

Conservation Commission

The Brooklyn Conservation Commission proudly presents our annual report for the year 2022.

The Conservation Commission is a seven-member volunteer board appointed by the Board of Selectman whose purpose is to protect and conserve the plants, animals and natural resources in the Town. In 2022, the Commission had six members – Diane Wimmer, Jeannine Noel, Dana Heilemann, Carolyn Teed-Ives, Richard Calarco and Victoria Fradette. In May, Richard Calarco was elected Chair and Diane Wimmer was elected Co-Chair. Treasurer duties were handled by both Richard Calarco and Diane Wimmer. Sara Deshaies was the Commission's Recording Secretary. The Commission continued to function within a reduced budget.

The Commission continues to maintain a Facebook page. It is updated regularly with events, photos, conservation topics and local information. The Commission also updates its page on the town's website. <https://www.brooklynct.org/conservation-commission>

Activities\Projects\Trails

Due to the Covid 19 Pandemic, the Commission held its meetings per the CDC guidelines. Meetings were held in-person with the option to participate by video. Members of the Commission exercised social distancing and wore masks as appropriate.

The trails and disc golf course continue to be maintained by the Parks and Recreation Department and the Public Works Department with input from the Commission. Trail maps can be found on the Conservation Commission's page on the Town's website under "Links" and "Brooklyn Trails".

In January, the Commission reviewed the town's Plan of Conservation and Development (2011-2020) and submitted recommendations and updates.

The Commission supported the Eastern Connecticut Conservation District's annual plant sale by purchasing bushes and flowers for the nature trail at Riverside Park. On April 30, 2022, the Commission held a planting event as a special meeting in honor of Earth Day.

Diane Wimmer set up a table at the town's Family Fun Day event. Approximately, 50 kids planted sunflower seeds in pots to take home. Extra supplies were donated to the Parks and Recreation Department for use during Summer Camp.

Richard Calarco and Diane Wimmer met with the First Selectman, Austin Tanner, to discuss trail maintenance and applying for grants. The Commission will continue to work with the First Selectman, Town Planner and Parks and Recreation Department to apply for grants and maintain the town trails. Conservation will apply for advertising/public relations grants.

The Commission met with Shannon Russo, a Brooklyn Middle School teacher, who attended the Goodwin Naturalist Course, concerning improving the Carol Randall trail located behind the school. The trail will be used to teach students about science. This project is ongoing.

<https://www.friendsofgoodwinforest.org/>

Development Reviews

As a non-regulatory land use commission, the Brooklyn Conservation Commission conducts development site plan reviews and forwards recommendations to the other regulatory land use commissions, Inland Wetlands and Planning and Zoning. These recommendations are based on review of our natural resource inventory mapping and the potential for impacts from site plan proposals. For subdivisions of three or more parcels, Subdivision Regulations stipulate Open Space donations (quit claim or conservation easement) either to the Town of Brooklyn or other not-for-profit land preservation trust or a fee in-lieu of the property donation.

In May 2022, the Brooklyn Conservation Commission reviewed the plan for Little Dipper Farm. In December, the Brooklyn Conservation Commission reviewed ZPC 22-007 Little Dipper Farm: Proposed Modifications to the Zoning Text Amendment to allow Glamp Grounds and Glamping in the RA (Residential-Agricultural) Zone - "The Commission's recommendation is that area of a glamping campgrounds are not permitted to damage resources identified in the co-occurring resource inventory as stated in the Planning of Conservation and Development. Other natural resources must be vetted prior to a regulation change. For example, historic, fishery, wildlife corridors, archeological, endangered species."

Training

Diane Wimmer attended an online seminar on National Trail Days. It's a topic that comes up periodically. It is held annually on the first Saturday in June. This year was the 30th Annual Celebration. National Trail Days was created to raise awareness to national, regional and local trails. The American Hiking Society sponsors it. It can be celebrated in several ways. Mostly hiking and education but stewardship as well. They have a website for assistance and resources available to help promote an event. The Commission will plan on holding a trail days event.

<https://americanhiking.org/national-trails-day/>

Carolyn Teed-Ives, Richard Calarco, Dana Heilemann, and Diane Wimmer attended the online Connecticut Invasive Plant Working Group Symposium on Thursday, November 3, 2022, from 9 am – 4:00 pm. The theme was Strategies for Managing Invasive Plants: Assess, Remove, Replace and Restore. Topics discussed included deer fencing, indoor/outdoor invasive plants, native plants, and other subjects. <https://cipwg.uconn.edu/2022-symposium/>

The Commission looks forward to attending future local conservation and land use educational training events, in addition to free webinars at <http://clear.uconn.edu/> and <https://sustainablect.org/trainings-events/>. These training events, workshops and webinars are essential in developing the skills necessary to protect open space and the environment for

future Brooklyn residents. The Commission continues to be a member of CACIWC and to receive copies of The Habitat newsletter quarterly. (CT Association of Conservation and Inland Wetlands Commissions). <http://www.caciwc.org>

Jeannine Noel
Brooklyn Conservation Commission