

Brooklyn Conservation Commission  
Regular Meeting  
Monday, November 6th, 2023  
Green Building  
and Virtual Meeting 7:00 pm

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## **MINUTES**

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

Present: Richard Calarco William Green; Diane Wimmer; Carolyn Teed-Ives.  
Dana Heilemann and Victoria Fradette were present via Zoom.

Staff Present: Austin Tanner, First Selectman (seated in the audience); Jana Roberson, Town Planner and Director of Community Development (joined at 7:08 p.m. via Zoom).

Also Present: Sandra Brodeur (present in the audience); J.S. Perreault, Recording Secretary (in person).

Also Present via Zoom: Andy Rzeznikiewicz, Windham Land Trust Board Member; Lori Corriveau, Little Dipper Farm; Jim Doherty; Lou Brodeur; Jackie Igliazzi; Sharon Loughlin; Sharon Hawes; Ed Homonoff; G.I.

2. Approval Minutes of October 2,2023

Motion was made by D. Wimmer to approve the Minutes of the Meeting of October 2, 2023, as presented.

Second by C. Teed-Ives. No discussion.

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote (6-0-0).

3. Public Comment – None.

4. Budgets

- 2023-2024

Mr. Calarco stated that he had a discussion with Parks & Recreation regarding getting the post and installing it and the Carol Randall sign.

5. New Business

R. Calarco added the following Item to the Agenda under New Business: Discussion/approval of the Brooklyn Conservation Commission 2024 Regular Meeting Schedule.

- Discussion/approval of the Brooklyn Conservation Commission 2024 Regular Meeting Schedule.

Monday, January 1, 2024 and Monday, September 2, 2024 are holidays, therefore, the Commission decided to meet on the following Tuesdays, January 2<sup>nd</sup> and September 3<sup>rd</sup>.

D. Wimmer noted that the Commission normally doesn't meet in July, but it was decided to schedule the July meeting in the case that there is a need to meet.

Motion was made by C. Teed-Ives to accept the 2024 Meeting Schedule. Meetings to be held on the first Monday of each month with the exception of two Tuesday meetings: January 2<sup>nd</sup> (due to New Year's Day) and September 3<sup>rd</sup> (due to Labor Day).

Second by W. Green. No discussion.

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote (6-0-0).

- Land Purchase – See Third Bullet Item below.
- Wyndam Land Trust Discussion

Andy Rzeznikiewicz explained that the site tour scheduled for November 19<sup>th</sup> would need to be delayed due to the property owners (Little Dipper Farm) needing the sale to happen soon. The property owners, whom Mr. Rzeznikiewicz stated want to preserve the property, contacted and received an offer from, a national group called The Conservation Fund, to purchase the property and to hold it for an unspecified amount of time to allow time for the Windham Land Trust to raise the funds needed. However, if the funds are not raised, The Conservation Fund could, then, sell the property. The property owners will let Andy know this week if they will accept the offer.

There was lengthy discussion. Mr. Rzeznikiewicz is optimistic about this approach and he explained that the Town would still have the opportunity to participate, but he would rather not go the route of State grants as he feels that it would take too long. Ms. Wimmer explained that the Town Ordinances would need to be followed (she referenced Chapter 2, Article 4, Section 2-43). Mr. Rzeznikiewicz explained that if the offer is accepted by the property owners, it would give both the Town of Brooklyn and the Windham Land Trust plenty of time to do what they need to do.

Mr. Rzeznikiewicz explained that the portion of the property that is in Pomfret is land-locked and undevelopable and that the Windham Land Trust is not asking the Town of Pomfret for money. They would still be looking for the same amount from the Town of Brooklyn (\$200,000).

Jana Roberson (via Zoom) shared/displayed/explained many maps/layers to assist the Commission with going through their site plan review checklist for analyzing sites for open space acquisition.

- Whether or not a parcel is adjacent to or close to existing preserved open space. She referred to the Committed Open Space Map Section on the Priorities Matrix which she explained the Commission could probe deeper when filling out the checklist.
- Ms. Roberson did a quick overview of the different checklist items:
  - Agricultural Resources (looking at the presence of fertile soil).  
Ms. Roberson explained about soils of additional Statewide importance, prime farmland soils, locally important farmland soils. She explained that there are good implications for Brooklyn to apply for State funding. A forest management plan will need to be verified outside of the mapping.
  - Water Resources  
Ms. Roberson explained that one of the criteria for the POCD is potential wildlife corridor linkages. She spoke about the two stream systems, Blackwell Brook and ??? which are both part of the . She explained that there is a major drainage basin divide going directly through the northerly parcel. She explained about how the northern part of the parcel drains toward Mashamoquet Brook and the southerly parcel and the pond which drain toward Blackwell Brook, are identified in the POCD as being a potential wildlife corridor linkage.  
She spoke about aquifers and the Groundwater Protection Overlay Areas which, she said, are not found on either of the parcels.  
Regarding vernal pools, she said that perhaps Mr. Rzeznikiewicz would know if there are any.
  - Forest and Wildlife Resources  
Ms. Roberson explained about the forest fragmentation map. Often times, the larger the block, the better the habitat. Both parcels are very unfragmented (almost completely forested). Powerlines can also be wildlife corridors. It is important to know the limitations of the mapping and to understand everything in context.  
Ms. Roberson explained the Natural Diversity Database Map. Just because no rare and endangered species have been documented on the parcels, doesn't mean there aren't any. The Commission can request more information from the State.  
Ms. Roberson explained about the Riparian Corridor and referenced the POCD where there is more information regarding the co-occurring resource inventory. She said that they all appear to be stream corridors. She noted that she is not a wildlife biologist and suggested that Mr. Rzeznikiewicz would be a better resource.
  - Committed Open Space

Ms. Roberson noted that it is up to the Commission to determine how those parcels would be used for recreational resources.

- Archeological and Historic Resources (Cultural Resources)

Ms. Roberson displayed a layer called hill shade (based on one-foot elevation data) which gives an inventory of stone walls.

She explained about the Archeological Probability Map.

There is a National Register Historic District along Bush Hill Road and parts of Route 169 which, she said, is a significant historic resource. She explained that the boundaries don't necessarily go into these parcels.

She suggested speaking with the State Archeologist to obtain more information.

- Scenic Resources (Cultural Resources)

Ms. Roberson stated that it is in the middle of a beloved, very scenic area. She noted that Bush Hill Road, in its entirety, is a Town-designated scenic road.

Mr. Calarco thanked Ms. Roberson for her helpful presentation and he stated that the Commission will have some time to research.

Mr. Rzeknikiewicz stated that he will keep Mr. Calarco informed on what transpires over the next week.

Ms. Wimmer asked Mr. Rzeknikiewicz about the Williams Forest.

Mr. Rzeknikiewicz explained that it would be owned by the Windham Land Trust as they would be raising the money to buy it. The access would be through the Wolf Den Land Trust Property.

### **COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC:**

- **Sharon Loughlin**, 601 Wolf Den Road, asked Mr. Rzeknikiewicz to clarify a statement that he had made regarding individuals who are opposed.  
Mr. Rzeknikiewicz explained that there would be an informational land trust meeting to try to solicit people to contribute to the project. There was discussion between Sharon Loughlin and Mr. Rzeknikiewicz. Mr. Rzeknikiewicz explained that the Windham Land Trust had contacted the group to purchase the property.
- **Jackie Igliozi** asked Mr. Rzeknikiewicz if the owners of Little Dipper Farm had researched and found the group that is interested in purchasing the property to hold for the Windham Land Trust.  
Mr. Rzeknikiewicz explained that Little Dipper Farm did find the group and passed on the information to the Windham Land Trust who contacted the group. Jackie Igliozi asked about the tax burden (she referred to page 3 of the appraisal) which she feels the Town should double check.  
Mr. Calarco explained that if the Town were to decide to move forward, any issues with the appraisal would be vetted.
- **Lori Corriveau** clarified that the Windham Land Trust had approached the Little Dipper Farm in 2022 and they have been talking since that time. Since the Windham Land Trust would not be able to close by the end of December, the Little Dipper Farm had reached out to a number of organizations, The Conservation Fund being one of them.

- **Jim Doherty** asked if the Rivers Act would have control regarding the streams and brooks referenced by Ms. Roberson in the wetlands mapping. He also asked for clarification regarding the appraisal stating only four estate-like lots (is it accurate?).  
Ms. Roberson displayed the aerial photo and the Inland Wetland Soils Map. She explained about Blackwell Brook and Bush Hill Brook which flow to the south and are part of the southerly basin. She does not think that the Rivers Act is applicable as they are not navigable waterways.  
Regarding the southern parcel number of lots, Ms. Roberson explained that with a shared driveway, you are limited to three lots and that with a road, it could be much higher. She has not done a build-out analysis. She explained that wetlands are not an absolute deterrent to development. She does not want to question the appraiser's report. She suggested that the Conservation Commission could conduct their own build-out analysis to see if they come up with something very different.
- **Jackie Igliozi** clarified that the appraisal states that the larger parcel has potential for development for four residences and that the smaller parcel has no development potential.

There was discussion by the Commission:

- Mr. Calarco stated that a cancellation notice will be posted for the November 19<sup>th</sup> site tour and that, if/when a new site tour is scheduled, a notice will be posted.
- Ms. Wimmer noted that she had found a difference in the acreage in the appraisal. She doesn't feel that the Town will want to deplete the Open Space Fund.
- Mr. Calarco and Ms. Wimmer explained that the Commission will need to do a lot of research to be ready to present for the Town meeting.
- Mr. Green spoke of making a list of other properties that the Commission may like to preserve that the money could be used for.
- Mr. Calarco would like to gather information on fees-in-lieu received over the past ten years. He would also like to look into open space funding (65-75 percent reimbursement). He stated that Ms. Washburn had told him of a property in Spencer, MA where there is an agreement between the town and a land trust that he would like to research.
- Dana Heilemann would like to get more information from the Natural Diversity Database.

Ms. Roberson explained that the Conservation Commission can request information and that there is a request form. She will forward the links/e-mail addresses to the State agencies that she had discussed earlier.

- Planning/ Zoning decision on open space

Ms. Wimmer spoke of how the Conservation Commission had discussed that they would like to give a recommendation regarding open space vs. fee-in-lieu on the Weaver properties on Day Street. There are eagles back there.

Motion was made by D. Wimmer that a letter be sent from the Brooklyn Conservation Commission to the Brooklyn Planning and Zoning Commission requesting that the BCC be allowed to give a recommendation for the back lots of the Weaver properties on Day Street.  
Second by C. Teed-Ives. No discussion.  
Motion carried unanimously by voice vote (6-0-0).

- Site tour – See Agenda Item 5, Third Bullet Item.

## 6. Old Business

- a. Trail Maintenance and sign Carol Randall Memorial Nature Trail - See above Agenda Item 4.

- b. Scout Project

Mr. Calarco stated that he met with the Scout and completed the paperwork. Mr. Calarco spoke with Bill Skene regarding the Scout and Mr. Skene feels that the Scout should be starting within a couple of weeks. Mr. Calarco informed Ms. Washburn regarding the wetlands and she will contact Public Works. When the work is done, maps can be updated.

Regarding the other Scout, Mr. Calarco stated that he is moving forward with the benches along the trail.

Mr. Calarco spoke about a potential project involving placing signage/location markers along the trail in case of emergencies.

- c. Discussion of Trail Days

Mr. Calarco explained that he met with Amy who is interested in participating in Trail Days by kicking off some type of program and then continuing it.

- d. Meeting with Parks and Rec

Mr. Calarco will attend the meeting next week and will discuss the general maintenance of the trail. He is hoping that grant money will become available again to enable work to be done on the trails.

- e. Training Session/Uconn

Mr. Calarco stated that he and Ms. Wimmer went to the training and it was well worth the money. There was discussion regarding what they learned. Mr. Calarco will see if UCONN would come to do an invasive walk-thru in Brooklyn.

They learned of a good seed project for the School/Trail Day.

Ms. Wimmer explained about doing the fields in Riverside – don't roto-till, take the sod out. There was discussion about milkweed and pollinators/Monarchs.

At this time, there was more discussion among the Commission regarding the Little Dipper property. The Commission should start researching and keep Finance and Planning & Zoning informed during the budget process.

At this time, Mr. Calarco noted that W. Green's term expires on February 12, 2024 and that C. Teed-Ives and his own expire at the end of January, 2024.

**7. Trails**

- a. Trail tour schedule - No discussion.

**8. Correspondence – None.**

**9. Public Comment – None.**

**10. Adjournment – (Scrivener's error on aAgenda, stated as Item #9, should be Item #10.)**

Motion was made by D. Heilemann to adjourn at 8:39 p.m.

Second by C. Teed-Ives. No discussion.

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote (6-0-0).

Respectfully submitted,

J.S. Perreault  
Recording Secretary