

Parks and Natural Resources Committee  
Tuesday April 16, 2019 7:00 PM  
Mansfield Town Hall Conference Room B

**Minutes -- APPROVED**

**1. Call to order**

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 PM

**2. Roll Call**

Attending: Jim Morrow (Chair), Ken Feathers (secretary), Quentin Kessel (Cons. Com. Rep.), Tom Harrington, Sue Harrington, and attending by conference call: Vicky Wetherell

Not present but on committee roster: Michael Soares, Heidi Groeger (alt.) , Julianna Barrett (alt.)

Town Staff Present: Jennifer Kaufman

**3. Review of Minutes**

The Minutes of the February 19, 2019 regular meeting were approved (moved S. Harrington, second T. Harrington)

The Minutes of the March 27, 2019 joint special meeting with the Conservation Commission were approved (moved T. Harrington, second Morrow)

**4. Opportunity for Public comment**

Suzanna Everett of the Board of Education was present as a guest to update the committee on the status of the school building project, on the agenda as a new business item.

**5. New Business**

• *School Building Committee Project*

Suzanna Everett of the Board of Education was present as a guest to update the committee on the status of the school building project. She summarized the two main activities of defining educational specifications and site location. The educational specifications include seeking to be a net zero energy school building. Site selection has focused on the Southeast School after examining two private parcels and also concluding that using the Middle School location was not feasible. Site considerations at Southeast include the ability to construct behind the current building without significant disruption of the existing school, which would then be turned into parking and bus/parent drop-off space. The committee noted a desire to connect to existing town lands across route 89 and incorporate a nature center in the site plans. It was also noted that if land area was tight a land trade with Army Corps land might be possible. Suzanne emphasized that they hoped to be on the fall election to bond the project and encouraged all to get the word out about scheduled information sessions and the need to get out the vote to achieve the required 15% voter participation in an off-year election.

• *Sustainable CT - Forest Advisory Committee*

Town Staff advised that one of the activities in the sustainable CT program was for the town to establish a Forest Advisory Committee. It appears that we have already done many of the activities of such a committee with our work on interior forest tracts and developing a cooperative plan for Whetten Woods. Town staff advised that the committee could vote to assume this role formally.

It was moved (Kessel) and seconded (Morrow) that the committee serve as a Sustainable CT Forest Advisory Committee as described in action 209 of the Sustainable CT program.

**6. Continuing business**

• *Whetten Woods Forest Management Plan*

The committee discussed the draft forest management plan and some comments and recommendations of other reviewers and concluded that it was necessary to ensure that barred owl and vernal pool habitats be adequately protected, and the towns stated goals should incorporate these concepts and the plan should follow literature recommendations as an example of good practices. The committee determined that it would be advantageous for public perception and education to put up explanatory signage about forest management, consistent with the role of being a forest advisory committee. It was also suggested that slash management should include some fire breaks to limit forest fire risk.

- *Simpson Family Property*

The committee did some detailed language review on the Simpson Family Property Management Plan and made specific recommendations of changes in the goals section, with a request for a further revised draft to be prepared.

The need to develop a town wide action system for how plans describe stewardship goals was discussed and deferred to a future meeting.

It was reported that one of the two needed wetland crossings might be accomplished by a future Eagle scout project.

- *Connecticut Bird Atlas*

Sue Harrington reported that work on the winter phase of the project is over. The project is in hiatus until spring nesting season is underway.

- *Outreach and Education*

Upcoming opportunities include a Mother's Day walk at Mount Hope Park and activity for Connecticut Trails Day at the pond loop at Bicentennial Pond, contingent on trail repairs and alternatively at Merrow Meadow.

Other upcoming opportunities are workshops on management of invasive plants (Charlotte Pyle and Brian Connely) and rain garden construction as part of sustainable Connecticut

## **7. Communications**

Communications were noted as listed on the agenda.

## **8. Executive session in accordance with CGS section 1200(6)(D)**

There was no executive session this month.

## **9. Other**

No discussion.

## **10. Future Agendas**

## **11. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:01 PM (move Feathers; second Wetherell)

Respectively Submitted  
Ken Feathers, Secretary