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Patricia B. O'Sullivan
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Orange Conservation Commission

High Plains Conference Room

April 4, 2018

7:00 p.m.

Approved Minutes

Attendance

Commissioners Present: Chairman Cindy Ruggeri, Donna Wesolowski, Kent Tullo, and Robert McCorkle

Commissioners Absent: Vice Chairman Sharon V. Ewen, Jonathan Clark, Amelia Williams, and Consultant Michael Ross

Guest: Claire Rusawicz, volunteer; Gregory Geslione, volunteer, John Wesolowski, Scout Master Troop 925, Kahled Jarad and Alex Abriola, Troup 925

Staff Present: Deborah Satonick, Recording Secretary

I. Call to Order

- Chairman Ruggeri called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m. and pointed out the emergency exits. She asked everyone present to introduce themselves.

II. Review and Approval of Minutes

January 3, 2018 Orange Conservation Commission Minutes

- Ms. Wesolowski pointed out a spelling error that needed to be corrected.

Chairman Ruggeri made a motion to approve the amended January third, 2018 Orange Conservation Commission minutes, seconded by Mr. McCorkle. All were in favor, and the motion PASSED.

Chairman Ruggeri made a motion to move the Eagle Scout Project up on the Agenda, seconded by Mr. McCorkle. All were in favor, and the motion PASSED.

III. Eagle Scout Project

- Chairman Ruggeri invited Alex Abriola to speak about his project of removing evasive species of plants at the Turkey Hill Preserve. Alex advised that he does not need funding as he has sufficient gloves and tools to complete the project. He will bag the evasive plants and take them to the dump. In addition, he will prepare a poster for next year's fair. Mr. Wesolowski estimated that this project would take about 150 man-hours.
- Chairman Ruggeri invited Khaled Jarad to discuss his Scout project. He intends to built landscape stairs at the Racebrook Tract and provided an estimate of costs, a map of the property, and the procedure that he will follow to build the outdoor wood steps. He will use pressure treated wood and the steps will be filled with gravel.
- After a brief discussion, the Commission agreed that the location of the steps should be moved nearer to the kiosk. This will reduce the number of steps required as well as the cost factor. Khaled will purchase fencing to prevent hikers from walking into an area that has erosion and exposed tree roots.

IV. Financial Report

- Chairman Ruggeri distributed copies of the current budget to the Commission members. She noted the Orange Fence Company had been paid from a wrong account, and the \$490.00 encumbered funds that were earmarked for this purpose was not used. She will consult with the Finance Director to investigate this matter further.
- Chairman Ruggeri also reported that she received the Lions Grant of \$225.00 that will be used to pay for the bird walk in May. They will be using some of the budget money to purchase seedlings from Broken Arrow to plant at Wepawaug.

V. Old Business

A. Indian River Fish Passage Restoration Grant Progress

- Chairman Ruggeri indicated that Sharon and Jim Ewen would be back in town and would select a day to buy and plant the seedlings. Ms. Wesolowski suggested asking a group to help and Chairman Ruggeri mentioned that three Amity runners also volunteered their services.

B. State of CT Grant Process

- Chairman Ruggeri stated that the work has been completed and would like to have the Commissioners see the extended walkway sometime this spring.

C. Orange Schools Science Program

- Chairman Ruggeri reported that Mike Ross was to contact the curriculum advisor at Turkey Hill School to offer a school science program at the Turkey Hill Preserve. He would also like to make this offering to the other schools as well.
- Ms. Rusawicz mentioned a program called “Everyone Outside.” The individual who runs this program finds grants to hold after school programs in the town of Durham, CT. She has a website and gets retirees or stay at home parents to volunteer. Ms. Rusawicz suggested seeking students from Common Ground in New Haven as volunteers for some of the work in Orange.

D. Orange Fence - Tyler City Road Fence Status

- As previously mentioned, the work has been paid in full from a wrong account and Chairman Ruggeri will speak with the Finance Director about this.

VI. New Business

A. Trail Cleanup Status

- There was a lengthy discussion about the individual trails with particular focus on fallen trees. Chris Small has done a great job in removing many of these trees. Bruce Lindsay has volunteered his time at Racebrook Tract to clear some of the trees and the Highway Department has also assisted in the tree cleanup. A massive tree fell on signage at Ewen Preserve and First Selectman Zeoli was checking to see if Town insurance would cover the repair.
- It was pointed out that their link on the Town website is down and Chris Small needs to update trail mileage, as it is incorrect. Mr. Tullo will put up the ATV signs and the Commission members will continue installing the trail markers as needed.

B. Turkey Hill Preserve Parking Lot

- The Land Trust will hold a guided walk at the Turkey Hill Preserve on April fourteenth. Chairman Ruggeri mentioned that \$50k has been set aside for a parking lot. Currently, there is only mud and some gravel. Mr. Ewen’s son is a landscaper designer and can design a parking lot for this property. The Commission can foresee a proposed barn at this site for future educational purposes.
- The Commission also briefly discussed the open space at Fred Wolfe Park. As this space has two new lacrosse fields and existing soccer fields, it is no longer passive use. Ms. Wesolowski suggested installing a measured mile walk around the fields, as the trails are no longer there. Ms. Rusawicz noted that there was a vernal pond on the property.

Chairman Ruggeri will speak with the Parks and Recreation Department about this consideration.

C. Spring Workday

- Ms. Ewen will set a date for planting at Ewen Preserve.

E. Spring Birdwalk Date

- The bird walk is scheduled for May nineteenth. Mr. Gallo may not be available that day, but the commission agreed not to wait until the fall to have this event, as they have already received the grant.

F. CT Trails Day –Hike Leader

- Ms. Ewen’s son has offered to be the hike leader for CT. Trail Day, which is scheduled for May sixth. If Mr. Gallo cannot make May nineteenth for the bird walk, it was suggested to have the bird walk the same day as the CT. Trail Day.

G. Trail Volunteers

- This topic was previously discussed in the minutes.

G Trail Use

- Chairman Ruggeri reported that an individual inquired if they could use the Town’s open space to hold a program called Tinkergarten, an outdoor educational program for young children. Mr. Zeoli explained that this individual must go through the appropriate channels to get the program approved. Chairman Ruggeri would like the First Selectman to give the Orange Conservation Commission a policy and procedure for these types of requests.

H. My Town Trails – Update Trail Length

- As previously noted, Mr. Small will need to update the maps and website to reflect the correct trail lengths.

I. Key Bank Community Day

- Ms. Ruggeri received a request from Key Bank in Milford about their desire to do community service in the Town of Orange. The Commission will need to think about what specifically they can do within the town enhance our open space.

The meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Deborah Satonick, Recording Secretary