



Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes

Date: Tuesday, January 7, 2025

Time: 7:00 PM

Location: Municipal Office Building, Room #1

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Joe Sina.

2. Roll Call and Alternate Appointments

Members Present: Joe Sina, Bernie Gillis, Barry Bernard, David Walls, Cameron Beard, and Alan Ponanski,

Members Absent: Gary Wilson, John Olin, Susan Pagnano.

Guests: Julie Anderson, a senior interested in environmental sciences, attended the meeting to learn more about conservation work. She volunteered to monitor the Gelston Trail and assist with clearing thorns.

Alternate Appointments: David Walls and Barry Bernard were appointed alternates.

3. Approval of Agenda

Motion to approve the agenda with the removal of the Lifeforms presentation because they were not ready to present. It was noted that Lifeforms would reschedule their presentation when ready.

Bernard/Walls – Passed Unanimously.

4. Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the Conservation Commission meeting minutes of December 3, 2024. With the correction of changing “Parker Preserve” to “Patrell” Under Stewardship & Forestry Management.

Bernard/Wilson – Passed Unanimously.

5. General Announcements

- ATV issues at Davidson continue; Bernie Gillis will put up additional signage to deter use. It was suggested that the state police be contacted to emphasize that ATV use on public property is illegal and carries fines.
- QR codes for trail maps remain under review. The Commission is considering adding geo-referenced PDFs to enhance usability and improve navigation.

- The Connecticut Land Conservation Council (CLCC) meeting is scheduled for March 22, 2025. The Commission has funding to send up to three participants.

6. Presentations from the Public

No public presentations were made.

7. Old Business

a. Subcommittee Updates

i. Stewardship & Forestry Management – Mr. Gillis

- Completed repairs to the White Trail bridge at Sabine Reserve and cleared additional fallen trees.
- Work at Sabine Reserve continues, with wood chips added to stabilize trails.
- Planned work parties to address overgrowth on the Blue Trail at Hatch Lot.
- Eversource-related signage at Roaring Brook was removed following cleanup confirmation.

ii. Outreach & Promotion – In Mr. Wilson’s absence, the Commission members discussed:

- An article on monarch butterflies is scheduled for publication in spring.
- QR code awareness will be promoted in the upcoming Events Magazine.

iii. Climate Resilience – In Mr. Olin’s absence, the Commission members discussed:

- The next public meeting for the Succor Brook project is tentatively scheduled for February 2025.

8. Liaison Reports

a. IWWC Updates – Mr. Walls

- No updates.

b. P&Z Updates – Mr. Gillis

- Discussions about the Colchester Turnpike cell tower continue.

c. Open Space Updates – Mr. Sina

- Open Space did not meet due to a lack of quorum.

d. Eightmile Committee Updates – Mr. Beard

- No updates.

e. Sustainability Committee – Mr. Ponanski

- East Haddam received Sustainable CT Silver Certification, with notable achievements in energy tracking and community composting.

9. Planting and Existing Garden Updates- In Mr. Wilson’s absence, the Commission members discussed:

- Spring planning includes hosting the Wild Ones organization for a tour of the Pollinator Garden and the ADA Trail. The event will highlight thoughtful planning and native plantings.
- The Commission is considering a program to collect and replant live, balled Christmas trees in the Community Garden.

10. Reserve Monitor Discussion

- Randy Barrett has volunteered to monitor Dean Reserve.

11. New Business

a. New Bills:

- Motion to approve Shagbark bills totaling \$253.39 for pressure-treated wood, directional posts, and screws.
Walls/Bernard – Passed Unanimously.

b. Discussion from Commission Members:

- **Budget Discussion:** The Commission suggested preparing hard copies of last year’s accomplishments and this year’s goals for presentation to the Board of Selectmen at the upcoming budget meeting.
- **Professional Forestry Services:** The Commission discussed budget constraints and the need to include professional forestry services in next year’s budget to address forest health and maintenance.
- **Hunting Signs:** Members discussed adding clear signage to kiosks at hunting-allowed preserves, stating “Hunting Allowed by Permit” and providing contact details for more information. Signs would be brightly colored for visibility.

12. Public Comment

No public comments were received.

13. Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 4, 2025, at 7:00 PM in Room #1.

14. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 8:26 PM.

Walls/Gillis – Passed Unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,
E. Ruth Ziobron
Recording Secretary