

1 **Guilford Conservation Commission**

2 **MINUTES**

3 **June 26, 2019**

4 **7:00 pm**

5 **Town Hall, Selectmen's Meeting Room, second floor**

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7 Present: Chair Laura Collins, Patricia Keegan, Patrizia DiLonardo, Janet Ainsworth
8 Alan Fairbank, Joe Nugent
9 Absent: Michael Kaczynski (Alt), Doug Clark (Alt)
10 Town Officials: Kevin Magee, Town Environmental Planner
11 Guests: Jeff Spooner, 36 Quidnet Court, Guilford

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13 At 7:03 pm, Chair Laura Collins called to order the regular meeting.

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15 **A. Introduction**

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17 **1. Members present - review**

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19 Chair and five regular members, vacancies include one regular member and one alternate.
20 Chair Collins will send a letter to Alternate Michael Kaczynski and Board of Selectmen (BOS)
21 regarding members' presence at GCC meetings.

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23 **2. Approval of Agenda**

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25 *Upon review,*

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27 *Motion: Janet Ainsworth moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Patricia Keegan.*

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29 *Vote: Carried - Patricia Keegan, Patrizia DiLonardo, Janet Ainsworth, Joe Nugent, Alan Fairbank*

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31 **B. Public Forum (3 minutes per person)** There were no Public Forum comments.

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33 **C. Operations**

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35 **1. Minutes of May 29, 2019 meeting**

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37 *Upon review,*

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39 *Motion: Patricia Keegan moved to approve the minutes as amended, on page 3, under H.*
40 *Elections, should read "...elections **will** take place in June", seconded by Janet Ainsworth.*

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42 *Vote: Carried - Patricia Keegan, Patrizia DiLonardo, Janet Ainsworth, Alan Fairbank, Joe Nugent*
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2. Finances and bills – review and approve

Kevin Magee gave a Finance Report as of May 31, 2019 :

- May trail supplies - \$24.99 Year to Date - \$694.39
- Kevin will hire professionals to remove trees across trail paths instead of the Land Stewards, who are at risk for injuries.
- Kevin is researching signage that would alert hikers to "at risk" activity.

Motion: Patrizia DiLonardo moved to approve the Finances and Bills report, seconded by Joe Nugent.

Vote: Carried - Unanimously

3. Announcements and Correspondence

Correspondence :

- Habitat magazine : Notice of Annual CT Assoc. of Conservation and Inland Wetland Commissions (CACIWC) Conference, November 19, 2019. GCC is a member.
- Email from Traci Brinkman, Selectmen's Office, re: new committee "Facilities Task Force", which will recommend stewardship projects for Town properties and facilities, including environmental needs, meeting spaces, Land Stewards' needs, and more.
- Thank you note from Joe Nugent for GCC donation to the Guilford Garden Club, Tree Fund, in memory of his wife Barbara.

Discussion :

- Kevin Magee will contact the Facilities Task Force to request a building/work shed for the Natural Resource Dept. Land Stewards.
- GCC will request a file room.

D. Reports from Liaisons

1. Land Stewardship (LSC)

Kevin Magee reported that the LSC had met in June. They had coordinated a Trail Work Day.

Discussion reviewed James Valley Preserve which is maintained by CT Forests and Parks Association. Entrances have been blocked to motorized vehicles. Kevin will contact the nonprofit Guilford Land Conservation Trust regarding fencing on their property. Chair Collins recommended GCC field trips to observe all the Town conservation properties and Preserves.

2. Inland Wetlands Commission (IWC)

Kevin Magee reported on the Planning and Zoning Commission public hearing on the approved open space housing subdivision on Long Hill Estates. These thirty-one, one acre Lots abut steep hills of Town property at Baldwin Middle School. The subdivision also has

wetlands and a road crossing a stream. GCC has questions including the impact of construction fill. Public Forums will be held July 10 at 7 pm in August at the Community Center. GCC will review questions and obtain information on this project and write a letter to the BOS regarding open space protection.

3. Chestnut Orchard

Kevin Magee reported that he will email the American Chestnut Foundation regarding the condition of the Chestnut Orchard. Trees have died since eaten by deer or are now diseased.

4. Tree Advisory Board

Kevin Magee reported that the Tree Advisory Board decided to plant eight native trees along Whitfield Street, including Sycamore, Pine, Oak and Red Maple. Janet Ainsworth will email Kevin with information on Stoneboat and other roads that need trees trimmed.

5. Planning Committee (PZC subcommittee)

Janet Ainsworth reported that the PZC Planning Subcommittee met in May. Their agenda included the Long Hill Estates subdivision, zoning on Lot frontage from road, and height of accessory buildings. The June meeting was cancelled. The next meeting is July 9, 5:15 pm, at the Community Center.

E. Conservation

1. Education / Outreach

A. Presentations

a. Dark Night Sky

Discussion reviewed the potential "Dark Night Sky" presentation.

- Chair Laura Collins reported that, several years ago, Branford was designated a Dark Night Sky Community. Field Expert Bob Crelin may be contacted as a potential speaker.
- Kevin Magee advised that since the PZC is updating the zoning regulations, GCC can recommend that light pollution regulations be included to protect wildlife cycles, natural resources and humans. He regularly recommends to PZC that all project designs avoid light pollution. Kevin will obtain further information to review at the August GCC meeting.
- Research and studies, as well as businesses and residents, support installing replacement outdoor lighting.
- Alan Fairbank will email a link to GCC members, with information on the reflective light impacting earth by satellites, launched by companies worldwide.
- Nonprofit "Sustainable CT" will give points to Towns to obtain grants if night sky light pollution is addressed.

- Chair Collins will research the Branford's regulations and Guilford PZC site plan regulations.
- GCC will collect information on this subject from other towns as well.

b. Additional Topics

Alan Fairbank advised that he had attended the Annual Meeting of the Branford Land Trust where Peter Raymond and Mark Urban, Ph.D., UCONN instructor presented on the impact of climate change on CT species. Salt Marsh Wren nests flood as sea levels rise. 50,000 nest from New Jersey to Maine. To deter flooding, storm gates could be installed at both East and West Rivers.

Alan will contact Peter Raymond and Mark Urban to request whether they could provide a GCC presentation.

Discussion reviewed how to widely publicize beyond Guilford by contacting other towns and groups. Patrizia DiLonardo and Laura Collins will meet before the August meeting to plan.

B. Civic Events There was no further discussion.

C. Partnership with high school environmental club

A new liaison is needed for the high school Environmental Club, which will reorganize when school starts in the fall.

D. Legislative Updates

Janet Ainsworth reported that the State of CT budget has been signed. Passport to the Parks remained in the budget. Janet will continue to email GCC legislative information. She encouraged GCC commissioners to contact public officials and state representatives.

F. Old Business

Kevin Magee reported that the Town continues to wait for the DEEP to issue the treatment permit to begin the aquatic weed control project at Lake Quonnipaug. He read from the report by DEEP Greg Bugbee and staff, who did a survey for a database. The Town must verify the presence of Water Marigold and Capillary Pond Weed, "plants of concern", to protect them.

East River Preserve Deer Management Program

Kevin Magee had emailed GCC the results of the Deer Management Program three year plan 2016, 2017, 2018.

Recommendations to the BOS from the Deer Management Committee and Bow Hunters included : Use the chosen alternate hunters if the first chosen are unable to fulfill their commitment and a request to extend the permit season to January.

Vegetation was monitored in only one enclosure control area due to vandalized fencing at other enclosures. When an enclosure was moved to the Bearhouse Road area it too was vandalized. The first year, the wildlife camera captured vandals destroying signs. The Town fined them.

Hunters observed many animals including flying squirrels and mink. Kevin had requested that hunters record observations of deer that they could not harvest. There was only positive feedback from hikers. No hunters violated the law or regulations.

Based on the report and notes by Kevin Magee, the Deer Management Program three year plan is rated "B" and recommended to continue in the fall 2019. The BOS approved an additional two weeks in January and three additional years for the program.

Discussion followed :

- GCC will publicize the BOS review and approval to renew the Deer Management Program another three years. BOS took into account the in depth review by GCC, Deer Management Committee, Bow Hunters and Environmental Planner Kevin Magee.
- Additional wildlife cameras may be installed at enclosures to also capture images of vandals.
- Patrizia DiLorenzo will inquire whether a Food Bank will take deer meat.

East River Preserve Parking

Kevin Magee reported that in 2014 the Inland Wetlands Commission approved a public parking area at the East River Preserve which had not been created until now. Kevin submitted the area diagram and map. In March, he had reviewed the project with the Town Engineer and the Public Works Director. Two new gates received two years ago should be installed near the stump dump. Parks and Recreation Dept. will open the gates daily. Kevin described the water flow to the stream adjacent to the parking area, which will be displaced into a graveled swale.

It was decided that Chair Collins will send a GCC letter to the BOS, requesting the urgency to install the two gates prior to the annual high school Cross Country Race in the fall.

2. Plastic Bag Ordinance Update

Kevin Magee reported that the Town Ordinance was passed to ban single use plastic bags by local stores, effective January 1, 2020. The Ordinance also states that there will be a ten cent charge if a customer wants to use paper bags. Kevin will contact Town Eng. Plaziak on where the Guilford/Madison Transfer Station brings disposed plastic bags.

G. New Business

Discussion reviewed the need for an update from the BOS on the GCC request for a waste oil disposal site to return to the Transfer Station. Kevin Magee will contact the First Selectman. Chair Collins will add the topic to the August GCC agenda.

Upon review,

Motion: Janet Ainsworth moved to cancel the July regular meeting, seconded by Patricia Keegan.

Vote: Carried - Unanimously

H. Other Business

1. Election of Officers

Upon review of GCC officers and vacancies,

Motion: Alan Fairbank moved to nominate and elect the following slate :

Laura Collins, Chair

Janet Ainsworth, Vice Chair

Patrizia DiLonardo, Secretary/Treasurer

Vote: Carried - Unanimously

2. Liaisons for Inland Wetlands Commission (IWC) & Land Acquisition Commission (LAC)

Volunteers are needed to fill the Liaison positions on the IWC and LAC.

I. Adjournment

Motion: At 9:03 pm, Janet Ainsworth moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Patricia Keegan.

Vote: Carried - Unanimously

J. Review Next Steps & Adjourn

LC will : Send a GCC letter to the BOS, requesting the urgency to install the two new gates at the East River Preserve parking area, prior to the annual high school Cross Country Race in the fall.

Meet with Patrizia DiLorenzo to plan contacting other towns and groups to share publicity of GCC events.

Request a file room from the Facilities Task Force.

Add to the GCC August agenda the topic of reinstating the waste disposal site.

Research Branford ordinance for Dark Night Sky pollution.

Contact the high school Environmental Club to encourage students to work with GCC on both groups' activities for the Sustainable Guilford Task Force.

Contact Leo Smith regarding a Dark Night Sky presentation.

Continue on POCD Action Item subcommittee with Alan Fairbanks and Patricia Keegan.

Email all volunteers to request further information on their interests.

Meet with KM to research studies, data, review the Town Center South Plan.

Attend and provide information and data to the Page's Lane Development Subcommittee on GCC concerns for those development plans.

Forward names of volunteers to LSC Chair Doug Clark so he may request their assistance.

KM will : Contact Town Eng. Plaziak on where the Guilford/Madison Transfer Station brings disposed plastic bags.

Obtain further information on light pollution to review at the August GCC meeting.

Contact the nonprofit Guilford Land Conservation Trust regarding fencing on their property.

Contact the Facilities Task Force to request a building/work shed for the Natural Resource Dept. Land Stewards.

Research signage that would alert hikers to "at risk" activity.

Hire professionals to remove trees across trail paths instead of the Land Stewards.

Contact the First Selectman regarding an update on the waste disposal site.

Attend the Tree Advisory Board meetings.

Post signs on prohibited activities at preserve entrances and middle of trails. East River Preserve (ERP) laminated map signs will be updated.

Contact Police Dept. Animal Control Officer re: dogs off leash enforcement at ERP.

Attend Sustainable Guilford Committee meetings.

Create a plan for removal of invasives with Doug Clark including a seasonal schedule of best times to remove particular plants.

Contact the American Chestnut Foundation regarding the mutual agreement with the Town and whether the Town needs to assist the Foundation in caring for the trees.

Schedule a Walk of the Eversource project site for GCC, Eversource personnel, the Inland Wetlands Commission, and the nonprofit Guilford Land Conservation Trust.

Remain Liaison to the American Chestnut Foundation.
Obtain meeting dates for the IWC ad hoc subcommittee, which will be reviewing regulations, setback ordinances, and zoning criteria.

PDL will: Inquire whether a Food Bank will take deer meat.
Meet with Laura Collins to plan contacting other towns and groups to share publicity of GCC events.
Compose a letter to the Editor of The Guilford Courier to remind the public and hired dog walkers on safety issues regarding dogs off leash and off wetlands, to use the Dog Park, and to follow the law.
Videotape GCC presentation series and events.
Attend Ad Hoc meetings of Inland Wetlands Commission and advise them on value of wetland buffers.
Secretary/Treasurer responsibilities.

JA will : Email GCC information on CT legislation on conservation issues.
Review monthly minutes of the Planning Committee and report at GCC meetings.
Email Kevin with information on Stoneboat and other roads that need trees trimmed.

AF will: Contact Peter Raymond and Mark Urban to request whether they could provide a GCC presentation.
Email a link to GCC members, with information on the reflective light pollution impacting earth by satellites.
Work with Kevin Magee on the DOT and ACOE plans for Route 146 bridge project.
Email information on points toward obtaining grants from nonprofit 'Sustainable CT'.
Continue on the POCD Action Item Subcommittee.
GCC Representative on the BOS Sustainable Guilford Committee.
Research the list of grants from Sustainable CT.

PK will : Continue on the POCD Action Item subcommittee.

The next regular meeting will be August 28, 2019 at 7:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Judith Anderson Castellano
Recording Secretary