

**Brooklyn Conservation Commission
Regular Meeting
Monday June 5, 2023
Clifford Green Building and Virtual Meeting 7:00 pm**

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MINUTES

1. Call to Order – Richard Calarco, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Present: Richard Calarco, Chair; Diane Wimmer; William Green; Dana Heilemann; Carolyn Teed-Ives. Victoria Fradette was absent.

Also Present: Megan Strange; J.S. Perreault, Recording Secretary. There was one additional person seated in the audience.

Present via Zoom: Patricia Buell, Superintendent of Schools; William Skene; Luke Landis.

2. Approval Minutes of April 3, 2023 Meeting (NOTE: Error - should be May 1, 2023)

Motion was made by D. Heilemann to accept the Minutes of the Meeting of May 1, 2023, as presented.

Second by C. Teed-Ives.

Discussion: Mr. Calarco noted that the error on the agenda regarding the date.

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote (5-0-0).

At this time there was discussion with Megan Strange who may be interested in becoming a Member of the Conservation Commission. Ms. Strange is an assistant at the CT Forest and Park Association and she explained about her background in conservation and gardening.

The Conservation Commission currently has openings for one regular member and two alternates.

3. Budget

- 2022-2023

Mr. Calarco provided copies of what is remaining in the current year's budget (over \$500). There was discussion regarding purchasing a kiosk for the Carol Randall Trail. Mr. Green explained his research on the options. There was agreement that it be able to hold pamphlets/brochures. It was suggested to put a sign on Gorman Road to let people know where the trail is. There was discussion regarding laminated maps. It would be nice to, eventually get kiosks for other trails also, after seeing how this one works out.

Motion was made by D. Wimmer to approve spending up to \$500 for a 16" x 34" kiosk for the Carol Randall Trail (to include shipping and the post).

Second by C. Teed-Ives. No discussion.

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote (5-0-0).

- 2023-2024 – No discussion.

Motion was made by D. Wimmer to move Agenda Item #8 – Public Comment under Item #3 Budget, to allow for discussion with Patricia Buell regarding trail signs.

Second by D. Heilemann. No discussion.

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote (5-0-0).

Public Comment:

- Patricia Buell, Superintendent of Schools (via Zoom), voiced concern regarding people walking the trail, in the woods, behind the School during School hours. She suggested signs that suggest that people walk on the trail when School is not in session. Discussion ensued. There was agreement among Commission Members to put a sign at the Creamery Brook junction in front of the Carol Randal Trail, two signs at Prince Hill (one by the soccer field and one where it joins with the Carol Randal Trail), and also one at the kiosk, informing the public that the trail is closed when School is in session. Ms. Buell will send the wording for the signs to Mr. Calarco. The signs would be funded through either the Town or the School.

Mr. Calarco explained that 32 QR codes have been posted on trees along the trail, which give information. Ms. Wimmer explained about information that will be put on the website.

- Luke Landis, Troop 44 Boy Scout/Life Scout, explained his proposal for his Eagle Scout project. He would like to restore a mile-long trail off of Rukstela Road near the Transfer Station. He would like to start late August/early fall and estimates that he would finish a few months into 2024.

The Commission Members were in agreement that this is a good project. Mr. Calarco offered to meet with Luke at the trail at some time.

Motion was made by W. Green to approve the proposed Eagle Scout Project by Luke Landis, Troop 44, to restore an old trail off of Rukstela Road.

Second by C. Teed-Ives.

Discussion:

- R. Calarco commented that he hopes that this is a start to begin working with the Boy Scouts and other community groups to work on the trails.
- D. Wimmer suggested that Luke check with Jana Roberson regarding land acquired through a subdivision. Ms. Roberson may also have some GIS readings.

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote (5-0-0).

4. New Business

- a) Subdivision Update – None.

5. Old Business

- a) Trail Maintenance

Mr. Calarco explained that he and Ms. Wimmer had met with the new Parks & Recreation Director and they clarified that the Conservation Commission does not maintain the trails. The Commission provides information and supervises the trails. The Commission does not have staff to maintain them, but makes recommendations as to what needs to be done. He suggested site walks in the early fall to make a list of what needs to be done. Ms. Heilemann suggested making up a document/schedule.

Ms. Wimmer noted that, at Creamery Brook, there is grass growing in the trail.

- b) Scout Project – See above under Public Comment.

6. Trails

- a) Brooklyn Middle School Trails Update

Mr. Calarco explained that he would like to set up an account to access through the Town website (a link).

- 32 signs (QR Codes) including set-up - \$625. There was discussion regarding the links/website for the QR codes. Ms. Wimmer will follow-up with IT (Gabe). This to be discussed at the August meeting.
- Can look at doing this for other trails under next year's budget.

b) Trail Grant

Mr. Calarco was not able to attend. Ms. Wimmer explained about two different types of grants (both in October):

- Urban Green Community Garden
Quebec Square may qualify as a distressed area. Other areas discussed: Community Center; School; Teen Center. Will contact the Agriculture Commission to see if they would be interested in helping.
- Open Space Grant Program

There was discussion. Mr. Calarco will speak with Jana Roberson. Mr. Green suggested that Chat GBT may be helpful.

c) Trail Day

There was discussion. Although there was not a lot of attendance, maybe due to a lot of other events going on at the same time, there was agreement that it would be worth doing again.

- Ms. Strange suggested avoiding the times when other events are taking place.
- Talk with Gary O. on WINY.
- Should meet with the Parks & Recreation Director in the fall.
- Do something with the Staff at the School. Tie-in an activity.
- E-mail list through the Town website. Use Constant Contact to send out newsletters/notices. Add to the Recreation annual mailing.
- Geo Catching
- Ms. Strange made some recommendations:
 - CT Trails provides leaders, promotional materials, media packet
 - When registering, have one e-mail point-of-contact. She suggested registering under the Conservation Commission as the leader, not Parks & Recreation.
 - She explained about third-party registration.
 - If more than one hike, separate them.
 - All Trails APP – You can put information/limitations about the trails, such as school hours. UCONN may also have an APP.

There was discussion regarding grants to make trails handicap accessible.

Mr. Calarco commented that he spoke with UCONN regarding the sustainable gardens program which will be in person in November. There will be no recording. There was discussion regarding invasives. Mr. Calarco will look into whether UCONN would want to sponsor a program in Brooklyn.

Ms. Strange explained about community projects for students through the Master Gardener ECCD Office.

Mr. Calarco explained that the Conservation Commission is trying to increase sustainability and let people know about invasives (ten most invasive plants in CT).

The Conservation Commission will not be meeting in July. The Green Building will be undergoing abatement of asbestos. There was discussion about whether there will be a meeting in August. If needed, the regular meeting could be cancelled and a special meeting could be scheduled for August.

7. Correspondence – None.

8. Public Comment – None at this time (see above).

9. Adjournment

Motion was made by C. Teed-Ives to adjourn at 8:19 p.m.
Second by D. Heilemann. No discussion.
Motion carried unanimously by voice vote (5-0-0).

Respectfully submitted,

J.S. Perreault
Recording Secretary