

**TOWN OF TRUMBULL
CONNECTICUT**



Trumbull Conservation Commission Virtual Meeting
Wednesday, September 1, 2021
7:00 pm

Present: Chairman Mary Ellen Lemay, Commissioners Richard Post, Pam Roman, John Massari, Matthew Silzicki and Sara Sterling

Also Present: Janet Epstein

Absent: Tim Coughlin

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Lemay at 7:03 pm.

Past Minutes

Motion was made by Mr. Post to approve the minutes of June 15, 2021 as written. Seconded by Ms. Roman and approved unanimously.

Next Meeting

Mrs. Lemay noted the next meeting would be held as scheduled on September 29, 2021.

New Business

1. Edits and New Format of the Natural Resource Inventory – Mr. Silzicki and Ms. Sterling reviewed documentation they had compiled on the suggested three-part division of the inventory. Mr. Silzicki presented a slide presentation that included information on the background of the NRI, the project goal, measuring success and program costs. The main topic for discussion was how to increase park usage by using the information in the NRI in a consumer-friendly manner to increase both education and interest in Trumbull parks. He shared information on what surrounding towns have done with regard to their website information. Several topics for inclusion on Trumbull’s website included giving an example of the park with pictures, including NRI information with more detail and explain its interest with ecological details, give an explanation of the importance of the park’s unique features such as wetlands and include a “click here for more information” tab which would link directly to the NRI section on that particular park. Non-online information was also discussed such as literature in the library and other areas as well as on the kiosks in the parks themselves. Allowing the user to print out what information they are interested in would also be helpful such as trail maps. Such sites include Alltrails.com or Trailforks.com. Also, a live trail map or interactive map would be fun with links

for the various sites to show historical information as many of the town parks have a rich history.

Mrs. Lemay suggested the slide presentation be brought to the Parks and Recreation Commission meeting as they manage the active and passive recreation sites in town. This type of project would be for the passive sites such as parks and trails. Ms. Epstein questioned if this project's goal to increase park/trail usage would also increase environmental concerns. The Commission felt the positives outweighed the negatives as the negatives already exist within the park/trail system. The residents should be aware that they are responsible for their actions within the parks and should take care of the trash and avoid other environmental impacts as they enjoy their experience.

With regard to updating the town website, Mr. Chin noted that he and Mrs. Zablocky would be coordinating the work due to the constraints of the town systems. Question was raised if there was a specific program that could be utilized by volunteers outside of the town systems that could be uploaded to the website. Mr. Chin will explore that possibility. This work would also be coordinated with the new Recreation Director, Noreen Wilpiseski and Mr. Paris.

Ms. Sterling presented her information regarding how the NRI information could be utilized by the various town departments and organizations. This included the work of the Conservation, Inland Wetlands and Planning and Zoning Commissions. There are still many questions to be answered on this part of the project such as how to specifically share the information from the NRI with the various organizations and budget considerations. There is a need to speak with Inland Wetlands and Planning and Zoning regarding the regulations update currently being conducted. Mr. Massari suggested quotes for printing should be obtained as well as consideration of web development funds. Mrs. Lemay reviewed the budget process for the town and the past practices of disseminating information to the town residents.

2. Status of Sustainable Trumbull Submission for Silver Certification – Ms. Roman noted the application was submitted last week. The committee is looking for equity toolkits which are collaborative efforts with other departments on projects within the community. If achieved, a Silver Certification is good for three years and they would need to continue working on the current projects as well as new initiatives to maintain that level.
3. Noxious Weed List and Native Plant List – Ms. Roman noted she was contacted by a member of the Trumbull Community Women who presented her with a town ordinance regarding noxious weeds. Ms. Roman noted the list is totally outdated and includes species of plants that are not considered noxious. It was agreed that this ordinance should be updated with current information and replaced with approval by the Town Council. Mrs. Lemay will check with Mrs. Katske as to the steps to getting on the Town Council agenda when this is ready for approval. Ms. Sterling noted the ordinance seems to be directed more towards the personal health aspect of the plants than the ecological impact and that perhaps the Health Director would need to be involved to provide updated information from their perspective. Ms. Roman will reach out to Mrs. Katske and the Health Director about the ordinance and work on an updated draft document which would include noxious weeds as well as tree and native plant suggestions. Mrs. Lemay noted the Connecticut Native Plant Working Group has generated lists of native plants, trees and shrubs with a goal to get this information out to the municipalities. Sharing this information with Inland Wetlands and Planning and Zoning would be beneficial and would facilitate dissemination of information. Having a document before both Commissions would

help when the applications do not need to be reviewed by Inland Wetlands so that native plants can be addressed. Planning and Zoning regulations are still in draft form.

4. New State Mandate – Mrs. Lemay noted there is a new public act passed by the Connecticut Assembly called the Case of Riparian Corridor Protections. It is a report of zoning strategies to reduce pollution of inland waters resulting in hypoxia in Long Island Sound. Now all 169 municipalities in CT are in the Long Island Watershed and they are mandated that specific points be put into the zoning regulations that will force the towns to make reasonable considerations for restoration and protection of Long Island Sound, designs that reduce hypoxia, pathogens and floatable debris and provide that the town zoning commissions consider the environmental impact on Long Island Sound as designated by the act. This is a legal mandate and municipalities will be subject to this mandate starting October 1, 2021. It is unknown how it is being sent to Planning and Zoning in Trumbull. Mrs. Lemay received information generated by the WESTCOG (West Council of Government) and she forwarded it to METROCOG as well as the Trumbull Public Works Director and other Trumbull land use boards. It was suggested that the Conservation Commission work with Planning and Zoning to update their regulations to include this mandate and other recommendations of the NRI. Ms. Sterling was willing to draft a presentation for Planning and Zoning around this mandate and include other science-based NRI recommendations that should be added into the regulations especially if Planning and Zoning is the only board looking at some development applications. Mrs. Lemay noted the suggestions are set forth in the document that should be included in the regulations. Commissioners were requested to review the information so that a draft can be discussed at the next meeting.
5. 1000 Trees for Trumbull – Mrs. Lemay noted the information in the draft Tree Ordinance could be transformed into a Tree Restoration Plan which would be a key point in the changes to the regulations. Funding is currently available in the town budget for tree removal but not tree replacement. This new mandate could result in funding for tree replacement. If Trumbull would like to be a Tree City town, there has to be money in the budget for planting. UI has a grant for tree replacement. However, coordination with the town would be necessary for any grant funding. Ms. Roman also noted that Sustainable CT could also provide funding for this project. Mrs. Lemay will put into the budget discussions with the First Selectman how much money should be provided towards tree replacement as well as printing funds. Mr. Massari will work on the printing quotes for the budget. The Tree Management Plan was discussed regarding replacement and selection of the right tree in the right place. A copy of the draft plan will be sent to the Commissioners for review.
6. Ecotype Project for Nichols Park - Raised Beds – will be discussed at a future meeting.

Old Business

1. Updates on IWWC Applications – Mrs. Lemay noted there are several applications before the Commission but none that are concerning. There was nothing on the agenda for the Pinewood Lake property. Mrs. Lemay encouraged the Commissioners to attend the Planning and Zoning meeting next week to hear the presentations.

Assignments

1. NRI inventory documents – word format has been received from Mr. Nordgren. Mr. Post was looking into Long Term Planning. A shared drive for the Commission's use was suggested which would include pertinent documents and provide a collaborative environment for working on the various projects. Mr. Chin will set up an account.

2. Mrs. Lemay will send the Commissioners the Tree Management Plan, the word document for the NRI, the report on the Riparian Corridors and a link to the new Public Act 21-29 mandating the towns update the zoning regs.
3. Budget – include funding for printing a brochure and tree planting plan. Revisit UI funding.
4. Ms. Roman will reach out to Cindy Katske about changing the noxious weed list by updating and adding information.
5. Ms. Sterling will develop a draft slide presentation to Planning and Zoning regarding the mandate changes and other science-based recommendations and updates.
6. Mr. Silzicki will update his slide presentation.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent at 8:44 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Crandall
Clerk