

Woodbridge Conservation Commission Minutes

January 20, 2022

Minutes recorded by: Paul Harrigan

You Tube Recording: <https://youtu.be/dp3QMpyDknQ>

The January 20, 2021 Conservation Commission was called to order at 7:01 PM and was adjourned at 8:38 PM.

In attendance: Tim Austin, Barbara Hagen Smith, Valerie Holley-King, Sharon De Kadt, Kate Rozen, Paul Harrigan and David Lober.

1. Guest Speaker - Kris Sullivan - Land Use Analyst & Zoning Enforcement Office

Kris Sullivan explained her role and answered questions. Kris explained some of the responsibilities of the various town land use boards and the conservation commission. She provided two useful links from the state (<https://www.caciwc.org/pages/cc/index.html>). Ms. Sullivan informed us that the Conservation Commission was a member of CACIWC and that CACIWC offered a useful seminar in the fall that we should consider attending. She also answered several questions regarding the proposed Merritt Avenue subdivision and briefly explained the process to have a portion of the subdivision designated as open space. She reported that Inland and Wet Commission will start its hearing on Merritt Avenue on February 16th.

2. Public Comment (via email)

No public comment was submitted.

3. Guidance on Public Minutes

Tim Austin provided an example of minutes issued by another town board. It was agreed that our minutes should be detailed enough in order to be a record for future reference of what was discussed and decided. It was further agreed that the name of the individual recording the minutes be noted.

4. Liaison Report

David Lober reported the following:

Masks are going to be required in all public buildings. The transfer station will begin charging for bulk disposal and for curb side bulk pickup. The Siting Council approved placing a cell tower on Soundview Drive even though residents opposed it. The American Rescue Act will have \$2.6M available for Woodbridge. The Board of Selectman decided to reject the Land Trust Proposal and negotiate with Arbor Haven without discussion in public.

Several members expressed dismay that the Board of Selectman had no discussion of the Conservation Commission's rejection memo and completely ignored our recommendation because it was seemingly not what they had hoped.

5. Preserving Trees during Development –

It was agreed that a regulation to Preserve Trees was desirable. The group discussed a tree preservation statute could be applicable to both new developments and existing homes. Barbara Hagan Smith offered to benchmarking similar statutes in other towns. Barbara agreed to report back to the commission once she completes her research into similar statutes in other towns.

6. Trail Challenge Update

Kate Rozen updated the Commission on the Trail Challenge and the "Woody Bridger" award program. It was suggested that a Prize of a pass to the water company trails could be awarded to those who hike a significant number of trails in Woodbridge's trail system. It was proposed that participants would record their achievement at stations at which they would punch cards or scan a QR codes. Kate agreed to continue to update the Commission on progress of the program. The commission discussed that it was important that the trails are maintained and are not hazardous for participants.

7. Merritt Avenue Open Space opportunity

The Conservation Commission will have a special meeting at Merritt Avenue to visit the site on January 22, 2022 at 10:00 AM. The Inland Wetlands public meeting on Merritt Avenue will begin on February 16th.

8. Member Comments/Items for February 17, 2022 meeting

It was agreed that the Parks Association and the Land Trust would be invited to our February meeting to present their proposal for the Roger Sherman Farm Property (AKA Woodbridge Country Club property) with discussion to follow the presentation. The Commission wants to give this proposal the same consideration we afforded the Arbor Haven Proposal. There was discussion regarding the Board of Selectman not considering input from CUPOP, the Conservation Commission, the Land Trust and the Parks Association regarding the Roger Sherman Farm Property (WCC).

Barbara offered to circulate a book from April 1965 regarding the Woodbridge Conservation Commission and Woodbridge Opens Space.

The Commission agreed that our normal meetings should be regular meetings so that the rules pertaining to regular meetings apply. The Commission was in agreement that our meeting time of a 7:30 PM start time should not be changed if it would make the meeting a special meeting.

9. Approval of Minutes

The 12/22/2021 (recorded by Tim Austin) and the 11/18/2021 (recorded by Valerie Holley-King) minutes were unanimously approved. The Conservation Commission agreed that the minutes of our meeting going forward will indicate who recorded them.