



The Woodbridge Conservation Commission

Regular Meeting Minutes

April 21, 2022 – 7:30PM

Woodbridge Town Hall

Recording of meeting available at: https://youtu.be/9ZuGx_1Hde0

In attendance: Chair-Tim Austin, Vice Chair-Sharon de Kadt, Paul Harrigan, Barbara Hagan-Smith, Kate Rozen

Absent: Valerie King and Diana McCarthy-Bercury

Board of Selectmen Liaison present: David Lober

Public comments - No public comments were submitted.

1) JP Garcia & Merritt Avenue Subdivision presentation

The presentation by JP Garcia & Merritt Avenue Subdivision was postponed until the May meeting because the wetlands expert has not yet given his presentation to the Woodbridge Inland Wetlands Commission. The expert's presentation will likely provide important information for our discussion and decision making.

2) Public Comment

There was no public comment.

3) Approval of Minutes for March 3, 2022

There was one correction. Barbara Hagan-Smith's name was written incorrectly. With that correction made, Tim Austin moved to approve the minutes and Kate Rozen seconded. The March 2022 meeting minutes were approved unanimously.

4) Available Open Space Grant Pre-work Discussion.

Tim Austin commented that grants are easy to find. Kate Rozen asked about us creating a focus to the grants we are interested in applying for. Sharon de Kadt thought the pre-work was a good idea and possibly doing a mock grant would be good to get non grant writers up to speed.

Kate Rozen informed everyone that there was a SCROG (South Central Regional Council of Governments) workshop online on "Best Practices for Grant Writing and Grant Opportunities" on May 19th from 10:30 a.m. until 12:00 noon. Tim Austin encouraged anyone who could to attend. Selectman David Lober was asked if in general the selectmen are in favor of acquiring open space with today's budget constraints. He said

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“yes “and that there are grants the town could find to possibly offset the direct cost to the town.

Barbara Hagan-Smith shared an article in the New Haven Register which stated that the goals for open space established by the State of Connecticut have not yet been met.

Kate Rozen offered to set up a Google Sheet so that any work a commission member might do could be shared with others so as to avoid redundant work. She kindly also offered to do a tutorial on how to do a Google Sheet for those members on the Commission not familiar with how that works.

The town has approximately \$70,000 in a budget for acquiring open space. The Commission agreed it needs to understand that money’s availability and how the Commission might initiate its use for a property in Woodbridge.

5) Discussion of meeting times

Tim Austin inquired if 7:30 p.m. on the third Thursday night of the month was the best time for our meetings. Barbara Hagan-Smith said she had rearranged her schedule to accommodate Thursday and she’d prefer it to remain on Thursdays. Kate Rozen indicated earlier might be better and Paul Harrigan said he couldn’t be at a meeting before 6:30pm. There is another meeting in the room we use that usually ends by 7:00pm. Tim Austin will check on the reliability of the space being available by 7:00pm and discuss at the next meeting.

6) Liaison Report

David Lober informed us that

- A \$2,000,000 grant was awarded the town to finish fixing up the old firehouse.
- Arbor Haven withdrew their proposal to develop the Woodbridge Country Club Property.
- The first select man will Send out a new RFP and then they will go to the board of Selectman for review. David Lobar didn’t know how the RFP was defined.
- The town ins hiring an architectural firm to create a plan for the commercial portion of Woodbridge so that the commercial center has more cohesiveness and charm.
- Eversource is doing extensive tree cutting maintenance and has specific guidelines and is informing abutters about their activities. Tim Austin asked if the town as an abutter has a specific person overseeing the relevant town-owned properties. David Lober thought that would be the town tree warden but wasn’t aware if he was taking on active involvement. Both Tim Austin and David Lober were going to look into the town supervision of the Eversource tree cutting operation.
- Town commissions need to meet a minimum of 6 times in a calendar year.
- A new waste program is being developed, which will involve a pick-up of two bags of garbage a week and a separate system for compost.

7) Members comments

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Tim Austin spoke about how the Conservation Commission meetings are archived. There is a YouTube recording of each meeting that so far has stayed available, but YouTube has no legal obligation to preserve them. There is also the Internet Archive of Institutional Memory that does keep the information officially and will keep it into perpetuity and is the legal record of the meeting. That said it is easier to access YouTube. To date the approved meeting minutes are the legal records of the meeting and the FOI office says that may change at some point but not yet. David Lober made the point that looking through the a few pages of notes is more efficient than reviewing a meeting in its entirety on video.

8) Greenway Extensions & Property Research Tools Demo

Tim Austin laid numerous maps out on tables that in different ways showed the properties which the town has designated as the Greenway. This designation was originally in the 2000 Town of Woodbridge Open Space Plan. There is a loop of the town's Blue Trail that is on the west side of town and goes north then travels down the center of the town. There are gaps in the trail's continuity. The Commission member expressed interest in extending the Greenway to include some to the properties to the south like the Woodbridge County Club and Oak Lane Country Club as well as connecting the Woodbridge Greenway to surrounding towns trails and opens spaces. Tim Austin is going to try to make an up-to-date map that includes the present state of protected land, the greenway that exists, and the open space on which the power lines and the gas lines that go through the town.

The next steps in this initiative is to 1) get familiar with maps, 2) make a plan as a commission, and 3) prioritize what the Commission wants to do to potentiate the Greenway that exists and increase its network in the town.

A motion to adjourn the meetings was made by Sharon de Kadt. Kate Rozen seconded. The Motion passed at 9:38p