CONSERVATION COMMISSION
FAIRFIELD, CONNECTICUT
SUPPLEMENTAL MEETING AGENDA
7:00 p.m. Wednesday, January 17th, 2018

The Fairfield Museum and History Center
370 Beach Road, Fairfield, CT

Kevin Gumpper, Chairman (FM)               Catherine O’Donnell, Secretary (FM)
Kate Maxham, Vice Chair (FM)                Elizabeth Jones (FM)
Felicia B. Watson (FM)                      Sam Boyarsky (FM)
Charlie Rowan (A)                           Richard A. D’Amico (FM)
                                           Milan Bull (A)
                                           Jennifer A. Hauhuth (A)

FM = Full Member  A = Alternate Member

CALL TO ORDER

APPOINTMENT OF ALTERNATES IF NECESSARY

I. NEW BUSINESS

   A. Request by the Fairfield Police Department to use the Hoyden Hill Open Space Shooting
      Range for Training during the dates of April 2nd through April 4th, 2018.

II. ADJOURNMENT
Hi Brian,

We are hosting a joint firearms training class with the FBI and need use of the outdoor range. I tried to schedule it in March but was unable to make it happen. Would it be possible for us to use the outdoor range on April 2nd-4th. I know this falls after the March 31st cutoff date but we need to hold the class in this fiscal year. Would we be able to make an exception for this training?

Any help would be greatly appreciated.

Thanks,
Chris
April 2, 2012

Gary MacNamara, Police Chief
Fairfield Police Department
100 Reef Road
Fairfield, CT 06824

Re: Hoydens Hill Open Space Police Shooting Range

Dear Chief MacNamara:

Please excuse the lateness of this letter as I am more than a month overdue in advising you of the Conservation Commission’s favorable decision on the Police Department’s request for ten additional training days and improvements at the Hoydens Hill Open Space area shooting range. I had drafted this letter the day following the commission meeting and believed it to have been mailed up to this time. In light of this delay, I am approving Lt. Walsh’s proposed request for additional training days through April 30, 2012. Range activities and improvements may be conducted until April 30th this year when the non-disturbance period for bird breeding and nesting is in effect. In the future, the non-disturbance bird breeding and nesting period for no activities at the shooting range will extend from April 1 to July 31, with unrestricted timing of training activities from August 1 until March 31 of the succeeding year.

At its February 16, 2012 meeting, the Fairfield Conservation Commission reviewed and unanimously voted to approve, with conditions, the request of the Fairfield Police Department to make improvements and increase its activities and use at the Hoydens Hill Open Space shooting range in order to maintain range serviceability, increase safety, and meet increased needs for training and qualification exercises, while protecting the open space area, minimizing inconvenience to open space visitors and disturbance to neighbors.

The Commission reached this decision following your department’s presentation with respect to the current use of its in-door range facilities and alternative range facilities in other towns; the Hoydens Hill outdoor range; the erosion and deterioration of this range, protective berms, and drainage over the past two decades; the police training requirements necessitating an increase in range use from the existing fifteen days up to twenty five days per year; the recent discontinued use of lead bullets; the limited alternatives available to meet your department objectives; your willingness to avoid disturbing the bird breeding and nesting season; and the long-term need to
plan for moving the range to a more suitable location in the future. The Commission considered the comments and concerns of neighborhood residents and the public seeking to emphasize safety, and minimize disturbance to their neighborhood and to visitors using the open space area. The Commission reviewed your request in the context of its Hoydens Hill Open Space Area Management Plan, its recent breeding/nesting bird survey, and its related land management efforts to improve and protect wildlife habitat during critical seasons.

With these factors in mind, the Commission approved your request with the requirement to meet with Conservation and Engineering staff to develop more detailed plans and range schedules with respect to specific improvements in grading and draining the range, providing a sound attenuator berm east of the range shelter, planting of trees and shrubs, constructing lateral wing-mounds at the target area, cleaning and maintaining a debris-free site; removing and disposing properly the accumulations of lead in the target area; providing level-lip spreaders to avoid erosive runoff; maintaining soil erosion and sediment controls, and conducting all construction activities and improvements in the post bird-nesting season from August 1 to November 1; conducting all training days and use of the range in the non-breeding-and-nesting season for birds, i.e., range use is permitted from August 1 to March 31 of the succeeding year. The range schedule for the total of twenty-five (25) annual activity-days shall be proposed and projected as far into the year as possible for notice to the public with the understanding that changes may be made to reflect weather conditions and scheduling needs of the Police Department. The existing procedures for proposing and providing public notice of range activity days shall be continued and expanded by posting the schedule to the town’s website, by providing notice (e.g., email/U.S. mail) to neighbors and the public requesting notice; and by clearly posting notices at the open space entrance and Kiosk in addition to the police barriers on the trail to the range.

We can meet to discuss further plans as soon as convenient to your office and that of the Engineering Department.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely yours,

Thomas J. Steinke

tjs
cc: M. Tetreau, First Selectman; M. Bull, CC; W. Hurley, EM; A. Jacobson, CA; E. Jones, OSM; P. Grace, H.S.R.; G. Lombardo, RD; J. Alexander, Golf Pro, H.S.R; Joshua S. Zabin, Captain; Keith Broderick, Lieutenant; Michael Walsh, Lieutenant; RTM Members Ellen Jacob and Carol Pontrelli.
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
FAIRFIELD, CONNECTICUT
MINUTES OF CONSERVATION MEETING
FEBRUARY 16, 2012

The Conservation Commission of the Town of Fairfield held a meeting on February 16, 2012, in Meeting Room II, Second Floor Conference Room, John J. Sullivan Independence Hall, 725 Old Post Road, Fairfield, CT.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Stanton Lesser, Chairman; Milan Bull, Vice Chairman; Kevin Gumpfer, Secretary; Frank Rice; Joan Neiley; Catherine O’Donnell; and Kathleen Maxham. ALTERNATES: Elizabeth Jones. Note: Two vacancies. Also Present: Thomas Steinke, Conservation Director; Edward Jones, Wetlands Compliance Officer/Open Space Manager; Annette Jacobson, Conservation Administrator; William Hurley, Engineering Department; Fairfield Police Department representatives: Gary MacNamara, Police Chief, Joshua S. Zabin, Captain, and Keith Broderick, Lieutenant; and members of the public and press.

I. CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 7:31 p.m. by Stanton Lesser.

II. APPOINTMENT OF ALTERNATES: Elizabeth Jones was appointed to sit as a full member.

III. CONSERVATION:

A. Bills and Communications:


2. Approval of Secretary’s Bill for January 19, 2012: Elizabeth Jones moved, and Catherine O’Donnell seconded to approve the Secretary’s Bill for January 19, 2012. Motion passed unanimously.

Kevin Gumpfer arrived at 7:34 p.m. during discussion on the following matter:

IV. OLD BUSINESS:

A. Proposed 2012-2013 Budget: Thomas Steinke advised the Commission that the 2012-2013 budget request of the Conservation Commission was recently revised by the First Selectman. The request of the Conservation Commission represents a .83 increase from the 2011-12 approved budget. Mr. Steinke further noted that the mosquito control project has been postponed by the State of Connecticut, following a reprioritization of projects due to tropical storm Irene. Chairman Lesser recommended pursuing funds for a new recording/PA system in order to provide improved sound capabilities at public meetings.

DRAFT MINUTES SUBJECT TO REVIEW, CORRECTION AND APPROVAL BY THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION OF THE TOWN OF FAIRFIELD
Joan Neiley arrived at 7:35 p.m. during discussion on the following matter:

B. **Proposed Land Acquisition – Connecticut Department of Transportation Surplus Property – 2021 Cross Highway**: Thomas Steinke provided the Commission with a brief description of the property which consists of 1.19 acres, noting that the foundations and well are still on the site. Mr. Steinke further indicated that soil and water samples were taken and found to be satisfactory. The CT DOT had originally acquired the property for the development of the Merritt Parkway, and should the Town of Fairfield elect to acquire this parcel there would be restrictions imposed whereby the Town must use the property for open space purposes, and any transfer of ownership or leasing of the property would result in the property being reverted to the State of Connecticut. The Town of Fairfield would be responsible for paying the State of Connecticut conveyance tax fees (approximately $1,000.00) in the event it acquires the parcel. Following discussion, Kevin Gumpper **moved**, and Joan Neiley **seconded** to endorse the proposal for the Town of Fairfield’s acquisition of this property, to be used as open space. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Milan Bull arrived at 7:40 p.m.

C. **Hoyden’s Hill Open Space Barn Grant Application**: Thomas Steinke advised the Commission that the efforts to obtain grant funds are moving forward. Several photos depicting the structural issues were submitted with the grant application. The Conservation Department will likely receive a response to its application at the end of March. If funds are awarded under this grant, then the Town would have three months to hire a contractor to perform the repairs; the contractor would then have nine months to complete the repairs. Mr. Steinke advised the Commission that endorsements have been obtained from local representatives as well as the Town of Fairfield Historical Commission.

D. **185 Thorpe Street Proposed Development and Open Space Encroachment**: Thomas Steinke advised the Commission that he is continuing to communicate with the Assistant Town Attorney on this matter, and will keep the Commission apprised.

V. **NEW BUSINESS:**

A. **Proposed American Chestnut Plantings by the Fairfield Garden Club on Open Spaces Areas – Presentation by Sandra Anagnostakis, Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station**: Dr. Sandra Anagnostakis of the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station and several members of the Fairfield Garden Club were present this evening seeking approval to plant 10 American Chestnut trees on ten Town Open Space areas, for a total of 100 trees. Dr. Anagnostakis provided the Commission with a brief history of how there was a significant loss of these trees in the 20th century due to the introduction in 1904 of a disease which had originated in Asia. Dr. Anagnostakis noted her efforts over the past forty years for the cultivation of disease resistant American Chestnut trees, which were at one time a dominant species reaching heights of 80’, and a considerable timber source as well as utilized by wildlife species. **Barbara Geddes Wooten** of the Fairfield Garden Club stated that this effort was in commemoration of the Garden Club of America’s one hundredth anniversary in 2013. **Ms. Wooten**
also provided information concerning the efforts to reintroduce these trees, and noted that the Fairfield Garden Club will coordinate the actual planting of the trees. In addition to reviewing the various locations considered as planting sites, soil testing had been conducted to ensure suitable conditions to maximize chances for tree survival. Volunteers are welcome to assist with the planting efforts. Open Space Manager Edward Jones and Tree Warden Kenneth Placko will also provide assistance in coordinating this project. Deer enclosures will be constructed to protect the trees. Once planted, Dr. Anagnostakis will continue to monitor the trees and will periodically provide status reports to the Conservation Commission concerning health and survival of the plantings. Following discussion, Kevin Gumper moved, and Joan Neiley seconded to approve the plantings on the Town Open Space areas as presented. Motion passed unanimously. The Commission thanked Dr. Anagnostakis and the Fairfield Garden Club for its efforts and donation of the trees for the Town Open Spaces.

B. Proposed Increased Scheduling and Renovations to the Police Shooting Range on Hoyden’s Hill Open Space Area: Police Chief Gary MacNamara, Lieutenant Keith Broderick, and Captain Joshua Zabin were present this evening to request Commission approval for renovations to the James V. Cavanaugh Firing Range at Hoyden’s Hill Open Space, and to request utilization of the range for ten additional days (beyond the current approved 15 days). William Hurley of the Town Engineering Department provided the Commission with a description of the proposed maintenance renovations, which include extension and reconstruction of the existing berm, construction of wing-walls, additional plantings, and diversion swales for improved drainage. Chief MacNamara discussed the efforts undertaken to ensure public safety, which includes notification to neighbors and interested parties by the Conservation Department Staff, signage, and blocking off of the area. It was noted that the closest residence is approximately 200 yards from the shooting range. No shooting is conducted during the evening or on weekends. Chief MacNamara also noted he was aware of Conservation concerns to avoid utilization of the range during wildlife breeding and nesting periods in order to protect the various wildlife species present at the site, and further indicated that the police department is willing to clean up the debris at the site. Following inquiry concerning the presence of lead due to the twenty-year use as a shooting range, William Hurley indicated that wherever feasible, the obvious loose lead debris would be removed during the reconstruction of the berm. The police department no longer uses ammunition containing lead. Members of the public were also present this evening; many expressed concern for notification and advance scheduling. Open Space Manager Edward Jones indicated that Conservation Department Staff provides range use notification to all neighbors and members of the public that have requested the same. Mr. Jones noted that any member of the public who wishes to be added to the notification list should contact the department. Notification by e-mail is preferred in order to reduce postage costs for the Town of Fairfield. Commissioner Frank Rice noted that when he has visited the site with his walking group during scheduled range use, he found the area to have sufficient signage and was well protected. Thomas Steinke provided the Commission with a description of the site, noting that the berm has eroded and should be reconstructed. Mr. Steinke indicated that the wing-walls were a good idea to protect open space visitors, noted the importance of avoiding the breeding/nesting season; and requested a more formal plan containing details of the proposed activities. William Hurley agreed to provide the detailed plan information to Conservation
Staff. The police department will attempt to improve public communication regarding range use by establishing an advance schedule, and when available, the schedule will be placed upon the Town website. Notification will also be posted at the kiosk. Following considerable discussion on this matter, Kevin Gumpper moved, and Joan Neiley seconded to approve the reconstruction of the range, with the understanding that the Engineering Department and Conservation Department would work out the plan details. Motion passed unanimously. Milan Bull moved, and Joan Neiley seconded to approve the request of the Fairfield Police Department to utilize the shooting range for an additional ten days, for a total of twenty-five days annually, with the understanding that the proper notification must be provided, the details of which would be coordinated through the Conservation Department. Motion passed unanimously.

C. CT DEEP OLISP COP Application of Bradley Jack for Proposed Riprap Revetment, Retaining Wall, Seawall, Seawall and Terrace Area Repair at 1155 Sasco Hill Road, Fairfield: Thomas Steinke provided the Commission with a description of the proposed activities, noting that this revised COP application was required by the State DEEP as a result of additional tidal wetlands being created at the site subsequent to the prior approval received by the applicant for similar activities. The proposal includes the removal of a deteriorated concrete wall which is approximately 800-1,000 feet in length. The proposed revetment will be approximately five-feet lower than the existing stone wall. Mr. Steinke noted that this proposal did not include measures which were provided for in the initial application, which would protect the adjacent Town property, including the concession stand. Mr. Steinke indicated that he has been in communication with the Applicant’s engineer concerning this omission and was advised that those activities for protection of the adjacent Town property would be set forth in a supplemental plan to be submitted to the State DEEP. Mr. Steinke further indicated that he recommends endorsement of this project by the Conservation Commission, with the condition that the activities necessary for the protection of the Town of Fairfield property be required. Following discussion, Milan Bull moved, and Kevin Gumpper seconded to recommend approval of this project, as recommended by Conservation Staff. Motion passed unanimously.

D. Advisory Conservation Comments to the Town Plan and Zoning Commission for Condominium Development at 130 Fairchild Avenue, Fairfield: Annette Jacobson advised the Commission that the proposal includes the development of a multi-unit condominium complex at 130 Fairchild Avenue. Ms. Jacobson noted that an inspection of the property revealed a significant amount of debris which includes many automobile parts and trash which had been discarded along the bank and river. This site is located within the Ash Creek/Rooster River watershed, which has been targeted for habitat and water quality protection and improvement, as set forth in the Conservation Commission’s Multiple Use Management Plan for Coastal Open Space. Annette Jacobson advised the Commission that Staff has recommended plan revisions to provide environmental protection and enhancement of this site, which would include the requirement of the Applicant to remove the debris, including the automobile parts, and for removal of the fill along the slope, re-grading the residual slope, and for the planting of native species. The Commission acknowledged receipt of a February 13, 2012 letter by counsel for the Applicant, Attorney John Fallon, which noted concerns by the
Applicant’s engineer and soil scientist that removal of the fill along the slope could result in destabilization of the bank. That letter also noted concern that such an activity below the high tide line may require a DEEP permit. Commissioner Milan Bull noted that removal of the car chassis from the site would likely disturb the integrity of the bank. Thomas Steinke indicated that it was feasible that the applicant could remove the debris, and where necessary apply topsoil and re-grade any depressions. The Commission noted that the applicant’s proposal included vegetation removal of invasive species and the re-planting of native species. The applicant’s proposal also included the provision for public access along the bank of the river and walking trail. Following discussion, Milan Bull moved, and Joan Neiley seconded to recommend that the Applicant be required to remove all foreign matter and debris, including the automobile chassis and parts, tires, and other trash from the site, and that it re-grade with topsoil, loam and re-plant where necessary. Motion passed unanimously.

VI. OTHER:


B. Conservation Department Web Site Statistics: Informational/None presented.

VII. ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Kevin Gumpper moved and Milan Bull seconded to adjourn at 8:58 p.m. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Betty Gabriel