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Patricia B. O'Sullivan
TOWN CLERK

Orange Conservation Commission

High Plains Conference Room

March 4, 2020

7:00 p.m.

Approved Minutes

Attendance

Commissioners Present: Chairman Cindy Ruggeri, Vice Chairman Sharon V. Ewen, Donna Wesolowski, Robert McCorkle, and Cathy Anderson

Staff Present: Deborah Satonick, Recording Secretary

I. Call to Order

- Chairman Ruggeri called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. and reviewed emergency exits. There was brief mention of two vacancies on the Commission, as both Mr. Clark and Mr. Tullo have resigned. Chairman Ruggeri will contact Mr. Tullo again to remind him that he must officially send notification to the First Selectman about his resignation.

II. Review and Approval of Minutes - January 8, 2020

- Chairman Ruggeri made one revision to the minutes for better clarification.

Mr. McCorkle made a motion to approve the revised January eighth, 2020 Orange Conservation Commission minutes, seconded by Ms. Anderson. All were in favor and the motion PASSED.

III. Financial Report

- Chairman Ruggeri reported that the current balance in the 2019 budget is \$2193.00. Grant money was used to pay for the Owl Prowl and another grant of \$1500 covered the Purple Martin Birdhouse. Ms. Ewen reported that the concrete base platform has been completed and the birdhouse is ready to be installed. A morning call box will be used to attract the birds.

- Mr. Williams, Town Treasurer, closed out some of their accounts and Ms. Ewen is concerned about the remaining balance of \$1,143.00. She believes that the accounts were zeroed out and the money returned to the Town's General Fund.
- Lastly, Ms. Ewen went to the Orange Fence Company to discuss the installation of the fence at Racebrook Tract. The money for the fence has been encumbered.

VI. Old Business

A. Wepawaug Bridge Railing - Estimate

- Ms. Ewen will be getting an estimate from Orange Fence for the railing and will report back to the Commission members. Orange Fence will install the railing with proper footings for stability.

B. January BOF Meeting

- Ms. Ewen made a presentation at the Board of Finance Budget Workshop asking for an additional \$3500 in the 2020-2021 budget for maintain of the Open Space. She explained that both the Highway Department and Parks and Recreation Department have been unable to fully commit to the maintenance of the Open Space due to their many other responsibilities. Mr. Ross was unable to accompany her to this meeting.

C. OCC Town Code Changes

- Chairman Ruggeri met with Attorney Marino to discuss the requested code changes. In light of the legal expense involved, Ms. Anderson suggested that their code changes be added with the other changes that were voted on by the Board of Selectman. Chairman Ruggeri did not feel that there would be any issues in getting the code changes and this matter will be discussed further at their next meeting.

V. New Business

A. Purple Martin Installation

- The installation of the colony birdhouse will be done this month. Ms. Ewen advised that the site location for the bird house was the location originally suggested by the Menukatuck Audubon Society. This location did not have ledge and there was no issue with soil erosion.

B. Scout Project

- Ms. Anderson gave an update on the Scout Project. The Scout, Ben, will be completing a wooden sign at Housatonic Overlook that will point out two trails on the single post. Only one location was determined that required signage.

C. New Scout Project

- Chairman Ruggeri received a request from another Scout, Alex Oleschuk, looking for a project. He suggested marking all of the unmarked trails at Racebrook and creating a Special Emergency Map for the property. The Commission did not feel that this was the right project at this time and discussed other suggestions for a project, some of which included replacing signs that were removed, building a stone walkway path, a possible water fountain or bridge at Turkey Hill Preserve, as well as other suggestions.

D. Racebrook Tract Hike for Racebrook Students

- Chairman Ruggeri reported that this event will be in honor of Earth Day, and the walk will be held at 5:30 p.m. on April twenty-third. Mike will be asked to guide the walk.

E. Spring Trail Maintenance Day

- This event will be held on April eighteenth, Saturday, from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. at Racebrook Tract. There will not be a rain date. The suggested date for the Connecticut Trail Day is Saturday, June sixth, at Turkey Hill Preserve. May fifteenth is the possible date for the Bird Walk at Turkey Hill Preserve.

VI. Review of Standing Committees/Liaison Reports

- There was a very lengthy discussion on the maintenance of the Open Space. Chairman Ruggeri discussed a workable Maintenance Spreadsheet for future use. Ms. Ewen will email Mr. Lynch about the spring clean up of the trails, in particular, down trees. Litter on the property was also an issue of discussion. The purchase of plastic doggie bags for dog cleanup was suggested.
- The issue of stolen signage was discussed as well as a missing wooden bridge. The Commission discussed the hiring of a high school or college student to walk the trails for cleanup and perform light maintenance as well as report to the Commission regarding down trees. Chairman Ruggeri will order additional ATV signs and contact the Highway Department to cut the tree at Turkey Hill Preserve. Ms. Ewen is optimistic that the Board of Finance will increase their budget by \$3500 for next year.

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Deborah Satonick,
Recording Secretary