



**TOWN OF WESTBROOK
CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

Mulvey Municipal Center
866 Boston Post Rd.
Westbrook, CT 06498
Tel. 399-3046 – FAX 399-2084

**Westbrook Conservation Commission Regular Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, June 21, 2022, 7:00 p.m.
Mulvey Municipal Center - Multi-Media Room and via Zoom
Hybrid Meeting**

Members Present:

Molly Bernstein, Chair; Marty Marx, Vice Chair; Randy Bell and Steve Bergeron

Members Absent:

Sheridan Bauman and Chris Bazinet

Also Present:

John Rie

Staff Present:

Heidi Wallace, Inland Wetlands Agent
Kathleen King, Recording Clerk

Call to Order

Chairman M. Bernstein called the regular meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

Minutes- May 17, 2022

MOTION: to approve the May 17, 2022 Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes as submitted. **MADE:** by R. Bell; **SECONDED:** by S. Bergeron. **VOTED IN FAVOR:** M. Bernstein, M. Marx, R. Bell and S. Bergeron. **OPPOSED:** None; **ABSTAINED:** None; **APPROVED:** 4-0-0.

Bills:

MOTION: to approve the time sheet from Recording Clerk Kathy King for a total of \$128.75. **MADE:** by M. Marx; **SECONDED:** by R. Bell; **VOTED IN FAVOR:** M. Bernstein, M. Marx, R. Bell and S. Bergeron; **OPPOSED:** None; **ABSTAINED:** None; **APPROVED:** 4-0-0.

MOTION: to pay Z. Zanzalari \$11.68 for gas reimbursement for the lawnmower and the weed whacker. **MADE:** by S. Bergeron; **SECONDED:** by M. Marx; **VOTED IN FAVOR:** M. Bernstein, M. Marx, R. Bell and S. Bergeron; **OPPOSED:** None; **ABSTAINED:** None; **APPROVED:** 4-0-0.

MOTION: to pay Voss Signs, LLC \$419.34 for the trail marker signs and nails. MADE: by R. Bell; SECONDED: by M. Marx; VOTED IN FAVOR: M. Bernstein, M. Marx, R. Bell and S. Bergeron; OPPOSED: None; ABSTAINED: None; APPROVED: 4-0-0.

MOTION: to pay Ace Hardware \$95.96 for charges made on 5/24/22. MADE: by S. Bergeron; SECONDED: by R. Bell; VOTED IN FAVOR: M. Bernstein, M. Marx, R. Bell and S. Bergeron; OPPOSED: None; ABSTAINED: None; APPROVED: 4-0-0.

MOTION: to pay Ace Hardware \$32.98 for charges made on 5/26/22. MADE: by R. Bell; SECONDED: by S. Bergeron; VOTED IN FAVOR: M. Bernstein, M. Marx, R. Bell and S. Bergeron; OPPOSED: None; ABSTAINED: None; APPROVED: 4-0-0.

MOTION: to pay Ace Hardware \$13.18 for charges made on 6/2/22. MADE: by M. Marx; SECONDED: by R. Bell; VOTED IN FAVOR: M. Bernstein, M. Marx, R. Bell and S. Bergeron; OPPOSED: None; ABSTAINED: None; APPROVED: 4-0-0.

MOTION: to pay Ace Hardware \$42.75 for charges made on 6/2/22. MADE: by M. Marx; SECONDED: by R. Bell; VOTED IN FAVOR: M. Bernstein, M. Marx, R. Bell and S. Bergeron; OPPOSED: None; ABSTAINED: None; APPROVED: 4-0-0.

MOTION: to pay Z. Zanzalari \$25.88 for reimbursement of plants for the Tom ODell Memorial Open Space. MADE: by M. Marx; SECONDED: by S. Bergeron; VOTED IN FAVOR: M. Bernstein, M. Marx, R. Bell and S. Bergeron; OPPOSED: None; ABSTAINED: None; APPROVED: 4-0-0.

MOTION: to pay \$16.99 on 6/16/22 for weed whacker line. MADE: by R. Bell; SECONDED: by M. Marx; VOTED IN FAVOR: M. Bernstein, M. Marx, R. Bell and S. Bergeron; OPPOSED: None; ABSTAINED: None; APPROVED: 4-0-0.

M. Marx requested a breakdown of expenses for equipment and supplies for the interns. He suggested a spreadsheet. M. Bernstein said she would create one and send it to the CC.

Correspondence –

The following correspondence was received: Inland Wetland Agent’s Report for October 2021 to June 2022.

Chairman’s Report –

- **Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) Committee Meetings**
M. Bernstein was not available to attend the first meeting, but H. Wallace attended. They are moving forward in prioritizing goals for the Committee. M. Marx asked M. Bernstein to forward any emails about this committee to the CC.
- **CT Trails Day – report**
Approximately 17 people attended the hike on June 4. The hike went very well and was enjoyed by those in attendance.
- **Congratulate H. Wallace on her efforts in the Toby Hill VIII grant/closing purchase closing on 6/22**

M. Bernstein thanked H. Wallace for all of her work on this. The closing is 6/22/22. H. Wallace has been working on this since 2018. The management plan and trail development will be next. She's anticipating the check from the Westbrook Foundation will arrive tomorrow.

- **Update on 28-acre parcel- Ivey Gianetti decided to put property on the market**

I. Gianetti attended tonight's meeting. The CC will be planning a site visit to the property. H. Wallace explained that the grant process has changed. Applicants will be required to have their applications and funding together when they apply. The property should be closed on within 18 months after the receipt of the award. The application due date is in September. It may be difficult to complete the grant application for the property owned by I. Gianetti by that time. There have to be two appraisals by people who have been certified in appraising open space properties. An A2 Survey of the property must be done, which can take some time. Then, there needs to be securing of the funds. The survey must be done first.

I. Gianetti confirmed what H. Wallace explained, that she would have to have the property surveyed and have two certified appraisals before the Town can purchase it. The property has never been surveyed. I. Gianetti said she will share this information with her family because it's a family decision. The property is currently listed for \$375,000.00.

M. Marx will call local surveyors to get an estimate for the cost of a property survey.

- **Capital Budget Approved for Fiscal Year 22-23 for \$50,000.00** – Board of Finance asked that before the funds are expended, the Conservation Commission inform them of the particular project purchase.
- **Cleaning the weeds up behind Mulvey Municipal Center** – M. Bernstein contacted Cyndi's Weed and Clean to get a quote. One of the interns will walk the property with Cyndi and go over the scope of the job with her and get an estimate.

New Business:

- **Town Ordinance for the protection and preservation of historic stone walls** – Bill Neale asked the Conservation Commission to write a letter of support to the Board of Selectmen. M. Bernstein said she will be writing the letter soon for the POCD Implementation Committee. There's not a pressing due date.
- **Salt Island – concerns about people getting stuck out on the island** - J. Rie said people are getting stuck out on Salt Island. Dave Russell, Assistant Harbormaster, and April Moran, Resident State Trooper, have asked for Salt Island to be shut down to the public over the summer. It's a drain on emergency resources to have rescues out on Salt Island. J. Rie said the Conservation Commission is in charge of the island. There is warning signage out on Salt Island about the tide, but it seems very few people are reading it. J. Rie asked M. Bernstein to talk to Water's Edge about all of the people going to Salt Island. A lot of the people who have been rescued do not speak English and may not have been able to read the signs. There was at least one fatality a number of years ago because someone couldn't get back from Salt Island once the tide came in. J. Rie suggested the CC talk with First Selectman John Hall about this issue, and he can discuss it with the Board of Selectmen. J. Rie will contact Rick Potvin from the US Fish and Wildlife Service as well.

MOTION: to recommend to the Board of Selectmen that in order to prevent people from getting stuck on Salt Island, they follow the precedence of Duck Island to prohibit visits to the island and erect bilingual signage on both the beach and on the western side of the island for boaters. MADE: by R. Bell; SECONDED: by M. Marx; VOTED IN FAVOR: M. Bernstein, M. Marx, R. Bell and S. Bergeron; OPPOSED: None; ABSTAINED: None; APPROVED: 4-0-0.

- **Reminder for the Conservation Commission’s attendance at the Stewart B. McKinney’s 50th Anniversary on Saturday, July 23, 2022. Time to be determined.**

M. Bernstein is planning to attend. She is going to bring hats from the Friends of the Westbrook Barrier Islands. She’s also planning to sell Heritage Maps. M. Marx and S. Bergeron would like to attend as well. When M. Bernstein knows the exact time of the event, she will let the CC know.

Open Space Projects:

- **Chuck Mandel, P.E., L.S., report of Horse Hill Woods/Breakneck Hill Road where the trail crosses onto Town Property**

H. Wallace said she and the interns met with C. Mandel in the field. He will do a sketch of where the trail crosses onto the Nettleton Property. Daria Nettleton has been kept informed.

- **Summer Interns Updates** - M. Bernstein to create plan for trail marker colors at Chapman Mill Pond and Horse Hill Woods

M. Bernstein said she’s diversifying the colors to make the trail map easier to read and follow. They have the blazes and nails ready to go.

- **Westbrook Land Trust 10 Hike Challenge**

M. Bernstein explained that Westbrook Land Trust has created an event for people to walk the CC Open Space Trails and the Land Trust Trails. If people walk all 10 trails and take photos, they get a prize at the end, and there will be a party.

Old Business:

- **Toby Hill VIII Management Plan Updates**

- **Pollinator Pathway mapping corridors, metal signs –**

C. Bazinet sent M. Bernstein an email about pollinator plants. M. Bernstein will forward this email to the CC. R. Bell said he has 2 large patches of clover on his property. He said there are far fewer bees than there used to be in the clover which is very concerning.

- **Reinstalling Breakneck Hill Road (Horse Hill Woods) Trailhead “Town of Westbrook Conservation Area” sign** – R. Bell reported that he has the sign at his house. His pick-up truck has been broken, so he’s not been able to transport the sign. He also needs to pick up 2 pieces of 8-foot pressure treated 4’ x 4’lumber to install the sign. S. Bergeron offered to get a vehicle to help. H. Wallace suggested that R. Bell check in with the Department of Public Works to see if there’s a particular lumber store they use. The expense for this would come out of the maintenance line item of the CC budget.

- **Ponzillo Property** – Conservation Commission group hike from Chapman Mill Pond to Ponzillo Property, to be announced

MOTION: to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 p.m., until the next Regularly Scheduled Meeting of the Westbrook Conservation Commission which will be on Tuesday, July 19, 2022. MADE: by R. Bell; SECONDED: by S. Bergeron; VOTED IN FAVOR: M. Bernstein, M. Marx, R. Bell and S. Bergeron; OPPOSED: None; ABSTAINED: None; APPROVED: 4-0-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathleen King, Recording Clerk