



Orange Conservation Commission

February 1, 2023 7:00 p.m.

High Plains Community Center – Room 2

Approved

Attendance

Commissioners Present: Chair Cathy Anderson, Donna Wesolowski, Santo Galatioto, Sharon Ewen, and Scott Somerville

Commissioners Absent: Chantelle Bunnell

Staff Present: Deborah Satonick, Recording Secretary

Guests: Cindy Ruggeri

Chairman Anderson called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. and reviewed the emergency exits.

1. Public Dialogue

Chair Anderson advised that the newest OCC member, Dr. Sharon Kahara, will officially be appointed and sworn in at the next Board of Selectmen meeting. She proceeded to wish Ms. Ruggeri well in her new ventures and all of the members thanked her for her twenty plus years of service to the town. Ms. Ruggeri gave Ms. Anderson all of the materials she had related to the Orange Conservation Commission and advised that she would be available to help in anyway as a volunteer.

Ms. Ewen suggested that we add “Development of the OCC Mission Statement” to next month’s Agenda.

[Mr. Galatioto arrived at approximately 7:09 p.m.]

2. Review and Approval of January Minutes

The Commission members reviewed the minutes and made two corrections as needed.

Mr. Galatioto moved to approve the amended January 1, 2023 Orange Conservation Commission minutes, seconded by Ms. Ewen. All were in favor and the motion PASSED.

Sharon Ewen
TOWN CLERK

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3. Financial Report

The discussion of the Financial Report was tabled until next month's meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Special Workshop in January to review SCRCOG Map and Leadership Map

Chair Anderson felt that the meeting was very informative and thanked everyone for their attendance. When the SCRCOG map is eventually redone, she would like to give some copies to Town Hall and to the Parks and Recreation Department.

2. Ewen Preserve Update

A. Status of Issues on 615 St. John's Drive

Chairman Anderson and Ms. Ewen spoke on the ongoing issues between the owners of 615 St. John's Drive, the neighbors, and the Town of Orange.

B. Relocation of Wooden Bridge on Walkway

This work will begin in the spring.

C. Renewal of Purple Martin Membership

Ms. Ewen advised that the \$35 membership has been renewed.

D. Status of New Blazed Walkway

The work has not begun and further discussion will be tabled at this time.

3. Wepawaug Historic Informational Plaque

No work has been done regarding the plaque. Ms. Anderson mentioned that an abutting property owner on Mapledale Road illegally dumped cut trees over their fence onto town property. Mr. Foyer sent a letter to the property owner advising that the wood had to be removed and the resident complied.

4. Status of Racebrook Tract Project

Ms. Ewen reported that the final cost for the steps was \$8,990. With the money left over a \$600 rail will be purchased. Concern was expressed over possible washout with the small gravel as well as the upkeep of the Mountain Laurel growing too big. It was mentioned that new plexiglass is needed for the kiosk. As the kiosk now faces a wrong direction with the new entrance, postings need to be placed on the backside and the adjustments will be made. Everyone commended Ms. Ewen for an excellent job with the steps.

There was mention of the Orange Foundation Grant to be used for a possible parking lot fence, but in the interim, Mr. Foyer will put two boulders on either side to stop parking close to the new entrance.

5. CT Trails Grant Proposals DEEP Webinar

Ms. Anderson watched the webinar and a brief discussion followed about applying for grants. No one on the Commission felt fully qualified to complete all of the required paperwork for a grant application. Ms. Ewen indicated that with the help of other Commission members and volunteers she would like to attempt to apply for a grant. The DEEP Grant deadline is February 28th and the Orange Foundation Grant deadline is March 1st.

6. Status of Refurbishing Entry Signs to all Trails

Ms. Ewen contacted New Haven Sign Company to get quotes for entrance signs into the Open Space properties. Signs range in price depending on their size from \$2400 to \$3200. The members preferred the smaller signage but will need to check with the First Selectman to see if some of the verbiage on the current signs might be eliminated or posted elsewhere. It was agreed that the landscaping under the signs should be maintenance free. Ms. Ewen intends to get additional quotes from other companies for the signage.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Discuss Project for Grant Request from Orange Lion's Club

A disability walkway or most any educational purpose project would be acceptable under this grant. Ms. Ewen will contact Mr. Cuzzocreo for advice and assistance with the grant process.

2. Address Vandalism Issues on the Trails

Motion-detector solar spotlights and surveillance cameras were discussed as possible options to deter vandalism on the trails.

3. Possible Trail at Fred Wolf Park

The development of a trail at Fred Wolf Park was briefly mentioned at the end of the soccer field where a prior trail had existed by the leadership group. No action was taken at this time.

4. OCC Attire

Ms. Anderson would like to order vests with the town logo and the OCC name for Commission members to wear when they walk the trails. The members agreed and Ms. Anderson will look into pricing.

5. Publication for the Purple Martins Presentation

This event is scheduled for March 8th at High Plains and Ms. Anderson will handle the publicity.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Ms. Anderson noted that the OCC homepage on their website is outdated and new verbiage is needed. She will work with Mr. Jeff Cap and Ms. Bunnell on updating the website.

Ms. Anderson completed the Annual Report that was due in September 2022.

There was a brief update on the status of the individual properties of Open Space.

Mr. Galatioto made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:45 p.m., seconded by Mr. Somerville. All were in favor and the motion PASSED.

Respectfully Submitted,
Deborah Satonick
Recording Secretary