

**ENVIRONMENT COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 9, 2013
TOWN HALL – ROOM 207/209 – 7:00 P.M.**

Members present: Randy Yale, Robert DeVylder, Jodee Heritage and Bill Sherman.

Member not present: Bonnie Mayer and Daniel Grasso.

Staff Liaison: Suzanne Simone.

I. Call to Order

Randy Yale called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

II. Roll Call

Bill Sherman called the roll. Members in attendance were Randy Yale, Robert DeVylder, Jodee Heritage and Bill Sherman. Staff liaison Suzanne Simone and recording secretary Carla Mills were also present.

III. Determination of Quorum

Randy Yale determined there were enough members present for a quorum.

IV. Pledge of Allegiance

All present receipted the pledge of allegiance.

V. Acceptance of Minutes Regular Meeting of October 10, 2012

Randy Yale called for a motion to accept the minutes from the October 10, 2012 meeting.

Motion: To accept the minutes from the October 10, 2012 meeting with corrections. Page 2 L38 delete ‘could if they’; Pg. 6 L6 “conductive” to “conducive”.

Moved by Ms. Heritage. Seconded by Mr. Sherman. Motion approved unanimously by Commission members present.

V. Approval of 2013 Meeting Dates

The Commission reviewed the 2013 meeting dates.

Motion: To approve the following 2013 Environment Commission meeting dates: January 9, 2013, February 13, 2013, March 13, 2013, April 10, 2013, May 8, 2013, June 12, 2013, July 10, 2013, August 14, 2013, September 11, 2013, October 9, 2013, November 13, 2013, December 11, 2012 (Room 207) and January 8, 2014. Meets will be held the second Wednesday of the month at 7:00 p.m., in Room 115 at Town Hall, 84 South Main Street, unless otherwise noted.

Moved by Mr. Sherman. Seconded by Mr. DeVlyder. Motion approved unanimously by Commission members present.

VI. Election of Officers

Mr. Yale informed Commission members that his term on the commission was ending and that he would not be returning. It was noted that Bonnie Meyer's term was also coming to an end.

Ms. Simone stated that in addition to the two terms expiring there is still one other seat that has not been filled.

Mr. Yale opened the floor for the election of officers.

Ms. Heritage nominated Bill Sherman as chair. Mr. Yale seconded the nomination. Mr. Sherman accepted the nomination. All present were in favor of the nomination.

Mr. Sherman nominated Robert DeVlyder as vice-chair. Ms. Heritage seconded the nomination. Mr. DeVlyder accepted the nomination. All present were in favor of the nomination.

Mr. Sherman nominated Jodee Heritage as secretary. Mr. Yale seconded the nomination. Ms. Heritage accepted the nomination. All present were in favor of the nomination.

There were no other nominations entertained.

Mr. Yale closed the nominations.

The elected slate of officers for 2013: Bill Sherman as chair, Robert DeVlyder as vice-chair and Jodee Heritage as secretary.

Mr. DeVlyder asked about the number of seats on the Commission.

Ms. Simone said there are seven seats on the Commission and three seats are up for re-appointment. She noted that re-appointments are done through the parties and the town council.

VII. Communications

1. **The Habitat, CACIWC Fall 2012 Newsletter Volume 24, Number 2
(To be handed out at meeting)**

Commission members received a copy of The Habitat newsletter.

Ms. Simone informed Commission members that the newsletter had a lot to do with the notification of The Habitat annual meeting that was held in November 2012 and a summary of summary of legislation.

2. **Registration Notification for 2013 Connecticut Trails Day Weekend**

Ms. Simone explained the CT Forest and Harvest Association has sent notification of a deadline to be part of the 2013 Connecticut Trails Day which is June 1-2, 2013 so if the Commission wanted to host an event then they would need to get notification in by February. She also explained that the Connecticut Trails Day is publicized very widely throughout the state and issue notification to all the libraries in all the towns. The registration deadline is February 1, 2013.

Ms. Simone said the Heddens did a walk of the Casertano property. There was also then a walk of the Land Trust and then Ms. Simone also scheduled a hike and the CT Parks Association contacted her and suggested she switch things around because there was too much going on at the same time.

Mr. Sherman suggested a hike of the DeDominicis property.

Ms. Simone said in her opinion she thought the DeDominicis is one of the nicest properties; this is a good property to introduce people to who have not been out to any of the town properties. She said the landscape and trails are nice and a good choice for a hike.

Mr. Sherman said he thought the DeDominicis property would be a good choice and wanted to offer up this property as the location for a hike.

Mr. Yale agreed the Commission should officially endorse the DeDominicis property for a hike.

The Commission agreed that the timing of the hike should take place from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. on Saturday, June 1 and the event would be cancelled in the event of rain; there will be no rain date.

Ms. Simone said that the organization provides t-shirts for the hike leaders. Three t-shirts will be needed.

Ms. Simone also said the Commission has a budget were interested in purchasing t-shirts or sweatshirts that say Cheshire Environment Commission or something like that to identify Commission members on tours and hikes.

Ms. Simone agreed to follow-up regarding the proposed date and time for a hike of the DeDominicis property.

IX. Calendar – Events

1. Earth Day: Monday, April 22, 2013

Mr. Yale talked about the past event schedule for earth day scheduled events.

Ms. Simone said the timing this year of earth day conflicts with the friends of the library annual book sale which will take place the same week.

Ms. Simone said she will work with the library to come up with other dates for earth day events.

2. Arbor Day: Friday, April 26, 2013

Mr. Sherman talked about an Arbor Day event. He said he had spoken with Mike Kennedy from Cheshire Tree Service about Mr. Kennedy presenting a short program.

Mr. Sherman said he'd follow up with Mr. Kennedy to see if he or someone from Cheshire Tree could commit to an Arbor Day event.

Ms. Simone said she's working with the library to spread out the events through the year and not just in April.

Mr. Sherman asked that when Ms. Simone gets a sense of some possible dates for an event to let him know and he'd then contact Mr. Kennedy.

There was discussion about doing a program on invasive species.

Ms. Simone said that if they were to run a program on invasive species a good component would be to actually tell people exactly where they could go in town and see standing Phragmites or other invasive species of plants are in town. She said they might be able something in and

bring volunteers together to work on a project to remove some of the invasive species.

Ms. Simone said the big invasive species in Cheshire are the Garlic Mustard, Bittersweet, Japanese Knotwood and Phragmites. She said there are several places that have easy parking access and are easy to get to on Cheshire trails so they locations would be good for a volunteer program to remove the invasive species.

3. Connecticut Trails Day Weekend: Saturday & Sunday, June 1 - 2, 2013

Discussion covered under communication number 2.

X. Unfinished Business

1. Tip of the Month

Mr. Yale suggested that for the next few months the tip of the month be removed from the agenda.

Ms. Heritage suggested using the Commission's website to post tips.

The Commission and staff talked about posting the tip of the month in the *Cheshire Herald* versus the *Cheshire Citizen*.

All agreed to have the tip of the month removed from the agenda for the next few months.

2. Open Space Property Signage/Logo Design

Ms. Simone explained that the large marker has been placed at the DeDominicis property. She said she was not sure if Commission members had an opportunity to see the sign and suggested they do so if they could.

Ms. Simone said the town will start posting signs at the other property locations.

Mr. Sherman informed the Commission that when the Commission is ready to move forward he'd contact the Boy Scout about constructing the kiosk as his Eagle Scout project.

Ms. Simone said that Boy Scout Patrick Hedden is interested in constructing a kiosk at the Casertano property and has put together his application for his Eagle Scout project; he had inquired about the kiosk. She said Patrick (he wants to do a project at the Casertano property) came in to get her signature on something and he inquired about that

and she informed him they had the material but it had not been assigned to a property yet.

Ms. Simone explained that the town is working to get the parking lot area paved; they are starting to survey that area and the plan still has to go to Planning and Zoning so it seems as though there is a concerted effort to get the projects going the kiosks.

Ms. Simone noted that the funds for the purchase of the construction materials for the kiosks come from the Environment Commission's budget.

The Commission talked about which location to choose to construct the kiosk. The materials have been purchased and are being stored for the construction of one kiosk.

There was discussion about requesting funds for materials are the construction of a second kiosk.

Mr. DeVlyder commented that the downed tree at the Ten Mile Lowland has not yet been removed and asked about staff following up with other town departments to get the down tree removed. He said he'd like to see one of the kiosks go up as soon as possible then work on putting up another kiosk.

Ms. Simone said that she'd follow up with getting the down tree removed at the Ten Mile Lowland site. She said that Patrick Hedden may be able to get some materials donated and if it turns out the materials the Commission has is for the Ten Mile Lowlands locations then perhaps the additional funds could be budgeted for a kiosk for another location.

Ms. Heritage asked if it would be helpful for commission members to contact the town manager to encourage the completion of this work.

Ms. Simone said she'd follow up with the town manager about the tree and see if that can get done sooner than later then the Commission may want to move forward with the kiosk at the Ten Mile Lowland site and the decision could be made in June to decide to purchase materials for another kiosk.

Mr. DeVlyder asked when the town was going to start work at the Casertano property.

Ms. Simone said she believed that they were going to start surveying and clearing to get in there so they can finish the survey this week;

once they have a draft of the plans then it goes to Planning and Zoning for review.

Ms. Simone said that she would give a reminder to the parks department regarding the area that needs to be cleared at the Ten Mile Lowlands.

XI. New Business

1. Earth Day Schedule

Ms. Simone reported that she will get new dates for earth day events. She explained that she's working on getting people to speak about Bobcats, Fisher, Coyotes, and possible other topics.

The Commission talked about Mountain Lion and Black Bear sightings.

2. Moon Property

The Commission reviewed the proposed Moon property management plan and associated map of the property.

Ms. Simone explained the property is located off of Cook Hill Road near Half Moon Road. She reviewed the management plan details including the site specifics, the location of wetlands and open space on the site, and the topography of the property.

Ms. Simone explained that portions of the site have steep topography and the areas of the site consist of wetland mucky soils.

Ms. Simone talked about the using the property for horses (riding) but that the soil types (wet soils) on the property might not be suitable for that use.

There was discussion about people who rode their horses on neighboring properties and their concerns about making the Moon property available for riding horse because of the wet soils on the property.

The Commission and Ms. Simone discussed the Moon property management plan and moving forward with the proposed plan after reworking some of the language regarding horse use on the property.

The Commission also talked about unauthorized ATV use in the area of the Moon property.

Ms. Simone agreed to rework the Moon property management plan and that she'd get in touch with someone from the Horse Council about the property and adjacent property issues relating to riding horses.

Ms. Simone explained to the Commission that they have 45 days to act on the management plan – 45 days from now.

3. Trails Day – School Children Involvement

Ms. Heritage proposed that the Commission get school kids involved in the Trails Day event. She suggested contacting the elementary school science teachers about Trails Day and asking the teachers to nominate a few kids who would be interested in participating in Trail Day program – maybe offer an hour long program and a lunch.

Ms. Heritage said involving school kids would be a good way to promote the Trail Days.

The Commission discussed Ms. Heritage's proposal and agreed it was a good idea.

Ms. Heritage said she would contact Deb Burns from the Cheshire Board of Education department about getting kids involved in Trails Day and report back to the Commission.

4. Randy Yale Comments

At this point in the meeting, Mr. Yale took the opportunity to thank the Commission for their support during his tenure on the Commission.

Mr. Yale also thanked Suzanne Simone for all of her hard work in supporting the Environment Commission.

XII. Adjournment

Mr. Yale called for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:58 p.m.

Moved by Mr. Sherman. Seconded by Mr. DeVylder. Motion approved unanimously by Commission members present.

Respectfully submitted:

**Carla Mills
Recording Secretary
Cheshire Environment Commission**