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Patrick S. O'Sullivan
TOWN CLERK

Orange Conservation Commission

April 1, 2020
7:00 p.m.

(Unapproved Minutes)

Attendance

Commissioners Present: Chairman Cindy Ruggeri, Vice Chairman Sharon V. Ewen, Donna Wesolowski, Robert McCorkle, and Cathy Anderson

Staff Present: Deborah Satonick, Recording Secretary

I. Call to Order

- Chairman Ruggeri called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. She indicated that the time allocation for the meeting was forty-five minutes via Zoom.

II. Review and Approval of Minutes – March 4, 2020

Ms. Ewen made a motion to approve the March 4, 2020 Orange Conservation Commission minutes, seconded by Ms. Ruggeri. All were in favor and the motion PASSED.

III. Financial Report

- Chairman Ruggeri had no updates at this time.

VI. Old Business

A. Wepawaug Bridge Railing - Estimate

- Ms. Ewen has not yet received an estimate from Orange Fence for the railing. She intends to ask Orange Fence if they will repair the broken slats on the fence at Ewing Preserve for free, as a courtesy to the Town of Orange.

B. OCC Town Code Changes

- Chairman Ruggeri was informed that Attorney Marino has opened up his own law firm and might have a different email. She will attempt to contact him by phone to discuss the OCC Town Code changes.

V. New Business

A. Purple Martin Installation

- Ms. Ewen reported that the installation of the Purple Martin birdhouse has been completed and she will contact Dennis for the solar panel and bird call. She will also be putting a lock on the birdhouse. Ms. Anderson obtained dry white pine needles for the birdhouse and Mr. Ewen spent his own money for the needed concrete. He has gone to the Town for reimbursement. The remaining balance of about \$300 will be used for either maintenance of the Purple Martin birdhouse or possibly for the purchase of wood to make additional birdhouses.
- The members agreed that after the lockdown due to COVID-19 is over, there will be live publicity on the installation of the Purple Martin colony birdhouse. Pictures will be in the local newspaper, Facebook, and the Town website. In addition, information on the Purple Martin birdhouse will be placed in the onsite kiosk.
- Ms. Anderson inquired if the bat houses and other bird houses at Racebrook Tract have been checked for occupancy and maintenance. It was noted that the bat houses require no maintenance and occupancy is unknown at this time. Chairman Ruggeri indicated that she thought that the bat houses have been occupied.

B. Scout Project

- Ms. Anderson gave an update on the completed Scout Project. It appears that the sign might have been placed in the wrong location. There was a discussion about asking the Scout, Ben, to make an additional sign for another location. After further discussion, the members decided that metal ATV signage appeared to be a better choice. ATV signs are also needed at Housatonic Overlook.

B. New Scout Project

- Chairman Ruggeri received another text request from Alex Oleschuk, looking for an Eagle Scout project. There was some discussion about having Alex build steps at Racebrook. However, it was decided that a professional should build the steps due to the serious erosion problem from the parking lot. Town codes do not require a railing for the steps. Mr. McCorkle mentioned water bars as a possible solution to the erosion problem.

D. Racebrook Tract Hike for Racebrook Students

- Chairman Ruggeri reported that this event will be postponed to a later date.

E. Spring Trail Maintenance Day

- This event will tentatively be held on April eighteenth, Saturday, from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. for Commission members, but not open to the public. The Commission members will look at possible areas of concern and a potential Eagle Scout project for Alex.

V1. Review of Standing Committees/Liaison Reports

- As Racebrook Tract extends into the Town of Woodbridge, it was noted that the Orange Conservation Commission is responsible for their red, purple, green and white trails and the brown nature walkway within the Town of Orange. There are several unmarked trails on the Woodbridge side, but this is not within the jurisdiction of the Commission. It was also noted that the purple markers have faded to white and will need to be sprayed or replaced.
- Ms. Ewen noted that while mountain bikers are using the Open Space, they are running the trails, the ecosystem, and scaring away all of the natural wildlife. There is a designated bike trail that they should be using.
- Gail Nixon, from the Garden Club, will be planting a Memorial Tree in honor of Ed Tucker. Due to the lockdown, there will not be a ceremony at this time. It was also noted that there is no ongoing maintenance regarding Memorial Trees.
- Mr. McCorkle inquired if the Bird Walk is still scheduled for May thirtieth. Ms. Ruggeri believes that it will most likely be postponed.
- Via text message, Chairman Ruggeri added to the minutes that the brother of Mr. Ross will be building a bridge at the Turkey Hill Preserve to go over the wet area.
- Lastly, in light of the current pandemic, the Commission wished everyone safety and good health during this uneasy time.

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Deborah Satonick,
Recording Secretary