

**MINUTES**

**Ridgefield Conservation Commission**  
**Town Hall Annex, 66 Prospect Street**  
**Ridgefield, CT 06877**

(203) 431-2713 • [conservation@ridgefieldct.org](mailto:conservation@ridgefieldct.org)

**Meeting March 18, 2024 at 7PM**



Present:       Roberta Barbieri     Jana Hogan           Jack Kace           Erik Keller  
                  Jim Liptack           Anthony Markert     Pete Nichols       Matt Sharp  
                  Allan Welby

Absent: James Coyle, Jean Linville

Present: Caleb Johnson, Brett & Yasmina Harrison

The Vice Chairman called the meeting to order at 7 pm.

**UPON** motion duly made (Sharp), seconded (Nichols), and carried, it was **RESOLVED** to add Wittman Preserve purchase and installation of fencing for the parking area as item 9 and the owners of 45 Saint Johns Rd discussion as item 2.

**1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**UPON** motion duly made (Barbieri), seconded (Nichols), (Keller abstained) and carried, it was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of March 4, 2024 be approved and ordered filed in Town Hall.

**2. 45 SAINT JOHNS RD**

The CEO gave a brief summary of the NOV and the communications that followed. The home owners stated their concerns and would like RCC members to identify themselves if on the OS checking in on the NOV issue going forward. The RCC informed the home owners that the land adjacent to theirs is public open space and is accessible by anyone during daylight hours. The home owners are very corporative and 100% complete with the NOV. The RCC will address personal identification at our next meeting.

**3. SUMMER TREKKING PROGRAM**

Ms. Hogan reported that Parks & Rec, Woodcock Nature Center and Ridgefield Library are all excited and on board for the program. June 1<sup>st</sup> is National Trails Day, RCC would like to coordinate the release of the new walk book for this event. Ms. Hogan is asking RCC for 12 total trail recommendations to be submitted by this Thursday in order to take advantage of all organizations marketing efforts.

**4. FORESTRY STUDIES**

Mr. Markert provided some updates on the Forestry study. CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection Service Forester Dave Beers received our list of six open space sites for field visits and he agreed to visit them as he has time available, probably beginning in April. Mr. Markert identified some grant applications available to the RCC however Mr. Keller will speak to Mr. Coyle and have a conversation with the BOS to understand their appetite for any type of matching grant regarding Hemlock Hills and Pine Mountain. Once this has been established RCC can move forward on scope and grant applications.

**5. WEBSITE UPDATE**

Ms. Hogan had some good news regarding the new RCC website, when you go to the Town website it now links to the new website. The RCC will also be able to get access to all previous minutes. There have been some unintended consequences regarding the new email addresses required by the town, if a member shifts titles or moves their emails do not travel with them. Ms. Hogan will log a formal complaint with the BOS.

**6. WALK BOOK UPDATE**

Mr. Keller reported the walk book maps are almost 100% complete. Still looking for more photos of interesting or distinct features of each property. Also, Mr. Keller is requesting trail suggestions for the following categories; 5 most difficult, 5 family friendly and 5 most interesting views and vantage points by our next meeting.

**7. AMERICAN CHESTNUT TREE PROGRAM**

The American Chestnut Foundation has provided the liability insurance document now it is up to the RCC to review the contract line by line with the ACF and decide if this is actually something RCC will get involved in. Mr. Coyle will forward the lease agreement to the newly formed committee Mr. Kace, Mr. Markert, and Mr. Nichols for review. Mr. Nichols will set up Zoom meeting with newly formed committee as well as the newly appointed Chair of the Tree committee and the ACF and report back.

**8. ANNUAL MEETING**

It was decided to create a plaque for the Edith Meffley award receipts (Mr. Nichols will begin working on these) and a photo with a personalized mat for Jill Kelly to be recognized as the very first Ranger. The event will be more a night of appreciation for friends of Ridgefield Open Space than a meeting. Hors d'oeuvres and drinks will be served along with a presentation from Dina Brewster on regenerative farming. Invites have been emailed. Ms. Hogan and Mr. Sharp are working on a slideshow to be shown as a backdrop at the event.

**9. WITTMAN PRESERVE**

Mr. Sharp gave the estimate to purchase and install the fencing around the parking area at the newly established WitTman Preserve OS. Mr. Sharp also mentioned that scouts will install a kiosk, create a seating area and develop the trail to Round Pond this year.

**UPON** motion duly made (Welby), seconded (Sharp), and carried, it was **RESOLVED** to spend up to \$3690 to purchase and install fencing along the newly constructed parking area.

**10. NEW BUSINESS**

Mr. Welby will by conducting two American Woodcock walks – March 19<sup>th</sup> and March 21<sup>st</sup> at 6:30pm in the parking lot at the end of Lauzen Lane.

**11. MEETINGS FOR ATTENDANCE**

**P&Z**

March 19 - Nichols  
April 2 - Hogan

**IWB**

March 28 – Barbieri  
April 11 – Keller

**12. CHAIRMAN’S REMARKS**

No remarks.

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**ADJOURNMENT UPON** motion duly made (Nichols), seconded (Kace), and carried, it was **RESOLVED** that the meeting adjourn at 8:09P.M.