

# Commission on Conservation & Agriculture



Chairperson	Elisabeth Holder ('22)	
Vice-Chair	Brian Gartner ('23)	
Members	Michael Thomas ('20)	Kate Miller ('23)
	Jane Brawerman ('23)	James Miller ('23)
	Katharine Owens ('22)	Bob Daniels ('22)
	Barbara Schukoske ('23)	David Bauer ('22)
	Vacant	
Alternates	Ellen Lukens ('23)	Judy Konopka ('22)
Staff	Marek Kozikowski, AICP, City Planner	

## REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

**DATE:** Tuesday, March 16, 2021  
**TIME:** 7:00 p.m.

Meeting was held online. Public Access was provide by:

1. Going to <https://webex.com> and joining the meeting using the appropriate meeting number and password
2. Launching the WebEx application and joining the meeting using the appropriate meeting number and password
3. Via telephone at 1-408-418-9388 and the appropriate access code  
**Meeting Number/Access Code:** 129081223  
**Event Password:** Conservation

In attendance: Commissioners Elisabeth Holder, Brian Gartner, Michael Thomas, Bob Daniels, James Miller, Katherine Owens, K. Miller, Barbara Schukoske, and Judy Konopka. Marek Kozikowski, City Planner.

Public In attendance: Kelsey Wentling and Donna Drouin.

### A. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:06pm.

### B. Accept the Agenda

A motion to accept the agenda with a revision to correct the meeting data of minutes to be approved from the January meeting to the February meeting was made by B. Gartner and seconded by B. Daniels passed unanimously.

### C. Public Forum

Kelsey Wentling, Connecticut River Conservancy described two projects that they are looking to do in the City. The first project discussed was installing boat storage racks adjacent to the Coginchaug River on the City's Johnson Street property. The second project was invasive species (water chestnut and hydrilla) removal along the Mattabeset and Connecticut Rivers.

### D. Approval of Minutes

#### 1. Approval of Minutes from the February 16, 2021 Meeting

A motion to approve the minutes of the February 16, 2021 meeting made by B. Gartner and seconded by B. Daniels passed 6-0; B Schukoske and K. Miller abstained.

### E. Request for Comment

None

### F. Officers and Committee Reports

#### 1. Chairman's Report

##### i. NRG update

E. Holder reported that the NRG project was removed from the March Common Council meeting, but had the opportunity to speak on the project. She read a statement on behalf of the Commission. NRG is selling the property.

**ii. Red Maple research group**

E. Holder reported that a small group of Commissioners have organized information on this project and will come back to the Commission with a proposal.

**iii. OSWA Grant Compliance**

E. Holder reported that we were awarded the OSWA grant with the condition that the City demonstrate that other OSWA grant acquisition properties are in compliance with the grant. DEEP wants confirmation that each property has proper public access and signage. E. Holder, J. Miller, B. Gartner and M. Thomas volunteered to form a working group to address the issues.

**2. Trails Committee**

**i. Upcoming trail work**

E. Holder reported that all trail work has been put on hold so that time can be used to address more pressing issues like the OSWA grant compliance issues.

**ii. Update on ATV's at Wilcox**

No update.

**3. Agriculture Committee**

**i. Farm survey working group**

No update.

**ii. Letter to City officials**

M. Kozikowski reported that he informed the Mayor that he will be receiving a letter from the Committee. B. Daniels will send the letter.

**4. Outreach Committee**

**i. 2021 Goals**

B. Gartner reported that the CT Forest and Park Association has approved a Trails Day this year and he agreed to lead a trail walk in the City. J. Miller agreed to be a co-leader. The event will be limited to 15 participants with pre-registration required.

**ii. Conservation Corner article**

E. Holder reported that K. Owens published the first article related to hiking on the Conservation Corner series located in the Middletown Press and Middletown Eye. J. Konopka volunteered to write an article about invasive species.

**iii. Trail Guide on City home page**

M. Kozikowski that the Trail Guide is shown on the front page of the city website as a spotlight item.

**5. Open Space Management Committee**

**i. Utilizing bond money for maintenance**

The Commission held a discussion on how much money can be spent on maintenance activities according to the open space bond. The Commission will work on identifying needs, which should be detailed in the future Open Space Stewardship Plan.

**6. Open Space Acquisition Committee**

**i. Pending Properties (Mckiernan, Sunshine Realty)**

The Commission discussed the possible Pierce property acquisition and M. Kozikowski provided an update on the revised appraisal. K. Miller suggested contacting the Middlesex Land Trust regarding this property since they were interested in working with the City in the past.

The Commission discussed a property located on Chamberlain Road as a potential open space acquisition. The property contains wetlands and watercourses. M. Kozikowski reported that considering the amount of wetlands on the property, the development threat is low. He had an inquiry on the property from someone interested in farming at that location.

**ii. South Plumb Road**

E. Holder reported that the Common Council approved the appropriation of fund for this acquisition at their March meeting.

**iii. Westlake Drive**

No update.

**ii. OSWA Grant- Majestic Oaks- Wilson Property Update**

E. Holder reported that they are working on providing revised compliance reports for the other OSWA grant properties.

**G. Old Business**

**1. Timber Management and Southern Border Safety**

No update.

**H. New Business**

None.

**I. Member Forum**

B. Gartner inquired and M. Kozikowski reported that there has been no guidance from the administration on resuming in person meeting.

The Committee discussed possibly amending the start time of meetings. This topic can be put on the next meeting agenda.

G. Gartner inquired and M. Kozikowski provided an update on the department split.

**J. Adjournment**

A motion to adjourn made by B. Gartner and seconded by K. Owens passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:25 pm.