



**TOWN OF WESTBROOK
CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

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

**Westbrook Conservation Commission Special Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, January 18, 2022, 6:45 p.m.
Virtual Meeting**

Members Present:

Marty Marx, Chairman; Sheridan Bauman, Randy Bell, Molly Bernstein

Members Absent: Chris Bazinet and John Rie

Staff Present:

Kathleen King, Recording Clerk

Others Present:

Bill Neale, from the Westbrook Land Conservation Trust and Planning Commission

Call to Order

M. Marx called the regular meeting to order at 6:45 p.m.

Annual Meeting

Election of Officers

M. Marx announced that he is planning to resign from the Conservation Commission effective October 2022. He is giving ample notice, so he can work with the next Chair to help him/her acclimate into the position. He asked if there were any nominations for Chair.

M. Marx nominated M. Bernstein as Chair of the Conservation Commission. She talked about her concerns about taking on the role of Chair, and M. Marx said he would co-chair with her through October.

MOTION: to nominate M. Bernstein as Chair. **MADE:** by M. Marx. **SECONDED:** by S. Bauman. **VOTED IN FAVOR:** M. Marx, S. Bauman, R. Bell and M. Bernstein. **OPPOSED:** None; **ABSTAINED:** None; **APPROVED:** 4-0-0.

Minutes- December 21, 2021

MOTION: to approve the December 21, 2021 Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes as submitted. **MADE:** by M. Bernstein; **SECONDED:** by R. Bell. **VOTED IN FAVOR:** M. Marx, S. Bauman, R. Bell, M. Bernstein. **OPPOSED:** None; **ABSTAINED:** None; **APPROVED:** 4-0-0.

Bills:

MOTION: to approve the time sheet from Recording Clerk Kathy King for a total of \$143.05. **MADE:** by R. Bell; **SECONDED:** by S. Bauman; **VOTED IN FAVOR:** M. Marx, S. Bauman, R. Bell, M. Bernstein; **OPPOSED:** None; **ABSTAINED:** None; **APPROVED:** 4-0-0.

Chairman's Report –

- **FY 2022-2023 Budget**

M. Marx said the budget has been submitted. He said he hasn't heard anything yet, but the Commission is requesting less money this year than last year, so he is hopeful the budget will be approved as submitted.

MOTION: to add to the agenda, Request for Funding in the Capital Budget for Open Space. **MADE:** by R. Bell; **SECONDED:** by M. Bernstein; **VOTED IN FAVOR:** M. Marx, S. Bauman, R. Bell, M. Bernstein; **OPPOSED:** None; **ABSTAINED:** None; **APPROVED:** 4-0-0.

- **Request for Funding in the Capital Budget for Open Space**

H. Wallace talked with Planning Commission Chair Marilyn Ozols today. M. Ozols shared some concerns about funding for Open Space. Right now, there is only \$4,000.00 left in the Open Space budget. M. Ozols suggested requesting funding to replenish the Open Space fund. Her recommendation was to ask for \$25,000.00 a year for a period of 3 years.

Bill Neale, from the Planning Commission and Westbrook Land Conservation Trust, explained that the funding for open space is supported in the Plan of Conservation and Development. B. Neale said he will request support for the funding and invite members of the Westbrook Land Conservation Trust to attend the meeting. He said he was told by members of the Westbrook Land Conservation Trust that \$50,000.00 a year would be a more appropriate open space funding request.

H. Wallace does not know when the Capital Budget Meeting will be held. She will email details when she gets them.

MOTION: to request that \$50,000.00 per year be added to the Capital Budget for the evaluation and purchase of Open Space in the Town of Westbrook. **MADE:** by R. Bell; **SECONDED:** by M. Bernstein; **VOTED IN FAVOR:** M. Marx, S. Bauman, R. Bell, M. Bernstein; **OPPOSED:** None; **ABSTAINED:** None; **APPROVED:** 4-0-0.

M. Marx and M. Bernstein will draft a letter of support on behalf of the Conservation Commission for the request of this money, and the letter will be sent to the Board of Finance and the Board of Selectmen.

Goals and Priorities for the Conservation Commission

M. Marx reviewed all of the different projects the Conservation Commission has been working on. He suggested Commission members discuss their goals and priorities.

There was discussion about maintenance of trails. R. Bell asked about opening up Horse Hill Gorge. An area needs to be established for the parking. The agreement for a parking area for Horse Hill Gorge is still in process; however, it has become complicated. R. Bell suggested the Town Attorney be consulted about this

situation. M. Marx said the land has to be surveyed. An alternative for parking may have to be considered such as parking on Kenrose Terrace. M. Marx said a determination has to be made as to whether the open space land at the end of Kenrose Terrace could be used as a possible second egress point for Horse Hill Gorge. A trail can still be established without a parking area.

R. Bell said he drove down Break Neck Hill Road today. He said the Conservation Commission owns a 10-foot wide right of way along the edge of the stream at the bottom of Break Neck Hill Road that leads to the Chapman Mill Property. He said he always thought it would be a great idea to build a raised walkway there. He's not sure how long the walkway would need to be. This would connect the properties along the greenway, connecting Chapman Mill Pond with Horse Hill Woods over Break Neck Hill.

R. Bell said that off of Break Neck Hill Road, there is a small Town owned property with a steep rocky cliff, and the bottom of the valley is all marsh. It's a hatchet shaped piece of land that almost touches the Chapman Mill Pond property. The land has some neat features including a very interesting rock formation. There is parking nearby. He suggested the CC establish a short walkway in that area.

M. Marx talked about the idea of connecting The Preserve to the Toby Hill VIII Open Space. This began a discussion about connecting trails in general.

M. Marx and M. Bernstein will review the goals and priorities discussed at tonight's meeting, and they will prioritize them.

Open Space Projects:

- **Brush Clearing of Tom ODell Memorial Open Space**

M. Marx sent an email to Finance Director Donna Castracane to let her know that he will be moving forward with the bid from Chris Hallahan. He then contacted C. Hallahan to tell him his bid was accepted. C. Hallahan is hoping to do the work clearing the brush in the Tom ODell Memorial Open Space in February.

- **Horse Hill Gorge**

This was discussed above.

- **Toby Hill VIII**

H. Wallace said that on February 2, 2022, there will be a virtual Special Town Meeting for Toby Hill VIII. H. Wallace will pursue the \$50,000.00 from the Westbrook Foundation. The Planning Commission does not want to bear the cost for the road to access the two lots. It would be very expensive. The State said the Town needs to own the entrance. The private owners would have an easement.

Old Business: There was no Old Business to discuss.

Reports: Planning, Zoning, Inland Wetlands, Town Center, Preserve Ad Hoc Committee, and Harbor Management Commission

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, February 15, 2022. MADE: by M. Bernstein; SECONDED: by R. Bell; VOTED IN FAVOR: M. Marx, S. Bauman, R. Bell and M. Bernstein; OPPOSED: None; ABSTAINED: None; APPROVED: 4-0-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathleen King, Recording Clerk