

**TOWN OF TRUMBULL
CONNECTICUT**



Trumbull Conservation Commission Virtual Meeting
Wednesday, August 31, 2022
7:00 pm

Present: Chairman Mary Ellen Lemay, Commissioners Matthew Sulzicki, Sara Sterling, Pam Roman, Richard Post, John Massari and Tim Coughlin

Also Present: Janet Epstein, Mary Isaac and Richard White

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Lemay at 7:07 pm.

Past Minutes

Motion was made by Mrs. Roman to approve the minutes of June 1, 2022 as written. Seconded by Mr. Post and approved by unanimous consent.

Review Meeting with First Selectman Conservation Town Survey

Mr. Sulzicki and Mrs. Sterling updated the Commission on their meeting with First Selectman Tesaro regarding the recent survey results and the presentation of the results to the town. They felt that she was interested in the results but that the Conservation Survey was not a top priority of the Town. After a brief overview of the results, there was concern regarding misinformation in the Town specifically noting the Town's dealings with private property and compliance with the Town laws. No approval is required to publish the results but it was felt that communication with the residents should be open, proactive, professional and accurate on the areas of the Commission's interests. Discussion was held regarding how the results should be published. It was agreed to publish a summary of the questions in some type of graph/matrix and include the most prevalent broad topics people wrote in as their concerns. Mrs. Sterling will draft a summary for the website. Mrs. Roman felt it was important to include what the follow-up would be from the Commission include the partnership with Sustainable Trumbull on many items.

Discussion was held regarding the presentation of the results to Town departments and organizations. It was suggested a schedule be prepared for presentation in October and include the Economic Development Commission, Sustainable Trumbull, Town Council and others. Residents will be able to attend these meetings to hear the information. They will also reach out to Amanda Cuda for an article in the newspapers.

Trumbull Times Article on Tree Initiative

There was an article in the local newspapers regarding this initiative. Good feedback has been received.

Old Business

1. **Status of P&Z Regulation Upgrades** – Mrs. Lemay spoke with Town Attorney James Cordone regarding the upgrades to the regulations. She noted a letter was sent in March asking for changes/additions to the regulations. With his input, it seems changes will be easier to make.
 - a. Clear Cut Regulations (Current) – regulations have been drafted. The clear-cutting area, less than 10,000sq.ft. (a quarter acre) may be clear cut without a permit. Any clear cutting at one time or over an extended period of more than 10,000sq.ft. requires a special permit. She felt this regulation was good because it limits the size of the area.
 - b. Steep Slope Change to 15% Grade Restriction on Vegetation Removal – instead of an ordinance, a request for change in the current regulation was advised. Mrs. Lemay read a draft letter to be sent to P&Z regarding this regulation addressing the change from 30% to 15% grade based on the CT DEP Low Impact Appendix and Guidelines for Soil Erosion and Sediment Control. They are very clear in their research and studies that 15% is the grade that should be maximum. Discussion was held regarding pictures on properties in Town with significant erosion due to clear cutting that would be sent as additional supporting documentation along with the above mentioned guidelines. Mrs. Lemay noted Mr. Cordone would present this information to the P&Z and the Town Planner about making that change. Changing this number would require being on the agenda for P&Z and holding a public hearing. Mrs. Lemay will draft this document with the change recommendation. Mr. Post will research other towns that have steep slope guidelines/regulations.

Motion was made by Mr. Post to allow Mrs. Lemay to send a letter to the Town Planner and Town Attorney requesting a grade change in the clear cutting regulations. Seconded by Mr. Coughlin and approved by unanimous consent.

Updates on IWWC Applications

1. Vote on Advisory Letter regarding West Mischa Road Application – Lengthy discussion as held regarding two applications coming to the IWWC for development on West Mischa Road. These applications had been withdrawn from consideration in the past and are now coming forward again for consideration. The Conservation Commission has been requested to send in their recommendations with regard to the applications which fall within a sensitive wetlands area. Several concerns were discussed including filling of a wetland to build houses and redirection and piping of an existing stream on the property to accommodate this construction. Mrs. Lemay spoke with an engineer and ecologist who reviewed the applications and discussed their findings. Mr. Massari noted these are approved building lots and were purchased with that intent but no changes have been incorporated to decrease the environmental impact. Mrs. Lemay will draft an advisory letter outlining the Conservation Commission's concerns and recommendation to reject the applications as written.

Motion was made by Mr. Post to submit a letter from the Conservation Commission, before the meeting of the IWWC on September 6, 2022, with recommendations as discussed. Seconded by Mr. Massari and approved by unanimous consent.

Ordinance Updates - continued

2. Native Plant Recommendations for Trumbull – Submission to IWWC and P&Z for Vote – Mrs. Lemay spoke with the Town Attorney who noted the IWWC currently makes recommendations on application landscape plans to plant native plants. Mrs. Lemay would like to extend an offer to the Town Planner/P&Z to help review the landscape plans, as an Advisory Commission, for inclusion of native plants. This would have the Conservation Commission working in a collaborative effort with P&Z without having a formal ordinance. Discussion was held regarding the Long Hill Green and using it as an example of Low Impact Design and native plantings. Mr. Post will contact Ms. Bakalar from Economic Development regarding signage on the Green depicting the sustainability efforts being taken.
3. Riparian Ordinance – The Trumbull Center application is being required to go before IWWC before it is passed to P&Z. The application must also follow PA21-29 as required by the State as this is a sensitive wetland area.
4. Tashua Knolls has approximately 40 monarch butterfly caterpillars, collected from the Golf Course, that are being raised in the lobby to depict the type of pollinators seen on the property.

Mrs. Roman left the meeting at 8:28 pm.

5. A Thousand Trees for Trumbull w/Sustainable Trumbull Team: Funding, Outreach and Mailings – The Commission is working in conjunction with Sustainable Trumbull. Current funding for the project includes \$12,000 in the Town budget and approximately \$15,000-\$17,000 from private donations that is being held by the Pollinator Pathway organization as a fiscal intermediary.

Discussion was held regarding a tree plan for this initiative with a focus on street trees. It was noted that Public Works will support the initiative if the trees are not planted on town right-of-ways. The Fairfield plan will be investigated further. Ultimately, the decision resides with the resident whether a tree is planted and what type of tree. It was suggested the tree warden from Fairfield, who runs the program, be contacted for input. Also discussed was the placement of trees in Town park lands. Mr. Coughlin will head this initiative and set up a meeting with the appropriate individuals.

6. Discussion was held regarding the proposed Community Center. Mrs. Lemay noted Mr. Nordgren is preparing a report regarding the property on Hardy Lane. Mr. Richard White discussed his concerns with the project citing several documents depicting the soil and slope problems with the site. He also noted the town would need to work with the DEP as it is an abutting land owner. Mr. White agreed to present this information to METROCOG at their September meeting as they should be aware of his findings. Discussion was also held regarding the regulation that the Town is exempt from P&Z regulations. Mr. White felt this should be brought to the Town Council again to be addressed.

Adjournment

There being no further business, motion was made by Mr. Massari to adjourn the meeting at 8:58 pm, seconded by Mr. Coughlin and approved by unanimous consent.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Crandall
Clerk