

Commission on Conservation & Agriculture
MINUTES

Regular Meeting of February 18, 2020

| Present | Absent | Public | Staff |
|-------------------|-----------------|---------------|------------------|
| Elisabeth Holder | Larry Owens | David Brown | Marek Kozikowski |
| Bob Daniels | David Bauer | Kaitlyn Regan | |
| Brian Gartner | Katherine Owens | | |
| Michael Thomas | Kate Miller | | |
| Barbara Schukoske | Ellen Lukens | | |
| Judy Konopka | James Miller | | |
| Jane Brawerman | | | |

A. Election of Officers

Commissioner Brawerman nominated Commissioner Holder for Chair. There were no other nominations. The nomination was seconded by Commissioner Gartner. The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Brawerman nominated Commissioner Gartner for Vice-Chair. There were no other nominations. The nomination was seconded by Commissioner Schukoske. The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Holder nominated PCD Staff to perform the duties of Secretary for the Commission. There were no other nominations. The nomination was seconded by Commissioner Schukoske. The motion passed unanimously.

B. Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 7:04 p.m.

C. Accept the Agenda

The Commission discussed the future consolidation of “Old Business” items into a single agenda item.

A motion was made by Commissioner Schukoske to accept the agenda. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gartner. The motion passed unanimously.

D. Public Forum

Kaitlyn Regan is a journalism student at SCSU and is observing the meeting.

E. Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Daniels made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 7, 2020 meeting with corrections. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gartner. The motion passed unanimously with one abstention (Schukoske).

Commissioner Schukoske made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 21, 2020 meeting with corrections. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gartner. The motion passed unanimously.

F. Request for Comment

1. 0 & 60 West Street. - Delfavero Associate Inc. - Multi Family Development

Upon a review of the plans and discussion the Commission made the following comments on the development project:

- The Commission expresses concerns of potential erosion of the riverbank caused by the development of the land immediately above the slope down to the Coginchaug River.
- The plan lacks a buffer between the driveway and the and the riverbank, which will result in driveway pollution, lawn chemicals, snow melt, and other debris going directly into the river.
- It was unclear how the former gravel parking lot will be removed so that any potential pollutants do not end up into the river.
- The Commission recommends LID stormwater management practices be used.
- The Commission recommends the landscaping plan to include only Connecticut native species.

Commissioner Schukoske made a motion to approve the comments for the pending PZC application. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gartner. The motion passed unanimously.

2. 584 Atkins Street. - Cocomo II, LLC - 3 Lot Subdivision

Upon a review of the plans and discussion the Commission made the following comments on the proposed subdivision:

- The Commission has concerns that the long driveways with impervious surfaces can carry salts and pollutants towards the wetland.
- The new homes follow the sprawl concept will abutting sensitive, high value wetlands. High-value wetlands depend upon lack of chemicals entering the still waters and usable surrounding land that can be used as habit for amphibians that breed in those wetlands.
- This is not sustainable development, which is what POCD process has focused on.
- The parcel abuts a 100 ac open space area and it might be better if this parcel was preserved as open space.
- If developed, the Commission recommends property/lawn care management that is free of pesticides, fertilizers and salts.

Commissioner Schukoske made a motion to approve the comments for the pending IWWA and PZC applications. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gartner. The motion passed unanimously.

G. Officer and Committee Reports

1. Chairman's Report

i. POCD Update

Chairwoman Holder reported that the POCD Steering Committee is working on the draft to include public and staff comments.

ii. CFPA visitor and collaboration

No new information to discuss.

iii. Annual Report and proposal to revamp committees

Chairwoman Holder reported that the annual report was updated and distributed for review. The Committee assignments were included.

Commissioner Thomas made a motion to table a vote to adopt the Commission's 2020 goals. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Daniels. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Trails Committee

i. Trail Work for Winter

Chairwoman Holder reported that land was cleared for the water tower project and this required relocating a portion of the Red Trail. Commissioner Thomas noted that they marked out a trail and conducted some preliminary clearing. The new trail will improve access to new observation areas. The bulletin board will need to be updated.

3. Agriculture Committee

i. Farm Market and Stand Ordinance Update

Commissioner Daniels stated that the agricultural survey was updated and available for review. The Commission and staff agreed to pool resources to create a distribution list of the survey to local farmers.

He also presented that the draft ordinance was drafted and passed along to the Department of Planning, Conservation and Development. Kozikowski stated that this ordinance should wait until after the 2020 POCD is adopted.

4. Outreach Committee

i. Future Events

Commission Gartner presented that he is working on hosting an urban core walk on Earth Day that would be coordinated with downtown events.

5. Open Space Management Committee

Chairwoman Holder reported that Commissioner Katharine Owens sent her a message stating that she will not be able to attend the next few meetings for personal reasons.

6. Open Space Acquisition Committee

Chairwoman Holder reported that the committee met and focused primarily on updating the scoring sheet used for ranking property acquisitions. Point values were slightly adjusted and some of the categories were modified or combined.

H. Old Business

1. Kleen Energy Property

The Commission addressed staff to explore re approaching the property owner for the possibility to acquire a portion of the property.

2. Landfill Trail

No new information to discuss.

3. Open Space Regulations

No new information to discuss.

4. Red Maple Swamp

No new information to discuss.

5. Livingston Updates

No new information to discuss.

6. Timber Management and Southern Border Safety

No new information to discuss.

7. Country Club Road

No new information to discuss.

8. Chiaravallo Development Rights Update

No new information to discuss.

9. NEAT Urban Farm Update

The Agricultural Committee will draft comments for the potential community gardens on Miller Street

10. Open Space Map Update

Kozikowski showed a draft of the 2020 update of the open space acquisition map for review.

David Brown, Middlesex Land Trust would like to meet with staff and the Chairwoman to compare notes on preserved properties to make sure the map is inclusive of all recorded preserved properties. Kozikowski will review the RiverCOG Regional Open Space Plan.

I. New Business

The Commission expressed sadness that Christine Raczka is leaving the PCD Department. They expressed that the Environmental Specialist position is an important position for the city. The job must encourage qualified people to apply and encourage them to stay with the City. The compensation should reflect these criteria. The POCD update emphasizes preserving the environment and sustainability of the city and the right person in this position will help the city achieve its goals. Members of the commission asked the chair to write a letter to the mayor expressing their concerns.

Commissioner Schukoske made a motion to request the Chairwoman to draft a letter to the Mayor to express these concerns. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gartner and passed unanimously.

J. Member Forum

No discussion.

K. Adjournment

Commissioner Schukoske made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gartner and passed unanimously. Meeting ended at 9:24pm.