

Conservation Commission

Special meeting

Meeting Minutes

January 16, 2020

In attendance: Jason Morrill (Chairman), Frank Deleo, Traci Capriano, Sharon de Kadt, Leland Torrence and Susan Dieterlen.

1. There was no public comment.
2. The meeting notes for the Conservation Commission meeting of November 21, 2019 were approved. Jason Morrill motioned, and Frank Deleo seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
3. The Conservation Commission's *Open Space Plan 2020* was discussed. Jason Morrill moved to approve, and Susan Dieterlen seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.

Further discussion ensued about the complexity of figuring out what pieces of land to prioritize when the Conservation Commission is considering purchasing Woodbridge properties for conservation. We discussed the importance of creating a ranking system associated with the *Open Space Plan 2020*. The ranking system needs to have both a subjective and objective component. The objective component would be fairly simple: the size of the property, the adjacent property, the amount of woodland, the amount of water and wetlands, the historic attributes, etc. The subjective component would be more subtle and harder to quantify.

As a group we decided to spend the February meeting coming up with more of the criteria for purchasing specific parcels of land with both objective and subjective systems of ranking. We all agreed once we had a ranking system, we could evaluate different properties. We also discussed the management of open space and what is considered recreational use versus development.

Leland Torrence suggested that we could possibly get several Yale Forestry School students to do some assessing of some of the larger tracks of Woodbridge town land.

4. We discussed the possibility of outreach conducted by the Conservation Commission to do town projects that would both beautify and improve Woodbridge, as well as involve more of the public. Before the meeting Sharon de Kadt had spoken to Tony Genovese, who is in charge of finance for the Town of Woodbridge. She learned that in the Conservation Commission's 2020-2021 budget there could be funds that could be utilized for the purpose of outreach and community investment for beautification. Ideas the Conservation Commission came up with included: litter clean up, planting bulbs, getting rid of invasive species on certain plots of land, doing lectures or guided walks, etc. Everyone agreed to think about other possible projects, and these will be discussed further during our February and March meetings, and the Conservation Commission will make a choice regarding future actions.

5. We discussed improvements of the Blue Trail System in Woodbridge possibly creating a GPS mapping system. Leland Torrence suggested asking Amity High School students to help with that effort. This might allow the use of a cellphone app to coordinate information with different locations on the trails that have interesting historic, geological, or biological importance.
6. Chairman's report:
 - A. On January 17, 2020 there will be a meeting about the Woodbridge trails with a representative from the Conservation Commission, the Woodbridge Park Association and the Woodbridge Land Trust. At that meeting the discussion will include, trail improvements blaze improvements, and trail cleanup, etc.
 - B. Jason Morrill spoke to Betsy Yagla about the Woodbridge Country Club proposal and found out that there would be a referendum vote scheduled within the next few months.
 - C. Jason Morrill informed us that the Agricultural Commission of Woodbridge had been approved by the Board of Selectmen, and that they are identifying board members. He encouraged us to think if there's anyone we think would be good for that board. He mentioned the importance of communication in the future between the Conservation Commission and the Agricultural Commission regarding properties in Woodbridge. Once the Agricultural commission is in full operation that will relieve the Conservation Commission of duties it was recently assigned associated with agricultural lands in Woodbridge.
7. Sharon de Kadt moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:35. Susan Dieterlen seconded. The meeting was adjourned.