

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

MEETING

MINUTES

WEDNESDAY, May 1, 2024

Branford Community Center, 30-48 Church St., Activity Room

7:30

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

Commissioners Present: Heather Wells Sweeney, Patrick Sweeney, Carol Kaminsky, Neil Goodlad,
Joshua Greenberg, Karyl Le Hall

Commissioners Absent: Karen Hannon, Christie Day, Adrian Bonenberg

1. Approval of minutes:

A. March 3, 2024

Carol Kaminsky made a motion to approve the minutes with the edits discussed.

Patrick Sweeney seconded the motion which passed.

Neil Goodlad abstained since he was absent.

B. April 4, 2024

Carol Kaminsky made a motion to approve the minutes with the edits discussed.

Joshua Greenberg seconded the motion which passed.

Neil Goodlad abstained since he was absent. He said he apologized for missing the last two meetings but there was a death in his family.

2. Correspondence and Announcements:

H. Wells Sweeney announced that the Land Trust is not ready to submit their grant application for the climate smart agriculture and that she will write a letter of support from the commission which she will show to them. She will keep them up to date on the Land Trust progress.

N. Goodlad asked about the commission's support of green peace . He noted when he was in Scotland recently, he received a letter from them(since he is a member) asking if he would support a plastic audit. The point of an audit is to document your plastic use in a week. Then Greenpeace would take the information is look up where every piece would go (incinerator, recycled or reused). Green peace encouraged people to write to their representatives to show their concern for this issue. He didn't know if this was something the commission could get involved in or is it outside of their prevue?

Karyl Lee noted she is increasingly worried about waste. She said years ago when she was teaching an environmental class at yale, waste disposal was

important. She talked of this briefly, are we really recycling? Where does the waste go? She said she would support the commission looking into this topic more.

Christie Day arrived at 7:43 pm.

H. Wells Sweeney quickly brought Christie up to date.

N. Goodlad spoke of the numbers in his plastic audit and what happens to the items.

Karyl Lee noted that maybe it would be helpful in seeing the contracts the haulers of the trash. Where does the waste go? She suggested checking with J. Cosgrove or J. Finch.

H. Wells Sweeney said perhaps the commission could find a way for the public to do a plastic audit. Maybe talk about it at the Branford Festival or a future festival. The commission discussed this and agreed that plastic usage and disposal is an important issue and people should be aware.

N. Goodlad said he would look into this and it can be discussed further at a future meeting.

3. New Business: Nothing was discussed.

4. Budget:

A. Fiscal year 2024 - year to date

H. Wells Sweeney reviewed the expenditures since the last meeting.

The commission made a few suggestions to purchase additional items.

5. Continuing Business:

A. Permits for coastal projects- None

B. Proposed developments and other building projects-Nothing was discussed

C. Invasive plant control

P. Sweeney noted that the collaboration between this commission and the Branford Land Trust has 2 events planned. One is May 4 from 9am to noon to pull invasives at the Flax Mill Road Land Trust Preserve.

The second event is June 2 at 2pm at Youngs Pond Park to remove a few different invasives. People bring their own tools, etc. More events to come. He will pass on the announcement for these events so the commissioners can get on a mailing list if they wish for future work parties. H> Wells Sweeney will post this info on the facebook page.

P. Sweeney spoke of prior locations that he has worked removing invasives.

D. Pollinator Pathway

H. Wells Sweeney met with a scout group and their parents at the Early learning center on April 20th and it went well. They were removing Mugwort in the area . She did train them so they can go to areas without her, but she will try to attend as much as she can. She invited the commissioners to join her if they wish.

She also said she would like to extend the meadow at the early learning center and she would like the commission to put down cloth at the triangle. The triangle that is formed naturally at the ledge and the trail. She would like to extend the meadow out to that point.

E. Natural Resource Inventory

H. Wells Sweeney would love to show an aerial view of the canopy cover in Branford historically and currently .She noted as trees are coming down, the canopy is not being replaced. It would be helpful to show how it has decreased.

P. Sweeney gave some comments. The commission discussed this briefly and agreed this is a good idea. She said she would work on this over the summer.

C. Day noted that the NRI was added to the website and she has reached out to Trista for publicity but hasn't heard back yet. There is also someone with GZA who does marketing so she will reach out to get more information.

F. Earth Day Fair

H. Wells Sweeney said the fair was a success and there were more vendors than last year. She would like to encourage more visitors to come to the fair. She noted that the clean-up portion of the day was not a success due to the publicity not getting out in time.

She noted that during the fair, she was approached by an ambassador from Marathon Sports and he said they would like to participate in a clean up day with the commission. She is glad for the offer but is concerned that as a commission, they don't want to appear to favor one business over another one. She asked the commission for thoughts. The commission liked the idea of area businesses joining in. They had a brief discussion. She will check with town hall for input.

They spoke of the next earth day, perhaps distributing information so people can their own plastic audit.

The commission discussed this further and chairperson H. Wells Sweeney suggested continuing this at the next meeting and perhaps deciding to have a special meeting over the summer to discuss it in further detail.

G. Branford Festival **Saturday, June 15**

Chairperson H. Wells Sweeney reminded the commission that any help would be appreciated, since it is a lot of work distributing all the plants at the festival.

She also noted that maybe she and Christie would have time to put some

materials regarding the Natural Resource Inventory for distribution at the festival.

H. Crabbing Bridge (Guilford) – Nothing was discussed.

I. Farm River coalition

Chairperson H. Wells Sweeney noted that the grant was not awarded to us. They had 41 applications this year . We are encouraged to apply again next year.

She then noted that there are two river clean ups scheduled on the Farm River . the first one is June 29 from 3 to 6 pm . The second one will be September 29, and the time is not certain yet. More info to follow.

6. Reports:

A. Select Committee for Open Space Acquisition- Nothing to report

B. Library books donations - Nothing

C. Spill reports- None

D. Contaminated sites - None

E. Coastal Resiliency Plan- Nothing was discussed

F. Website

7. Other:

A. Tweed Airport Expansion- Kayl Lee Hall noted there is nothing new to report. The Town of East Haven and Save the Sound are co-plaintiffs in their legal action against the FAA.

8. Adjournment- adjourned at 8 pm.