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2026 FEB - 6 AM 9:55
John Ewen
TOWN CLERK

Orange Conservation Commission

High Plains Community Center –January 4, 2026
7:00 p.m.

(Unapproved)

Attendance

Commissioners Present: Vice Chair Donna Wesolowski, Dr. Daniel May, Sharon Ewen, Chantelle Bunnell, and Dr. Sharon Kahara

Commissioners Absent: Chair Liam Ferguson and Dr. Scott Somerville

Vice Chair Wesolowski called the meeting to order at 7:09 p.m. and reviewed emergency exits.

Public Dialogue

There was no public dialogue at this time.

Approval of the December 3, 2025 Minutes

Commissioner Ewen made a motion to approve the December 3, 2025 Orange Conservation Commission minutes, seconded by Dr. May. All were in favor and the motion PASSED.

Financial Report

Chairman Ewen advised that there have been no changes to the budget. The bill for the Owl Prowl has been received at Town Hall. Commissioner Wesolowski gave Commissioner Ewen a \$31 bill for the seeds for the Seed Presentation given by Mr. John Wesolowski.

OLD BUSINESS

Art Williams -Money in the OCC

Commissioner Ewen reported that she has not yet spoken with Mr. Williams, the Town Treasurer, about the amount of money being held on behalf of the Orange Conservation Commission. She will report back next month.

Potential Workdays – Garbage Cleanup & Removal of Bittersweet at Racebrook

The discussion for garbage cleanup & removal of bittersweet was tabled until the weather begins to thaw.

Commissioner Wesolowski gave a brief overview of the Seed Presentation that her husband hosted. It went well with thirty-two participants. Rebecca, from the Case Memorial Library, offered to host this presentation at the library. The library, in turn, would handle all of the publicity for the event. All leftover seeds from this event will be available for public distribution at the library. Commissioner Wesolowski discussed the optimal locations for Pawpaw trees and Spice bushes for potential tree plantings at Racebrook and distributed an informational handout on different plant species.

Commissioner Day has eight bluebird houses and a few poles, but additional poles will need to be purchased. He suggested installing the bluebird houses at Racebrook and Fred Wolfe Park.

Dr. Kahara advised that she has a new student that would be interested in studying bittersweet and might be interested in attending the workday cleanup this spring.

Dr. May advised that the trail maps will be updated over the next two years. It was noted that this could be a possible Eagle Scout project. Dr. Kahara also mentioned that students from the University of New Haven might also be willing to handle this. Dr. May also mentioned that grant money may be difficult to obtain this year as State funding is being used for a 2.5-mile handicap trail from West Haven to New Haven.

(Commissioner Bunnell arrived at 7:40 after another meeting that she was required to attend.)

Commissioner Ewen discussed the function of the Tree Committee and in the absence of Mrs. Nixon, no one is keeping this Committee up and running. She questioned whether the OCC should assume the responsibilities of the Tree Committee, which plants memorial trees in remembrance of loved one. Commissioner Bunnell felt that the Orange Conservation Committee has enough responsibilities and should not take on additional chores. Commissioner Ewen will discuss this matter with Mr. Zeoli.

988 Lifeline Signage

Commissioner Bunnell displayed the signage and advised that the Town would be handling the installation using metal poles. Commissioner Ewen suggested two signs be installed at High Plains and an additional sign at Tucker Ridge.

NEW BUSINESS

2026 Orange Country Fair Tent Reservation Form

The tent reservation form has been submitted and the OCC requested a different location from last year due to the close proximity of an amusement ride and the resulting noise.

Commissioner Bunnell made a motion to add “Discussion of the OCC Website” to the Agenda, seconded by Commissioner May. All were in favor and the motion PASSED.

Discussion of the Orange Conservation Commission Website

There was a lengthy discussion about the need to update the OCC website. While Ms. Shaw, the Town Clerk, uploads information to the Town website, Mr. Jeff Cap is primarily responsible for the website. The goal is to make the OCC website more accessible and user friendly, contain a brochure of the town maps, and to interlink with their Facebook page. It was suggested that Mr. Cap be invited to an OCC meeting to discuss the updating of their website.

Commissioner Bunnell made a motion to invite Mr. Jeff Cap to the March Orange Conservation Commission meeting to discuss upgrading their website. Dr. May seconded the motion and all were in favor. The motion PASSED.

Adjournment

Commissioner Bunnell made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:03 p.m., seconded by Dr. May. All were in favor and the motion PASSED.

Respectfully Submitted,
Deborah Satonick,
Recording Secretary