

Mansfield Conservation Commission
Minutes of the August 21, 2002 Meeting
Conference Room B, Audrey P. Beck Building

Present: Robert Dahn (Chair), Jennifer Kaufman, Quentin Kessel, John Silander, Frank Trainor, and Mary Rogers.

Absent: Denise Burchsted, Lanse Minkler, and Robert Thorson.

Town Staff: Grant Meitzler

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:38 PM.
2. The minutes of the July 17, 2002 were approved unanimously with a motion made by Rogers and seconded by Kaufman.
3. Kaufman moved and Kessel seconded that a subcommittee be formed to review the pending revised map for the Maplewoods subdivision and, if appropriate, provide comments to PZC should action need to be provided before the CC's September meeting. The motion passed unanimously and Dahn, Kaufman and Rogers agreed to serve on this committee.
4. Kessel moved and Kaufman seconded that the same committee review the pending revised map for the Pine Grove subdivision and provide comments to PZC, if appropriate. The motion passed unanimously.
5. Fenton River Water Level: Kessel reported that it was about ankle deep, in spite of the recent inch of rain. He also noted that during this very dry summer the level would sometimes rise even though there had been no rain. He assumes this effect is related to changing drawdowns by the University pumping stations.
6. Mission Statement: Historical information, including the CC 1967 administrative procedures and CC statements of purpose had been distributed to the members. These included the minutes of the first meeting in 1963 for which Audrey Barbaret was acting secretary and a June 6, 1967 statement presented by the CC at the public Thames River Watershed Water Quality Standards hearing. Kessel noted that the CC has a proud history of testifying at public hearings.
7. Open Space: Kessel reported on the August 20, 2002 Open Space Preservation Committee meeting. The OSPC is recommending the 9 acre parcel owned by Thompson at the corner of Bone Mill Road and Route 44 be purchased for open space. It is part of the Nelson Brook watershed and would buffer both Town and University owned lands. Padick will be meeting with George Merrow in the near future. The Merrow family owns several hundred acres in that part of Town. Of special interest to the CC was the OSPC's recommendation that in updating the 1993 Town Plan of Conservation and Development that the matrix developed by the CC for

evaluating properties be updated to include grasslands, forestry resources, and wildlife corridors. The OSPC felt that these were not given adequate consideration in previous plans.

8. Lands of Unique Value: Silander reported that the next meeting was set for August 29, 2002 and he plans to attend. Concern was expressed that this study might not be forthcoming with some of the information for which it was commissioned, specifically professional assistance with the CC's matrix for evaluating the relative values of watersheds, forestland, open space and farmland, etc.

9. Fenton River Level A Aquifer Mapping: The subcommittee's letter on this issue was not available for review.

10. Plan of Conservation and Development: A draft list of volunteers shows no CC membership, in spite of Silander and Burchsted agreeing to serve on the committee. Kaufman will check on this.

11. The Green Valley Institute Protecting Family Farm and Forests Workshop the CC is co-sponsoring with the Willington CC will be held September 26, 2002 at 7:00 PM in the Edwin O. Smith High School chorus room.

12. Letter from Willimantic River Alliance (7/30/02) - Greenway Application: Kaufman moved and Silander seconded the statement, "The sense of the CC is that the Town of Mansfield should support these efforts of the Willimantic River Alliance in any way possible." The motion passed unanimously.

13. IWA Applications.

a) W1187 - Montessori School – 132 Pleasant Valley Road. Map date July 16, 2002. This application is for a school addition and an upgrade to their parking area. Kaufman moved, and Silander seconded, that the proposed work would have no significant negative impact on the wetlands if the siltation and erosion controls indicated on the map are in place during the construction and removed once the site is stabilized. The motion passed unanimously.

b) W1188 - Tynan - Spring Hill Road. Map date August 20, 2002 revised. This application is for a drive way in a buffer area to a home to be constructed. Kessel moved, and Dahn seconded, that the proposed work would have no significant negative impact on the wetlands if the siltation and erosion controls indicated on the map are in place during the construction and removed once the site is stabilized. The motion passed unanimously.

c) W1189 - Malek - East Road. Map date July 18, 2002. This application is for a four lot subdivision with work to be done in a regulated area. For discussion purposes, Kessel moved, and Silander seconded, that the proposed work would have no significant negative impact on the wetlands if the siltation and erosion controls indicated on the map are in place during the construction and removed once the site is stabilized. A number of matters were discussed. Concern was expressed that the project was typical of those which contribute to a cumulative negative impact on the

wetlands, the end result of which may be a significant negative impact. It was further noted that approval of this project will remove that much more prime farmland from Mansfield's inventory of prime farmland. The CC also hopes that should this subdivision be approved that the PZC will show appropriate concern for the University of Connecticut's nearby astronomical observatory. It was strategically placed to avoid light pollution. Any house or required street lighting must be minimal and directed downward to minimize its effects on the night sky. The original motion to approve did not pass (1 in favor, 4 against, and one abstention).

15. Kaufman noted that the CC had not received a reply from the PZC regarding our memo on developing a policy for invasive species. It was agreed that the Town's public works employees might benefit from some training in this area. Kaufman will discuss the status of this memo with Greg Padick.

16. The meeting was adjourned at 9:20 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Quentin Kessel
Secretary, *pro tem*.