communication:** K. Demers shared info about CACIWC's upcoming conference on November 11th and encouraged members to consider attending.
 - D. **Regional Pollinator Pathway Initiatives:** UConn will hold a "Native Plant and Pollinator Conference" on their campus on November 2nd.
 - E. **Open Space Opportunities:**
 - 1) Burma Road property.
 - Lustig Road access:* K. Demers noted that Selectwoman Wiecenski has received information from Ashford that the unmaintained portion of Lustig Road, which connects with Burma Road, was officially discontinued by a town meeting vote in 1929 and certified by their Selectmen in 1935. In order for Willington to use the discontinued roadbed to get to Burma Road, we would

have to gain permission from the 3 current property owners who bound the road. Selectwoman Wiecenski will discuss this issue with the Town's land use attorney and get back to the CC. K. Demers also walked the unmaintained southwestern section of Burma Road with Public Works Director Troy Sposato and Selectwoman Wiecenski this week to see if it might be feasible to repair it just enough to remove the camp if the town decided to buy the property. Director Sposato noted it would be possible, but would certainly cost more money and time than using the discontinued Lustig Road access.

F. Willington Wire: M. Schreiber volunteered to submit an article on beaver dams for the Winter edition due December 22nd.

G. Other:

-*Outreach:* N. Jones showcased a conservation education kit at the Willington Public Library on October 7th. Some animal pelts and skulls from the kit are still available to view at the library.

-*Membership:* K. Demers noted that 1 regular and 2 alternate seats are still open on the CC and encouraged CC members to invite new people to attend meetings/consider serving.

VII. New Business

A. Communications: Steve Jones, Willington Public Library's Programmer will attend the November meeting to discuss partnering with the commission on events that might correspond with the "Conservation" theme for the 2024 Summer Reading program..


B. Other:

K. Demers noted that the Board of Selectmen recently discussed the possibility of allowing hunting on the Town's 41 acre Cadlerock property. CC members discussed how high levels of deer density is negatively affecting forest health and farm crops and whether they might want to also recommend limited hunting on some of the Town's open space properties.

VIII. Next Scheduled Meeting: November 15, 2023

IX. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 7:51 pm.

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

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TOWN CLERK