

Agenda
Tolland Conservation Commission
Zoom Remote Meeting
Thursday, January 11, 2024, 7:00 p.m.

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Roll Call**
- 3. Election of Officers**
- 4. Seating of Alternate(s)**
- 5. Public Comments**
- 6. Additions/Changes to Agenda**
- 7. New Business**
- 8. Old Business**
 - 8.1. "Bigfoot" Licensing/Event
 - 8.2. Recreational Trails Grant Opportunity
- 9. Reports from Head Steward and Subcommittees**
 - 9.1. Conservation Corp (Bob Rubino):
 - 9.2. Management Plans (Gene, Jim):
 - 9.3. Communication and Education (Jane):
 - 9.4. Property Boundaries and Trail Mapping (Adam):
 - 9.5. Town Owned Property Evaluations (Gene, Jim):
 - 9.6. Wanat Property Design Implementation (Peggy, Jane):
 - 9.7. Grant Writing and Fund Raising (Peggy, Jim):
- 10. Reports/Information from Other Organizations**
- 11. Staff Updates (David Corcoran)**
- 12. Items for Next Meeting**
- 13. Announcements**
- 14. Approve Minutes – November 16, 2023 Regular Meeting**

15. Adjournment

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One tap mobile: +13017158592,,4325402030#,,,*444555#

Or call: 1-646-876-9923 and input:

Meeting ID: 432 540 2030

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Tolland Conservation Commission (TCC)

Meeting minutes

16 November 2023 at 7:00 p.m.

Virtual meeting via Zoom

1. Call to order 7:02 p.m.

2. Roll call

TCC Members: J. Hutton (Chairman), J. Simao, K. Ackerman, A. Grossman

TCC Alternates: L. A. Swan

Public: D. Corcoran, B. Rubino

3. Seating of Alternate(s)

At the beginning of the meeting a quorum was not present. Alternate L. Swan was seated.

4. Public Comments

There were none.

5. Additions/Changes to Agenda

There were none.

6. New Business

6.1. Schedule of Meetings for 2024 Year

The meeting schedule for the 2024 year was reviewed. A motion was made by J. Simao, 2nd by A. Grossman to adopt the schedule as presented. The motion was unanimously approved.

7. Old business

7.1. Parciak Forest Management Plan

J. Hutton stated that due to the excessive rain the tree harvest at the Parciak Forest has been put on hold. There was too much damage from the machines to continue. After the ground dries out, or when the ground freezes in winter, the job will resume. J. Hutton stated 3 items needed to be addressed:

1. Information needs to be placed on the TCC website explaining what is going on at Parciak Forest including that we are temporarily on hold.
2. There is an area on Bald Hill that has been used as a staging area. After the tree harvesting is complete, this area can be turned into a small parking lot. A plan including how many cars can be parked as well as how/what should be planted needs to be developed. J. Hutton will ask B. Rubino and the steward if they can help.
3. J. Hutton presented a picture of bird viewing blind designed by the naturalist Edwin A. Teal. J. Hutton suggested the Commission build several of these at select locations on the Parciak Conservation Area after the tree harvesting operations are completed. A discussion was held on how to engage young people to help build the viewing blinds. Ideas on how to engage the Tolland High School Environmental class, local scout troops, and Tolland High School Wood Shop classes were offered by various Commissioners. J. Simao will reach out to the Environmental class and will ask the Audubon Society if they have plans of the blinds that they can share. J. Hutton will ask the Boy Scout Troop 15 if they are interested. L. Swan will ask the Cub Scout Troop 15 if they are interested. The blinds can be constructed in the spring after the forest harvest is complete.

7.2. USDA Forest Service Community Forest Program grant.

J. Hutton asked if the 26-acre parcel next to Palmer/Kendal area has been sold. D. Corcoran stated he didn't believe it has sold. The owners were asking for \$650,000. J. Hutton and D. Corcoran stated they will look into what a reasonable price for this property would be.

7.3. OSWA Grant for the Tolland Marsh.

D. Corcoran stated that the appraisal and appraisal review of the Tolland Marsh area has been submitted to DEEP. D. Corcoran stated that the 25-acre property off Goose Lane and adjacent to the Skungamaug River south of the Tolland Marsh has not yet been sold.

8. Reports from Head Steward and Subcommittees

8.1 Conservation Corp

B. Rubino reported on the fall Tolland Conservation Corps trail workdays. Several projects have been completed. B. Rubino stated that he has good volunteers and good turnouts. This Saturday is a workday at the Wanet Conservation Area. Approximately 6 projects are planned. The cages around the Linden trees need to be removed. It was suggested that the scouts may be able to remove the cages. There was additional discussion on the Sage Meadow Conservation Area and how to get the grass cut when the property has remained very wet for the last several years. B. Rubino would like to cut a path down to the pond at the edge of the meadow to improve access and define the Town's land boundary up to Sage Meadow Drive. B. Rubino stated that after the Luce trail workday scheduled for December, the Corps may be able to cut the path at Sage Meadow. J. Hutton stated he will get a price/schedule for cutting the meadow at Sage Meadow.

8.2. Management Plans

There was none.

8.3. Communication and Education

J. Hutton stated that over past winters, in collaboration with the Bolton Lakes Watershed Association, the TCC has done a hike in the Atlantic Cedar Forest. Maybe this coming winter, if there is enough snow/freezing, another hike can be scheduled.

8.4. Property Boundaries and Trail Mapping

A. Grossman will begin scheduling property boundary walks to check for encroachment and to check/confirm property corners on various Conservation Areas.

8.5. Town Owned Property Evaluations

D. Corcoran stated there is a 55-acre piece of property next to the Luce conservation area that is for sale. The seller stated he is interested in selling the parcel to the Town for use as open space or for conservation. The parcel is adjacent to the Luce Conservation Area and a trail could connect the two areas. D. Corcoran stated he will investigate the Forest Service grant program which might help fund the acquisition of this land if the owner wants to sell it to the Town. The owner has not indicated how much he wants for the land.

8.6. Wanat Property Design Implementation

There was none.

8.7. Grant Writing and Fundraising

A. Grossman presented a very fun and creative fundraising idea to sell "Big Foot Trapping" licenses and "Unicorn Trapping" licenses. The cost to create each "license" is only \$1.50. Discussion on selling price and details was held. The idea was well received. There was discussion on how donation money is accepted and managed by the Town. D. Corcoran stated that the Town has a Conservation Fund in the Town's accounting system and he will discuss how to collect funds with the Finance Department. A discussion on holding a kickoff event, including a family hike and tips on tracking and trapping bigfoots/unicorns, was held. A. Grossman will finish the design of the license and work on the rules for tracking. J. Simao and A. Grossman will work on the details. Having a bonfire and spiced cider and hot chocolate was suggested.

9. Reports and information from Other Organizations

L. Swan stated that she attended the Connecticut Association of Conservation and Inland Wetland Commissions (CACIWC) annual conference last Saturday. She gave a brief summary of what was presented at the 3 talks she attended. She noted that she thought the conference was well worth attending.

10. Staff Updates

There were none.

11. Items for Next Meeting

There were none.

12. Announcements

There were none.

13. Approve Previous Minutes

A motion was made by J. Simao; 2nd by L. Swan to accept the minutes of 12 October 2023 meeting. The motion was approved.

14. Adjournment

A motion was made by A. Grossman, 2nd by J. Simao to adjourn the meeting. The motion was unanimously approved. The meeting was adjourned at 8:13 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Lee Ann Swan
Secretary, Tolland Conservation Commission