

Beacon Falls Conservation Commission
10 Maple Ave.
Beacon Falls, CT 06403



BEACON FALLS CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Regular Monthly Meeting Minutes
August 4, 2014
(Draft Copy-Subject to Revision)

1. Call to Order/ Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Diane Betkoski called the meeting to order at 6:35 PM.

Commissioners present: Secretary Tanya Gutierro, Michael Opuszynski, Mike Bouchard
Commissioner absent: Jeff Kean, Sophie Zyla, Chris Wilemski
Chairman D. Betkoski added agenda item Defining Maintenance of Open Space under #8 Open Space Management.

2. Approval of Minutes – June 2 & July 7, 2014 - tabled

Due to lack of quorum of commissioners the June 2 and July 7, 2014 meeting minutes could not be approved.

3. Correspondence

- Letter from Atty. Byrne re: open Space Workshop dated 7/9/14 to Joe Fitzpatrick & Diane Betkoski discussion of actions, as a guide for what the Conservation Commission needs to do:

#1 Re-adopt the ordinance which states funds can be used for preservation of open space And that the land is preserved in perpetuity, recreation that doesn't bring harm to land or habitats or ecosystem

Define term preservation, does that include construction of ball fields, state what the land can and cannot be used for

#2 define the open space preservation fund more clearly, needs to be better explained, the ordinance may need to be amended

Fund are monies budgeted, received in lieu of open space from developers or gifts, bequests or donations used to purchase property for open space or for expenses related to purchasing open space, i.e. legal fees, land surveying fees, etc.

M. Opuszynski suggested adding to that ordinance the definition as to how the payments of funds are accepted from a developer and how a purchase of property should be made and to define the approval process; also using input from P&Z

#3 Ensure the name utilized for the budget line item is consistent and emphasizes preservation

#4 Adopt a consistent definition for “Open Space” and eliminate any overlap with Park and Recreation Commission

#5 While P&Z forms are in the process of being modified ensure that the developer’s application will be referred to Conservation Commission for review and recommendation of open space donation

#6 Create checklists and flow charts for all applications so the public can be made aware of the administrative process.

M. Opuszynski suggested that the Conservation Commission send a formal letter to P&Z requesting to be included when an application is presented and to provide the information to the Conservation Commission.

#7 Land Use committee ordinance should be amended so the commission may meet more often

#8 Suggestion that an open space plan be developed and should focus on collecting fees in lieu of open space so that funds can be accumulated to purchase targeted parcels of land.

ACTION: D. Betkoski will scan and email this letter from Atty Byrne to the commissioners.

D. Betkoski commented that this letter is a decent road map to follow to establish lines of communications and processes and procedures for open space acquisition.

• Habitat newsletter Spring 2014

[<http://www.caciwc.org/library/habitat/Habitat%2014%20spring.pdf>]

D. Betkoski pointed out several articles of interest including:

- article about open space that’s unprotected for conservation purposes; the state will pass laws to protect this land in perpetuity
- November 15 CACIWC conference at Villa Capri in Wallingford
- 2014 Legislative wins for Conservation matters
- Gov Malloy approving \$5M for towns to purchase open space via matching grants

4. Comments from the Public - none

5. Membership Update -

Registrations due for October 7 symposium at UCONN

Can only go for half-day, if interested

Registration deadline Sept 8

ACTION: Commissioners interested in attending October 7 symposium at UCONN should notify D. Betkoski by Friday August 8 so she can request funding for this training.

6. Budget Update

- Month to date report:
Received documentation on money spent for books for library.

Commissioners found the budget report confusing as it shows the Conservation Commission was over budget in FY 2013-14 which was not the case.

ACTION: D. Betkoski will contact Denise Weik in the town finance office for an explanation/correction of the FY 2013-14 yearend report.

7. Land Use Committee

- Conservation Commission Representative Appointment Request –
D. Betkoski resent email to First Selectman Bielik naming M. Bouchard and M. Opuszynski as representative and alternate, to verify that these appointments are made in time for the tentative meeting in September.

8. Open Space Management

- Open Space Workshop - Actions to be taken
- Open Space Inventory & Future Planning
 - Review and discussion of copies of deeds for town open space

M. Bouchard commented that deeds to some parcels are missing.

Lantern Ridge deed accounted for; listed for the benefit of the public for recreational open space use forever.

M. Opuszynski asked if the Conservation Commission ever defined active and passive recreation. D. Betkoski agreed that active and passive recreation needs to be discussed and defined.

M. Bouchard suggested checking to see if the state of CT defined it.

ACTION: D. Betkoski will research for state of CT definitions for active and passive recreation.

M. Opuszynski suggested that active recreation needs to be defined and stress that that is

the Conservation Commission's definition and applies to the deeded property under the purview of the Conservation Commission.

Smith Farms deed accounted for; land conveyed to Conservation Commission

Many deeds were accounted for but not specifically given to the Conservation Commission for protection and/or in perpetuity:

Haley Ridge deed states it's deeded to the town of Beacon Falls as open space in perpetuity

Woodridge Estates parcel was given to the town of Beacon Falls no reference to open Space

Industrial Park deed states it's given to the town of Beacon Falls, no mention of open space or for perpetuity

Oak Wood deed references property given to the town of Beacon Falls as open space

West Winds deed references property given to the town of Beacon Falls in perpetuity as open space

M. Opuszynski questioned if the town could opt to sell those properties that were donated to the town but not under the purview of the Conservation Commission and therefore not protected for conservation.

Deeds missing for **Highland Estates** on Rice Lane & **Eagle Ridge (Tiverton)**

M. Bouchard suggested that at some point the Board of Selectmen may have conveyed these properties to the Conservation Commission at a meeting and it would be noted in the meeting minutes, but it may not be reflected in the deed.

M. Opuszynski suggested that this list of properties deeded to town should be declared as open space and given for preservation in perpetuity under the management of the Conservation Commission.

ACTION: D. Betkoski will contact the Board of Selectmen for clarification on the deeds as to what the intent was for open space preservation.

Defining Maintenance of Open Space

Maintenance schedule for open space: M. Opuszynski shared the draft list of suggested maintenance for open space parcels he compiled with J. Kean and will email to commissioners.

Discussion of draft maintenance plan for any open space: should it include snow plowing and mowing?

May transfer Some maintenance may be transferred to Park and Rec unless it is recommended leaving the parcel in its natural state.

9. Outreach Activities

- Thank you letter to Girl Scouts for their work at Lantern Ridge

D. Betkoski expressed her thanks to M. Opuszynski for sending a thank you letter for the Girl Scouts to the Citizen's News on behalf of the Conservation Commission.

M. Opuszynski noted that the Girl Scout troop went out again in July to clean up Lantern Ridge and their plan is to perform this clean up every third Sunday around noon.

D. Betkoski noted the BFPL recently held a DEEP program "In the Woods"

10. Payment of Invoices -

Clerical invoice –

Motion to accept Clerk Martha Melville's invoice requesting payment of \$76.25 for the July 7, 2014 meeting and associated administrative work and pay the bill as submitted: Opuszynski/Gutierrez; all aye.

11. Announcements/Adjournment

The next meeting will be a Special Meeting held on Monday, September 8, 2014 at 6:30 p.m.

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:02 PM: Opuszynski/Bouchard; all aye.

Respectfully submitted,
Martha Melville
Clerk

CC: Conservation Commission members
Board of Selectmen

Planning & Zoning Commission, Inland Wetlands Commission, Park & Rec
Commission