

**Commission on Conservation & Agriculture**  
**MINUTES**

**Regular Meeting of April 16, 2019**

<b>Present</b>	<b>Absent</b>	<b>Public</b>	<b>Staff</b>
Elisabeth Holder	Brian Gartner	Gabe Russo	Christine Raczka Marquis
Kate Miller	Jon Morris	Kevin Crowmen	
Barbara Schukoske	David Bauer		
Bob Daniels	Katherine Owens		
James Miller	Larry Owens		
Jane Brawerman			
Ellen Lukens			
Michael Thomas			

- A. **Call to Order**—Meeting called to order at 7:06 p.m.
- B. **Accept the Agenda**- The Chairwoman asked if there was a motion to accept the agenda. Barbara Schukoske made the motion and Bob Daniels seconded the motion. The motion passed.
- C. **Public Forum**—Gabe Russo gave an update on Forest City Farms and provided a copy of their annual report. Gabe Russo discussed with the Commission the success that they have had with their CSA program and at various farmers markets. Gabe Russo mentioned that their market sales had decreased and thought it might be due to more farmers markets in the area and people going on vacation. Gabe Russo and the Commission discussed Middletown’s Farmers Market and compared it to other towns of similar size. Gabe Russo stated that markets that were successful in towns of a similar size had been around for a while and had support from the city and the community. Gabe Russo also discussed future uses and ideas for the property. Liz recommended that the Agriculture Committee work with Gabe on finding additional funding and grants.
- D. **Approval of Minutes**  
The Chairwoman asked if anyone on the Commission wanted to make any changes to the minutes. Kate Miller requested that we add some information on the student (Julah Isaacson) who has been working with the Commission on the upcoming volunteer event and a mapping project at Wilcox Conservation Area. Ellen Lukens made a motion to approve the minutes from the last meeting as amended. The motion was seconded by Bob Daniels. The motion passed with seven votes. Michael Thomas abstained from voting since he was not at the last meeting.
- E. **Request for Comment**  
Christine Raczka Marquis told the Commission about a request to conduct research on the Emerald Ash Borer on city owned open space and also a request from a local couple to start a tree farm on city owned open space.  
  
The Commission expressed concerns about aspects of the research project. Christine Raczka Marquis agreed to discuss the Commission’s concerns with the researcher (Dr. Claire Ruthledge). The commission made a motion to approve the research with the provision that the researcher will do her best to limit the potential release of the Emerald Ash Borer. The motion was made by Kate Miller and seconded by Bob Daniels. The motion passed unanimously.

The Commission also expressed several concerns over the proposal to use city owned open space as a tree farm. Christine Raczka Marquis agreed to discuss the Commission's concerns with Joe Samolis.

## **F. Officer and Committee Reports**

### **1. Chairman's report**

#### **i Plastic Bag Ordinance**

The Chairwoman reported that the new ordinance is moving forward

#### **ii. Artificial Turf on Country Club Rd**

The Chairwoman gave an update from Council on the artificial turf field on Country Club Rd

#### **iii 2018 Annual Report and 2019 Goals**

Ellen Lukens asked to make an addition to the goals. She would like the Commission to work to get an open space acquisition referendum to raise money for the purchase of open space and recreation. Kate Miller said she would support Ellen's proposal but maybe the Commission could also include management in the bond proposal. The Chairwomen asked if there was a motion to approve the 2018 Annual Report and 2019 Goals. The motion was approved by Ellen Lukens and seconded by Barbara Schukoske.

#### **iv Commission Vacancies**

The Chairwoman told the Commission that Jon Morris would like to resign from the commission since he is unable to attend the meetings due to his teaching schedule. The Chairwoman made a motion to accept his resignation. The motion was approved by Barbara Schukoske and seconded by Bob Daniels. The vote passed unanimously.

The Commission discussed the open vacancies on the Commission board. Kate Miller suggested that the Chairwoman ask Larry Owens if he could recommend someone to the Commission. The Chairwoman asked Michael Thomas if he would like to move from being an alternate to a full time member. Michael Thomas agreed and the Chairwoman made a motion to move Michael Thomas from an alternate to a full time member. The motion was approved by Ellen Lukens and seconded by Barbara Schukoske. The motion passed unanimously.

## **2. Trails Committee**

### **i. Trails Work**

Michael Thomas and Jim Miller reported that they have been conducting trail maintenance at various city owned properties. Jim Miller said he would coordinate with Brian on the Trials Day Event

## **3. Agriculture Committee**

### **i. Farm Market and Stand Ordinance Update**

Bob Daniels updated the Commission on the Farm Market and Stand Ordinance updates. He is hoping that Mark DeVoe, the city planner, can incorporate their recommendations for the farm markets and stands ordinance. The Chairwoman asked staff for an update by the next Commission meeting.

## **4. Outreach Committee**

The Outreach Committee updated the Commission on the Earth Day hike at the Aslyum Reservoir. Jim Miller asked if we needed a sign in sheet or a waiver. The Commission agreed to a sign in sheet. The Commission discussed the upcoming Wilcox Spring Cleanup Event on May 18<sup>th</sup>.

They would like to incorporate the UCONN's student poster and also a discussion of invasive species and the proposed research by Dr. Claire Ruthledge.

**5. Open Space Management Committee**

No Report

**6. Open Space Acquisition Committee**

The Chairwoman asked for a motion. The motion was made by Jane Brawerman and seconded by Bob Daniels.

The Chairwoman asked for a motion. The motion was made by Barbara Schukoske and seconded by Bob Daniels.

**G. Old Business**

Staff updated the Commission on the Landfill Trails grant and the Red Maple Swamp area. The Commission discussed the Guida property and the EPA water tower project.

**H. New Business**

Staff updated the Commission on Public Works project near Lawrence School. The Commission asked that Public Works limit the amount of proposed parking and ensure that there would be no change in the run off flow to the adjacent wetlands. The Chairwoman made a motion to approve the plans with the Commission's suggestions. The motion was approved by Bob Daniels and seconded by Ellen Lukens. The motion passed unanimously.

**I Member Forum**

Nothing to report

**J. Adjournment**

Motion made by Barbara Schukoske and seconded by Jim Miller. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 10:00 pm