

Orange Conservation Commission Monthly Meeting
High Plains Community Center
August 3, 2016

Present: Cindy Ruggeri, Sharon Ewen, Jon Clark

Absent: Robb McCorkle, Kent Tully, Amy Williams, David Krause, Michael Ross, Consultant

Guest: Donna Wesolowski

The meeting commenced at 7:10 pm.

I. Public Participation

Donna Wesolowski joined this meeting as a potential new member.

II. Financial Report

Cindy is getting a copy of the budget/balance report. Pat O'Sullivan will contact us within the next few months regarding the new file cabinet.

III. Old Business

a) SCRCOG Maps

There will be a meeting on Thursday, August 11th on the discussion and distribution of Town of Orange trail maps to the library (also available online).

b) Audubon grant: Ewen Preserve

Sharon has received no news on this \$8,000 grant but is expecting to hear something by the end of August.

c) CT grant: Ewen Preserve

Jon went to pick up information regarding this grant but it was not yet ready. James Zeoli said it must go through the treasurer (Art Williams) because there are certain limitations imposed by the state.

d) Open space signs

Sharon has received the trail and boundary markers. George Lesko, Orange Lions Club, has arranged for a large group of volunteers to put up the signs beginning at Racebrook Tract. There will be a presentation to the Lions Club in September regarding help from its members. The signs/markers are expected to go up in October.

e) Bat boxes: Racebrook Eagle Scouts project

David Nemecek of the Eagle Scouts has given an informal presentation to the Conservation Commission during the April meeting. There is a plan for four bat boxes (two boxes on two posts). We await a formal presentation and documents from David.

f) Train Station

Waiting on plans for the new station for us to review, approve and sign off on.

g) Open space letters

A letter has been drafted. The plan is to send a letter every 5 years to owners of properties of interest. The draft will be edited and finalized before letters are sent.

h) Drone ordinance

A town-level ordinance on drones must wait until an ordinance is imposed at the state level.

IV. New Business

a) Orange Agricultural Fair

The fair dates are September 17th and 18th. We will have four tables among two spaces. Materials from past fairs will be used, including pegboards and laminated invasive posters. Ahead of the Owl Prowl in November, owl information will be shown. Flyers on the hiking backpacks have been printed to give away. Volunteers will be asked to commit to certain time slots to run the tables during the fair.

b) New secretary

Daina Larkin has stepped in as the new secretary.

c) New members

We are seeking adjunct members. Zeoli has approved us to take on more members.

d) Owl Prowl

The next Owl Prowl will take place on November 18th at the Ewen Preserve. Frank Gallo, a naturalist from Audubon, will lead the group.

e) April Garden Club presentation

A presentation about the OCC and goals will be given to the Garden Club on April 11th, 2017.

f) West Haven Cub Scouts at Racebrook

A troop leader from the West Haven Cub Scouts wants to hold a nighttime activity at Racebrook Tract. We want more information on expected attendance (including amount of supervisors) so we can inform the police department and make sure it will not be an issue legally.

V. Liaison reports

a) Wepawaug

Sharon is concerned about the messy entrance at Wepawaug. The field needs mowing and there is poison ivy that must be removed.

b) Housatonic Overlook

The area at the top of Housatonic Overlook needs to be trimmed and the parking area needs designation by signage.

c) Turkey Hill

The area should be mown to the border of the pond. Cindy will contact someone from the Highway Department about this. There's been no official response to the OCC's written letter regarding concerns with the storage of heavy equipment during the parking lot paving project, which was shut down for budget reasons. Another written letter should be sent ahead of a revival of this project.

Meeting adjourned at 8:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Daina Larkin