

**TOWN OF BOZRAH
INLAND WETLANDS AND CONSERVATION COMMISSION
BOZRAH TOWN HALL
1 RIVER ROAD
BOZRAH, CT 06334**

January 7, 2020

The meeting of the Bozrah Inland Wetlands and Conservation Commission was called to order by Chairman Scott Taylor at 7:04 P.M. via Zoom teleconference/videoconference.

Members present: Scott Taylor, Chuck Mandel, Jim Sipperly, Evelyn Brown, Steve Brunetti, Charlene Lathrop.

Members absent: Jessica Carson (alt.).

Others present: Glenn Pianka, Selectman, Sam Alexander, SCCOG/Town Planner, Steve Seder (resident, PZC Chair), Katey DeCarli, P.E., CHA/Land Use Agent.

1. Review and approve minutes:

a) March 5th regular meeting.

Charlene Lathrop will distribute these minutes prior to the February meeting.

b) October 4 site walk.

Evelyn Brown requested that her name be added to the minutes. Chuck Mandel made a motion to approve the minutes with that correction. Evelyn Brown seconded the motion.

VOTE – 5 IN FAVOR / 1 ABSTAIN (Sipperly) – MOTION CARRIED

c) November 5th regular meeting.

Jim Sipperly made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Chuck Mandel seconded the motion.

VOTE – 4 IN FAVOR / 2 ABSTAIN (Brunetti/Lathrop) – MOTION CARRIED

d) December 3rd regular meeting.

Sam Alexander (Town Planner) stated that these are “notes” not minutes, due to lack of a quorum. They require no action.

2. Hear the report of the Wetlands Enforcement Officer:

Katey DeCarli (Land Use Agent) reported on her recent activity. Katey DeCarli will be addressing an agricultural use issue on Salem Turnpike, and is seeking permission from the property owner to do an inspection of the property. Katey DeCarli is also addressing failed erosion controls related to the completed

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water/sewer line install on Salem Turnpike; she will be recommended a woodchip berm for the remainder of the winter.

Chuck Mandel asked about CHA's ability to write grant applications.

3. Review correspondence pertaining to agenda items: *There was none.*

4. Discussion of possible Avalonia Land Conservancy property acquisition on South Road:

Sam Alexander explained that at the December meeting, Dennis Main, a resident of Bozrah, former member of the IWCC, and representative from the Avalonia Land Conservancy, Inc., addressed the Commission regarding Avalonia's expanded regional focus and possible activity in and around Bozrah. Avalonia is considering purchase of a 105-acre property in Bozrah and adjoining 56-acre property in Montville, both located south of South Road.

Jim Sipperly suggested the Commission move to endorse Avalonia's project. There was discussion. Scott Taylor suggested that the Commission wait until completion of the Open Space Plan before formally endorsing any projects by outside organizations, but generally supported the project. Others agreed. The Commission was generally supportive of the proposal but would rather develop a formal process for evaluating such proposals.

5. Open Space Plan:
 - a) Discuss parcel evaluation criteria.

Sam Alexander began a PowerPoint presentation overviewing draft "parcel evaluation criteria", which the Commission can use to score or rank the value of different possible open space parcels, to be acquired through the Town, a land trust, or others. The draft criteria have been discussed at past meetings. There was discussion.

The Commission generally felt that the criteria were strong but wished for consideration of the parcel's zoning to be added to the scoring matrix, so that conservation goals are not negatively interfering with the town's development goals. The criteria, along with this change, will be added to the draft plan.

 - b) Discuss areas/corridors of interest for conservation.

Sam Alexander displayed a map of important geographic areas in Bozrah, for the Commission to consider when determining priority conservation areas. There was discussion about the map. Commissioners suggested adding in large

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forest blocks, like the parcel surrounding the Mineral Spring property. The Commission also suggested that a map show already preserved areas, so there can be a visualization of where potential open space corridors exist.

The Commission also discussed the need to relinquish town-owned properties with little community or ecological value. These properties are dedicated open space set-asides from subdivisions. Steve Seder (PZC Chair) stated that the practice of the Planning and Zoning Commission is now to require fee-in-lieu of open space in the amount of \$1,800 per lot. The Commission suggested that the Town Planner speak with the assessor to determine the value of these excess properties.

Glenn Pianka (Board of Selectmen) suggested that a strategy for doing this be developed in coordination with the Planning and Zoning Commission, Board of Selectmen, and Board of Finance. Glenn Pianka praised the Commission for their efforts and suggested that preservation of the land surrounding the Mineral Springs property would be a great initial open space effort by the Commission.

c) Discuss of other planning priorities and review draft plan to-date.

The Commission discussed the most recent version of the draft open space plan. Sam Alexander suggested that the Commission begin thinking of a “vision statement”, which will be included in the draft at a later date. Sam Alexander reviewed draft planning objectives, which came out of past discussions by the Commission. Those are:

A) Take an active role in conservation.

- 1. Solicit interest from owners of large or otherwise important tracts of land, particularly in targeted areas.*
- 2. Educate owners on benefits of conservation, different mechanisms, and financial benefits, such as tax write-offs for bargain sales/donation.*
- 3. Communicate with land trusts, such as Avalonia Land Conservancy or The Nature Conservancy about options for conservation and those organizations' interest in the property.*
- 4. Communicate with CT DEEP about the Department's interest in the land as a State Forest, State Park, Wildlife Management Area, or other property.*
- 5. Apply for grant funds for conservation and assist with pre-requisites, such as appraisals.*
- 6. Acquire land or easement, or support acquisition by a land trust or the State, with the goal of minimizing costs to the town and maximizing benefits to the public.*

B) Support conservation actions by others.

- 1. Communicate town priorities for open space to land trusts, CT DEEP, and others potentially operating in Bozrah.*

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2. *Write letters of support for land trusts applying for state, federal, and other grants.*

3. *If appropriate, financially support or support through in-kind services conservation actions by others in town.*

C) *Support the sale of open space from past subdivisions with little ecological or community value.*

1. *Work with the Board of Selectmen to sell properties with funds directed into the Open Space Fund.*

Scott Taylor suggested adding a new action item under objective “A” to publicize open space success stories in This Week in Bozrah or by another means. Scott Taylor also suggested hosting a Connecticut Trails Day event.

There will be a public hearing in the spring. The Commission should have an additional opportunity for public comment/a public workshop at their February meeting.

The Commission reviewed a listing of available grant programs for funding open space efforts. Jim Sipperly suggested that Connecticut Resource Conservation and Development (CT RC&D) has access to a clearinghouse.

6. Review general correspondence: *There was none.*

7. Adopt 2021 meeting schedule:

Chuck Mandel made a motion to adopt the 2021 meeting schedule as presented. Jim Sipperly seconded the motion.

VOTE – UNANIMOUS – MOTION CARRIED

8. Such other business as the Commission may vote to hear: *There was none.*

9. Public comment period:

Steve Seder asked about IWCC oversight of Eversource activities. The IWCC generally has little say in projects regulated by the Connecticut Siting Council.

Jim Sipperly made a motion to adjourn. Chuck Mandel seconded the motion.

Meeting adjourned at 8:46 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,
Samuel Alexander, AICP
Town Planner