



TOWN OF THOMPSON

Conservation Commission

815 Riverside Drive - P.O. Box 899
North Grosvenordale, CT 06255
www.thompsonct.org

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

SPECIAL MEETING Minutes: Monday, December 18th, 2023 - 6 PM

In Room 1 of the THOMPSON PUBLIC LIBRARY and via Zoom

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:07 PM by Chairman Judy Rondeau.

Members present: Norma O'Leary, Dave Clark, Pat Cheever, Judy Rondeau, Peter Cummins, Carol Smith. Absent: Susan Wheeler;

Staff Present: Dan Malo (Agent), Gloria Harvey (Recording Secretary), Tyra Penn-Gesek (Planner)

2. Review of Minutes

a. November 20th, 2023 – Regular Meeting

Dave Clark made a motion to accept the Minutes of November 20, 2023. Norma O'Leary seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

3. Financial Matters

Paid CACIWC, Connecticut Audubon Society membership and Windham Land Trust membership. Connecticut Land Conservation Council membership will be due in March 2024.

4. Correspondence

In response to an email from Dan Malo to Town Attorney, Richard Roberts, asking if there was an ordinance creating the Open Space Fund or any reference to local code in the open space section of the Subdivision Regulations, Attorney Roberts stated that there was no specific ordinance or policy in place and he referenced subsection 14(a) in the Subdivision Regulations and Connecticut General Statutes (CGS) 8-25b Fund Payments in lieu of open space. CGS stated the funds shall be used for the purpose of preserving open space or acquiring additional land for open space or for recreational or agricultural purposes, therefore giving the Commission a broad scope of permissible uses. Dan Malo commented that the fee-in-lieu of open space account was created through the subdivision regulations and with smaller lots now being allowed under the new Regulations, there may be more opportunity for the fund to increase.

Dan Malo invited Michael St. Lawrence, President of Windham Land Trust, to speak at tonight's meeting, however he was unable to attend. He emailed Dan Malo and said he realizes that his previous request was a "big ask" and he believed the Train Wreck Memorial project will have more impact and be a better use of the Open Space Fund. Dan Malo read his email into the record; a copy can be obtained in the Conservation office.

5. Agent Report

There was no Agent Report given.

6. Old Business

a. Discussion – 65 Main – Small Business Support Center & Public Food Forest

A "Save the Date" monthly workshop #3 flyer was distributed. The workshop will take place on Wednesday, December 20, 2023 in the Louis P. Faucher Community Center of the Thompson Public Library from 6-8 PM. Wayne Weiseman of the Permaculture Project will speak on site design for the 65 Main project. An RSVP is requested. Tyra Penn-Gesek, Town Planner, was present for the discussion on the 65 Main project and answered various questions from the Commissioners including reference to the size of the parcel of land for this project.

b. Discussion – Wyndham Land Trust/Thompson Open Space fund requests

Dan Malo reported that Michael St. Lawrence mentioned that the owners of the East Thompson property that Wyndham Land Trust hopes to purchase have agreed to a 6-month extension of their Purchase and Sales Agreement. St. Lawrence is confident that the funds to purchase this property will be raised. He commented that the \$5,000 to purchase the Butler parcel as part of the Great Train Wreck Memorial would be a more appropriate use of the Open Space Fund.

Tyra Penn-Gesek, Town Planner, talked about the Butler parcel and the Train Wreck Memorial. She stated the total project will cost approximately \$20,000. She asked the Conservation Commission to authorize \$5,000 out of the Open Space Fund for this project. She stated that approximately \$9,000 of the state grant has been spent so far and there are plans to go out to bid for construction in 2024. **No taxpayer money will be used to fund this project.** Additional funds to complete this project will be raised without using taxpayer money.

Attorney Roberts stated because there is no specific ordinance or policy in existence in the Town, the Open Space fund established through language in Planning and Zoning regulations – funds shall be used for preserving open space – said it seems it is allowable to use money in the Open Space fund for acquiring land. Norma O'Leary asked if this would have to be approved by Planning and Zoning and Tyra Penn-Gesek replied that they have already approved it.

Pat Cheever made a motion to endorse the use of \$5,000 from the Open Space fund to supplement the purchase of the Butler parcel for the Train Wreck Memorial Park. Norma O'Leary seconded the motion. The Chairman called for a roll call vote.

Pat Cheever-yes, Norma O'Leary-yes, Dave Clark-yes, Peter Cummins-yes, Carol Smith-yes, Judy Rondeau-yes. The vote was unanimously approved.

c. Discussion – Commission Bylaws

The members will read the bylaws before the next meeting and review them in January.

7. **New Business – None**

8. **Citizens' Comments - None**

9. **Members' Forum - None**

10. **Announcement**

a. The next scheduled meeting is Tuesday, January 16th, 2023 - 7 PM.

11. **Adjournment**

After the completion of the agenda, the meeting adjourned by unanimous consent at 6:47 PM.

To see/hear the entire meeting via ZOOM, copy and paste the following link into your search bar:

https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/3VAreSE5tmhEbiHOWtQOIkHBzYHvhVm1-oM6jgePhhYIqTIMLVFUuIRPN4FV6uoE.S62lg-6vnX-q_a3N

Passcode: 97y#fOkh

Disclaimer: These minutes have not yet been approved by the Inland Wetlands Commission. Please refer to the next meeting's minutes for approval of, and/or amendments to these minutes.

Respectfully submitted,

Gloria Harvey

Gloria Harvey, Recording Secretary