

2023 MAY -5 AM 9:38



Orange Conservation Commission

May 3, 2023 7:00 p.m.

High Plains Community Center – Room 2

(Unapproved)

Attendance

Commissioners Present: Chair Cathy Anderson, Donna Wesolowski, Sharon Kahara, Scott Somerville, Chantelle Bunnell, and Sharon Ewen

Commissioners Absent: Santo Galatioto

Staff Present: Deborah Satonick, Recording Secretary

*Chairman Anderson called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., seconded by Ms. Bunnell. All were in favor and the motion **PASSED.***

Chairman Anderson reviewed the emergency exits and advised that Dana Crandall was unable to attend the meeting to speak to the Commission during public dialogue. The members agreed that Ms. Crandall can conduct her research study at Racebrook, Housatonic, and at any other Open Space location of her choice, with the exception of Fred Wolfe Park.

1. Review and Approval of April OCC Minutes

The Commission members reviewed the minutes and made corrections as deemed necessary.

*Ms. Wesolowski moved to approve the revised April 5, 2023 Orange Conservation Commission minutes, seconded by Ms. Kahara. All were in favor, with Ms. Ewen and Ms. Bunnell abstaining. The motion **PASSED.***

3. Financial Report

There was no Financial Report to discuss at this time.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Spring Workday Status

Chairman Anderson advised that the THP workday has been rescheduled to Saturday, May 6th

and this new date will be advertised. After reviewing the dates for the Bird Walk and CT. Trail Day, it was agreed to have a possible second workday in the month of September.

2. Ewen Preserve

Mr. Somerville walked the area and established the new, unmarked trail. It will be mowed and properly blazed. Ms. Kahara suggested that the new trail be logged on GPS. The Ewen walkway on the resident's property on St. John's Drive has not yet been moved, as the town is waiting on Orange Fence.

3. Wepawaug

Ms. Ewen distributed an article about the history of Wepawaug and Jim Neal's Cabin. Ms. Wesolowski brought additional information about Howard Brooks and his contributions to the Town of Orange. This information will be used to help design a historic informational plaque for the property.

4. Racebrook Tract

The Commission members discussed the status of the sign directing bike entry from the parking lot as well as the status of the new entry sign. The Commission should hear back regarding the Orange Foundation grant request for the parking lot fence by Memorial Day and Mr. Ewin will handle the replacement of the plexiglass on the back side of the kiosk. Lastly, Ms. Denney contacted Trailsfork.com and they were receptive and willing to cooperate with the town.

Chairman Anderson noted that they have signage "Stay on Trails" stored in their closet. It was suggested putting up the signs at this location facing the Woodbridge side to notify cyclists that the Town of Orange prohibits off trail biking.

5. CT Trails DEEP Grant

The Town of Orange was not awarded this grant, which was to be used for the Howard Brooks Walkway. It was suggested that this walkway be blocked for usage as it has been deemed unsafe.

6. THP Unofficial Trails

Mr. Somerville walked the unofficial trail at THP and he discussed its degree of difficulty. He will discuss the possibility of blazing this trail with Mr. Zemba while at the Bird Walk.

7. Landscaping at Entry Signs

It was agreed to edge and mulch this area and allow the Girl Scouts to help. Mr. Foyer will also be contacted to see if he can bring some decorative boulders to this area.

8. Lion's Club Mini-Grant Application

Chair Anderson reported that she has not heard yet if they have been awarded the \$500 grant that was submitted on 2/24/23.

9. Status of Pilot Program for Cameras/Motion-Detector in Parking Lots

After a lengthy discussion, it was agreed to purchase and install the following items as a pilot program to monitor the parking areas and deter vandalism:

THP – Install one solar light near parking lot high enough to be out of reach of visitors
Ewen Preserve – Install one camera with phone remote (cost approximately \$150-\$250)
Racebrook Tract – Install two solar lights and one camera near parking lot

10. Revise Verbiage on Homepage of OCC Website

Chairman Anderson asked Ms. Wesolowski if she would consider working on the OCC website at her convenience, noting that there was no urgency to have this finished by a certain deadline. The suggestions to the website included GPS points, border illustrations, and tab links to additional Open Space info.

11. SCRCOG Maps

The Commission will continue to work on these maps, as this will be an ongoing task.

12. Development of Mission Statement, Review of By-laws and OCC Handbook

There was a brief discussion on the role of the Secretary and this position was further clarified. A distinction was made between the Recording Secretary and the role of the Commission Secretary.

13. Spring Re-blazing of Trails

Chairman Anderson found metal disks in the closet and suggested that they be used as trail markers this spring.

14. Status of Gmail Accounts

Chairman Anderson suggested that every Commission member open a Gmail account to access Google Docs.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Fred Wolfe Park Trail

This property was discussed in some detail and Ms. Ewen noted that there was a preexisting trail on the property that is no longer usable. She will speak with Mr. Zeoli to discuss the future use of

Fred Wolfe Park.

2. Purchase of Wheelers Farm Acreage

Ms. Anderson reported that this parcel of land was purchased by the Orange Land Trust and the Town of Orange on behalf of passive open space. There is a pond on the property and an open stone wall that leads to the trails. A parking lot and picnic tables could be a possible use for the land in the future.

Mr. Somerville made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:05 p.m., seconded by Ms. Ewen. All were in favor and the motion PASSED.

Respectfully Submitted,
Deborah Satonick
Recording Secretary