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Orange Conservation Commission

April 6, 2022 7:00 p.m.
High Plains Community Center

Approved Minutes

Attendance

Commissioners Present: Cindy Ruggeri, Cathy Anderson, Donna Wesolowski, and Scott Somerville (Facetime)

Commissioners Absent: Chair Sharon Ewen, Robert McCorkle, and Santo Galatioto

Staff Present: Deborah Satonick, Recording Secretary

Guests: Girl Scout Troop

I. Call to Order

- Ms. Anderson called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and reviewed emergency exits.

Ms. Anderson made a motion to add "Discussion of Girl Scout Project" as item #II on the Agenda. Ms. Ruggeri seconded the motion and all were in favor. The motion PASSED.

II. Girl Scout Project Discussion

- In attempt to receive the bronze award for community service, the Girl Scout Troop expressed an interest in volunteering in the Open Spaces of the Town. They indicated that they are interested in helping on an ongoing basis with trail cleanup. The planting of annuals and perennials at strategic locations near open space entrances and trail signs was also suggested. The girl scouts would also be interested in making a tutorial video about proper use of the trails and the Commission members indicated that they could add this video on their website. The Commission members felt that Racebrook Tract would be a good venue for cleanup and also considered having the girl scouts plant orange flowers for the Bicentennial. The due date to for this project is 9/30/22.
- Ms. Ruggeri gave each girl scout and parent in attendance at the meeting the pamphlet illustrating all of the trails in the town. The Commission members thanked the girls and welcomed them back next month to discuss this again at greater length.

III. Approval of Minutes – March 2, 2022

- The Commission members reviewed the minutes and made edits as necessary.

Ms. Ruggeri made a motion to approve the amended March 2, 2022 minutes, seconded by Cathy Anderson. All were in favor and the motion PASSED.

IV. Financial Report

- The current balance is \$2,873,.93. There was a discussion on how this remaining balance would be spent. Some expenditures include the purchase of signage and the purchase of orange flowered perennials for the Girl Scout Troop to plant around the kiosk, at the entrances to the Open Spaces, and around the trail signs.

V. Old Business

A. New Trail at THP/ Kiosk Updates

- Ms. Wesolowski mentioned that there is an area of the yellow trail that is in need of a small bridge to cross over water. As Jack Belfonti's Eagle Scout Project has not been approved, this might be an alternate project for consideration.

B. Kiosk Updates

- There was a brief discussion about the kiosk updates at the different locations and their progress.

C. Review of Maintenance List

- The Recording Secretary has updated the Maintenance List and will email an updated copy to the Commission members.

D. Jack Belfonti Eagle Scout Project

- Jack Belfonti's Eagle Scout project was withdrawn as the inland wetlands officer indicated that there was too much wetlands for this area to be considered as an Eagle Scout project. The \$605 check will be retained and used on his behalf for another project.

E. Spring Bird Walk – April 23, 2022

- Mr. Zemba will host this event and it will be advertised on Facebook, the website, and in the local paper.

F. Spring bird Walk – April 9, 2022

- Mr. Zemba will host this event, which is a sponsored Orange/Woodbridge Rotary Service event. The Girl Scout Troop was invited to attend this event at Racebrook Tract so that they can familiarize themselves with Racebrook Tract.

G. Wepawaug Walk 200 Year Orange Celebration

- Ms. Wesolowski gave a very brief history of Orange during the Civil War timeframe and how it might relate to the 200 bicentennial celebration. The Commission did not feel that an historical hike at Wepawaug would be the optimal contribution to the bicentennial celebration.

H. Purchase of Signs

- There was a lengthy discussion about signage at the various Open Spaces. It was agreed to purchase four ATV signs and a metal post for Housatonic Overlook. Mr. Somerville felt that additional “No Biking” signs are needed at Racebrook Tract. There was also a discussion about possible signage at the town ponds in regard to skating. Ms. Anderson will contact Mr. Lynch about this topic.

I. Children’s Programs

- This discussion was tabled until next month when Chairman Ewen will be in attendance.

J. Racebrook Tract Steps

- The Town is awarding \$12k for a Capital Project at Racebrook Tract. Ms. Ewen clarified that while the money is listed for a bridge it will actually be used for steps and drainage. Mr. Cifarelli advised that this would not be an issue.

K. Purple Martin Houses

- Ms. Anderson advised that Ms. Ewen helped her in cleaning and refreshing the Purple Martin Houses. They are ready for another mating season.

VI. New Business

A. Turkey Hill Preserve Vandalism of Boulders

- While there were no obvious holes in the ground, it appears that boulders have been removed. This area near Douglas Road will be watched more closely.

B. Land Trust Invite

- George Laskos from the Land Trust would like to have a combined meeting with the Orange Conservation Commission and Chairman Ewen felt that they might come to their June meeting. She suggested that Mr. Laskos contact Jeff Cap for website and Facebook information.

C. CT Trail Days – June

- CT Trail Day is June 4th and Founder's Day is May 28th.

VI. Standing Committees

- It was mentioned that both signs and tree markers have been removed from a number of the trails and that this has been an ongoing problem.

VII. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Deborah Satonick,
Recording Secretary