

Branford Conservation and Environment Commission  
P.O. Box 150  
Branford Town  
Hall Branford,  
Connecticut

## ***Meeting MINUTES***

**\*\*Special Meeting\*\***

**WEDNESDAY, October 16, 2024**

**Branford Community Center, 30-48 Church St., 1<sup>st</sup> floor conference  
room**

**\*\*7:00 p.m.\*\***

**or via Zoom with the link below if unable to attend in person.**

Commissioners Present-Heather Wells Sweeney(Chairperson), Patrick Sweeney,  
Joshua Greenberg, Neil Goodlad, Lauren Ruotolo,  
Carol Kaminsky

Commissioners Absent- Karen Hannon, Karyl Lee Hall, Christie Day

The meeting started at 7:10 pm

1. Correspondence and Announcements:

A. Calendar 2025—will vote next time; check your personal calendars

B. NRI

Chairperson Wells Sweeney and L. Ruotolo spoke briefly about publishing the NRI and different ways they could let people know its complete and on the website.

2. Planting Natives

A. Proposal by Ken Engelman

The guest Ken Engelman spoke of different ideas to promote more planting of natives, He is a Branford resident who would like to educate and inspire people to learn about planting of natives and the benefits of them that many homeowners are not aware. He would like to volunteer to help sculpt a program to start. He mentioned he spoke to the First Selectman who supports this idea. He volunteered to reach out to the old Agway store to see if they want to participate in this, perhaps with other businesses.

The commissioners asked him questions such as :how to implement this program and what are the incentives for people? Ken replied and offered a few other suggestions such as getting a tax break fi purchasing natives or a possible store discount when purchasing native plants.

They then discussed various ways to get the info to people and maybe getting other groups involved as well as the media.

The commission discussed this and asked some questions.

Ken noted his goal is to get a program in place by the planting season in 2025. More info will follow.

### 3. Miyawaki Forest

Chairperson Wells Sweeney asked the commission if they would be interested in this. She noted that two Branford residents sent her a video about this and its very interesting. She said maybe a Miyawaki forest can be started in Branford. But there must be a water source to have one. She explained that this type of forest is a densely planted forest, 3 trees per square foot and because of the competition, the forest grows fast. It is an exciting and beneficial idea. This idea has taken off all around the world. She mentioned a website called creating tomorrow forest.com. She said she wants to get involved as an individual and will keep the commission posted.

The commission asked her some questions and thought his was a good idea.

### 4. Budget:

#### A. Fiscal year 2024 - year to date

Chairperson Wells Sweeney reviewed the money that was recently spent. She noted there are some funds left and there will be further discussion at the next meeting regarding that.

### 5. Conferences

Chairperson Wells Sweeney reviewed the list of conferences coming up, and she noted the cost to attend. Three people have expressed interest in attending an upcoming conference (SALT).

The second one is the CACIWIC conference, and she invited all commissioners to attend.

The third one is the CT Invasive Plant working group and that is 70.00 to attend.

N. Goodlad asked that if one of the commissioners attend a conference, that they report back to the group what was discussed or highlights of the meeting. It would help others to learn if they can't attend the conference.

P. Sweeney made a motion to send 3 commissioners to the SALT conference and one person to the CACIWIC conference.

J. Greenberg seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

### 6.

A. Permits for coastal projects- None

B. Proposed developments and other building projects- None

C. Invasive plant control- Nothing new was discussed

D. Pollinator Pathway-Nothing was discussed

E. Natural Resource Inventory- A press release will go out soon per C. Day

- F. Branford Festival- Nothing to discuss
- G. Crabbing Bridge (Guilford)- Nothing to discuss
- H. Farm River coalition- Nothing to discuss.
- I. Pilot Forest Stewardship Plan
  - P. Sweeney said they did schedule a visit from the Forester to 3 town properties that plans are being developed for . He has not been updated yet as to the results of those walks. We will receive reports from Forester.
  - He then reviewed the plan and what is for and how the process works.

7. Reports:

- A. Select Committee for Open Space Acquisition- Nothing to discuss
- B. Library books donations
  - Carol Kaminsky said she received book recommendations from the high school for 5 books. She is waiting to hear from the other librarians.
- C. Spill reports-- None
- D. Contaminated sites-- None
- E. Coastal Resiliency Plan- Nothing to discuss.
- F. Cross-commission meeting- Nothing to discuss.

8. Adjournment- 8:09 pm