

**ENVIRONMENT COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING  
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2013  
TOWN HALL ROOM 207/209 AT 7:00 P.M.**

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**Members present: Chairman Bill Sherman, Matt Abdifar, Carrie Collins, Robert DeVylde, Jodee Heritage, and David Mercugliano.**

**Member not present: Daniel Grasso.**

**Staff: Suzanne Simone**

**I. Call to Order**

**Mr. Sherman called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.**

**II. Roll Call**

**Ms. Heritage called the roll.**

**III. Determination of Quorum  
Commissioner Attendance Summary**

**Chairman Sherman determined there were enough members present for a quorum.**

**Members in attendance were Bill Sherman, Matt Abdifar, Carrie Collins, Robert DeVylde, Jodee Heritage, and David Mercugliano. Daniel Grasso was not present.**

**IV. Pledge of Allegiance**

**All present recited the pledge of allegiance.**

**V. Acceptance of Minutes – Special Meeting – October 21, 2013**

**Chairman Sherman called for a motion to accept the minutes from the October 21, 2013 special meeting.**

**Motion: To accept the minutes from the October 21, 2013 special meeting (no corrections).**

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

**VI. Approval of 2014 Meeting Dates**

Commission members reviewed and discussed the 2014 meeting dates.

Chairman Sherman said the Commission looks at the meeting dates at this meeting then they become posted for public record for next year.

There was discussion about the possible need to change a few of the meeting dates to accommodate scheduling conflicts.

Ms. Simone stated the town ordinance does specify that the meetings are to be held on the second Wednesday of each month but the Commission does have the ability to notify in advance that a meeting date has changed.

Chairman Sherman said they've done that before – he said they moved the October 2013 meeting.

Mr. Mercugliano explained he has a few scheduling conflicts with the second Wednesday meeting date (they can work with these dates on a case by case basis).

Chairman Sherman said they can keep those dates in mind as they get closer to the date they can post a cancellation and the posting of a special meeting.

Chairman Sherman asked about the second meeting date of Thursday, February 13, 2014 due to the holiday.

Ms. Simone explained the town hall is closed on Lincoln's birthday. She noted the town follows the state list of holidays.

Ms. Simone explained the process to change a meeting date and the posting requirements.

Meetings will be held at 7:00 p.m. in the Cheshire Town Hall Room 115 on the second Wednesday of each month unless otherwise noted.

Motion: To approve the official 2014 Environment Commission meeting dates.

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

Commission members agreed to hold the first meeting of 2014 on Wednesday, January 15, 2014 to accommodate a scheduling conflict on January 8.

**VII. Communications**

**1. SWCD Soil and Water Fall 2013 Newsletter (To be handed out at meeting)**

Commission members received a copy of the SWCD Soil and Water Fall 2013 Newsletter.

Chairman Sherman asked Ms. Simone or perhaps the town planner attended the conference back in the fall.

Ms. Simone said she attended CAIWAC conference. She said they did have some good information relative to protection of vernal pools and how to incorporate inland wetland regulations to provide additional protection of those habitats and information on conservation easements and invasive species.

**2. Invitation to hear DEEP Commissioner Dan Esty speak at Economic Development Meeting on December 17, 2013**

Ms. Simone said there's an invitation handed out to members tonight – Commissioner Esty is coming to Cheshire Town Hall will be addressing the Economic Development Commission – that Commission has extended an invitation to other Commissions to attend.

Ms. Simone said the meeting is at 7:30 a.m. on Tuesday, December 17, 2013.

**VIII. Calendar – Events**

Chairman Sherman stated that staff has indicated a couple of dates to keep in mind.

Chairman Sherman said CT Trails Day is slated for the weekend of June 7-8, 2014 and staff mentioned there was a registration that would be due by February 3 – that we (the Commission) would register and participate in the event.

The Commission talked about sites that were walked on previous Trails Day events.

Ms. Simone explained the Connecticut Forest and Parks Association is the agency that promotes the CT Trails Day so they provide a booklet and its free of charge so that's why they have the early deadline of February 3 so any town or not for profit that's interested in registering that then they put all this information together.

Ms. Simone said if the Commission decided to not meet this deadline the Commission could still participate and post an event it just wouldn't be widely distributed.

Chairman Sherman said he remembered seeing the booklet – it was pretty impressive booklet that they put together.

Ms. Simone said to meet the deadline for February 3 you would need to have a plan together of what property you plan on going to so they could provide directions and give specifics in the description.

Commission members discussed last year's walk.

Ms. Collins stated there was a good turnout – she said most of the people that came were not from Cheshire they were actually from other towns but came because of the booklet.

Ms. Simone stated that she got a fair amount of phone calls from people that lived in various places that were asking about this property and directions to get there – she said she thought there was a wide interest.

Mr. Mercugliano said Ms. Simone if she had a suggestion or recommendation of perhaps a lesser known property that would be still well accessible.

Ms. Simone said she thought the Casertano property was coming along nicely and by June – and she'd have an update further on in the agenda but by June Patrick Hedden – Boy Scout/Eagle Scout will be more advanced in his project and he'll likely have the kiosk up and the loop completed and the trail will be marked so that may be a good opportunity to unveil as a Trail Day opening so that people can come and see it.

Ms. Collins asked if parking would be an issue at this location (it was last time).

Ms. Simone said a parking lot was put in recently.

Mr. Mercugliano said coming from a scouting environment having a deadline like that to unveil it is probably a great idea for him and for us.

Ms. Simone said and he (Patrick Hedden) has made a lot of progress – he's really ambitious and on top on it.

Mr. DeVlyder asked if we had the money to put a kiosk there.

Ms. Simone explained that is something Patrick had indicated that he is already in the process of getting materials himself to do it as part of his scout project.

Ms. Heritage asked is that something we should consider donating toward out or our budget.

Ms. Simone stated the Commission could do that as well.

Ms. Heritage said we can see where he is on the project and what he needs and maybe that see where we can help.

Mr. DeVlyder commented that the remains of the downed kiosk on Boulder Knoll were removed. He suggested that a second kiosk be build when they are building the one for Boulder Knoll – when that one is repaired they can build a second one for the lowlands.

Chairman Sherman said that's a good point because he knows a Ten Mile Lowlands another Boy Scout was planning on that.

Commission members agreed the Casertano property would be the site of the Trails Day hike.

Ms. Simone asked if the Commission if they thought it would be worthwhile to ask Patrick if he would like to contribute by leading the hike – maybe that would give him a sense of pride with all the work he's doing there.

Commission members replied absolutely.

Ms. Heritage said maybe the send a notification to the local paper about Patrick (leading the hike).

Chairman Sherman stated they can make a nice splash – nice publicity on this.

Ms. Collins commented about parking issue at the Casertano site last time there was a hike.

Ms. Simone stated the Casertano property does have advocate parking – it has a good size parking lot – we can also make the property on the other side of the street available.

Ms. Heritage said Trails Day is June 7 and 8 – was it one day or both.

Ms. Simone stated the Commission can choose one day or another or chose the 8<sup>th</sup> as a rain day – it depends - some organizations do two days sometimes there just doing Sunday - they can pick one or the other or both.

The Commission and staff discussed what day would be best to schedule the hike and if a rain date should be scheduled.

Ms. Simone stated the rain date would have to be Sunday, June 8.

Ms. Simone asked if there was light rain would the Commission want to cancel. She said the site has steep topography but there are water bars across there to help get your footing and slow down any water coming down; she said it hasn't been her experience that it's slippery – there are no rocks.

Commission members agreed to hold their Trail Day event on Saturday, June 7 from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. at the Casertano property. Sunday, June 8, 2014 would be the rain date.

Earth Day, April 22, 2014 & Arbor Day, April 25, 2014:

There was no discussion about Earth Day and Arbor Day events.

## IX. Unfinished Business

### 1. Social Media

Ms. Simone said town staff has been meeting with a social media committee to look at what the town can do for social media – she said the town is pretty much settled on Facebook and Twitter to start with and then moving up from there.

Ms. Simone explained the plan is that within the next couple of weeks they are going to work on a platform – we'll have each of the departments allow to access this and post information and respond to comments and then from there a policy will be drafted in place for Commissions to do their postings and there will be a formal procedure in place.

Ms. Collins said she has not been able to make an appointment with Arnett Talbot (due to scheduling issues); she said she's hoping to either she (Ms. Talbot) can send her some of the policy stuff in an email to review or schedule something in January.

Ms. Simone stated they haven't gotten to the written draft part yet.

## 2. Scout Projects & 3. Property Updates

Ms. Simone said she's been in touch with Patrick Hedden and he indicated that he is not stopping work for the winter – it's just too cold to do anything but he has made great strides in doing the blue trail and he does plan on working on the kiosk in the spring and he's looking to get the material donated so he does have the information – the blue print and the supply material list that we've used in the past.

Ms. Simone explained additionally for Ten Mile Lowlands – the town does have a stock of all the pieces needed to make a kiosk and there's been discussion with someone – a scout who was interested in doing something at Ten Mile Lowlands.

Ms. Simone said she's reached out to the scout a couple of times and she has not heard back of where he's at in the process understanding that it's cold now and he's not going to be working on it – she said she knew he had some health issues in the family – she said hopefully she'll maintain contact with him again soon and get an idea of where he's at.

Chairman Sherman said to Mr. DeVlyder's point – if they're going to be repairing kiosk a – they should look at another.

Mr. DeVlyder suggested that this other scout pick up another kiosk project.

Chairman Sherman said if he wants to work on that project there's other things that could be done there – he said he knew initially he seemed fairly eager to get started but that was several months ago and he don't want to let in languish so much further.

Mr. DeVlyder said that's the problem we've had right along.

Chairman Sherman said he thought Mr. DeVlyder's point was a good one and maybe we'll just employ those materials.

**Ms. Simone said the timing is that the kiosk that had fallen down at Boulder Knoll is in the process of being repaired and maybe reinstalled already – it should be reinstalled this week – she’s waiting for verification from the Parks Department when they’re putting it back up.**

**Mr. DeVlyder said on one of these snowy days the Parks Department will be looking for something to do.**

**Ms. Simone stated that would be a request that this Commission can make of the Parks Department and they would decide whether they could do that.**

**Ms. Simone informed Commission members that she was contacted by the state that they wanted to see some information posted on the kiosks because both Boulder Knoll and DeDominicis were purchased with state funds and they wanted some narrative indicating that state funds used to purchase it.**

**Ms. Simone said she made the maps up – she made the information – laminated it – went to bring it out to DeDominicis and she found that the kiosk is completely obliterated.**

**Ms. Simone handed out photos of the obliterated kiosk.**

**Ms. Simone explained when she looked down the road about 100’ down the road she could see a tree clearing crew working in the right of way - so she spoke to one of the individuals there who was claiming no knowledge and that he wasn’t there yesterday; she asked if the kiosk fell apart yesterday and he said he didn’t know.**

**Ms. Simone informed the individual that it appeared that a tree fell on it (the kiosk) and his response was ‘safety first at least no one was killed.’**

**Ms. Simone stated it was obvious to her in the field that a tree was felled on the kiosk the way that its broken – there were some chain saw marks also in the kiosk in some of the lumber that maybe it was half standing and they took it out of its misery and cut I down.**

**Ms. Simone stated the tree company was subcontractors of CL&P.**

**Ms. Simone said they do have a Police report on this and the town manager is in contact with CL&P to get the full reimbursement for not only the material but also the installation.**

**Ms. Simone stated the kiosk is unsalvageable – it’s just obliterated.**

Mr. DeVyllder said in his opinion the Boulder Knoll kiosk was run into by a pickup truck.

Ms. Simone said the information she got said that that was a Boy Scout project that wasn't set in cement when it was originally down (and the wood was rotten).

Mr. DeVyllder disagreed and said in his opinion it was deliberate vandalism.

Chairman Sherman said as staff said the kiosk at Boulder Knoll is in the process of being reinstalled.

Ms. Simone stated town staff is working to repair that and reinstate it.

Ms. Simone said so there's still material available for the Ten Mile Lowlands so the town has been storing that for a couple of years for another kiosk so there is a kit fully available but not that's she's suggesting that for DeDominicis because CL&P will cover the cost of that.

Chairman Sherman asked would it be Park and Rec or Public Works that would be build the kiosk.

Ms. Simone said its Park and Rec that is repairing the Boulder Knoll kiosk.

Chairman Sherman asked if they were in a position to ask Park and Rec to build the one for Ten Mile Lowlands with the materials we have or is that a Public Works.

Ms. Simone said she would recommend that this Commission make a motion to that and then she can relay that to the town manager.

Motion: That the Commission recommend that Parks and Rec construct the kiosk at the Ten Mile Lowlands.

Moved by Mr. DeVyllder. Seconded by Mr. Mercugliano.

Discussion:

Mr. Mercugliano asked if they knew what costs were involved presuming that this come from this Commission's budget – the assembly – the labor.

Ms. Simone said if a town department is doing this work then no she did not believe so – the Parks Department is actually the department that is responsible for open space – the Parks Director is actually who is responsible for open space.

Ms. Simone explained she serves as the open space steward so we work together so her understanding is no – that this Commission would not be billed for staff time to do the work.

Ms. Simone stated we have all the material not just the lumber but also the Plexiglas.

Ms. Heritage asked if there was any kind of town insurance policy to cover anything like the vandalism.

Ms. Simone stated likely – that’s something the town manager would address with CL&P.

Motion approved unanimously by Commission members present.

Chairman Sherman said hopefully by the spring they’ll have three new kiosks budding forth.

## X. New Business

### 1. Open Space Maintenance Categories-Draft

Chairman Sherman said everyone should have received the open space maintenance checklist draft.

Ms. Simone explained that for a number of years town staff has been using the open space property maintenance inspection check off sheet when we visit properties and she has been able to track what different needs are required for individual properties – the town owns so much property now that they really need to have a maintenance plan in place where particular departments or staff members are identified as whos coming to do what and follow the procedures.

Ms. Simone said so following the template of the field inspections report she sort of fleshed out categories and she’s looking to this Commission to get some feedback on these categories – if they believe the cover everything or if there’s omitted.

Ms. Simone said she approached it as you are first walking upon the property - what was the first thing you are likely to see – is Access including parking (and entrances); she reviewed the items to inspect.

Ms. Simone said she was just brainstorming as what might they see out there – what should we be looking for and she thinks this would evolve after time and time again of going out and practicing this but just wanted to sort of frame something to start with.

Ms. Simone reviewed the second category item – Signage – the goal would be that each of the properties would have a marker placed on the kiosk or a marker placed on the 4” by 4’ post or both and those are items that would need to be monitored to make sure they are up and functioning and not damaged.

Ms. Simone said the third is the Kiosk – that each property that does have a kiosk and all properties eventually will have kiosks – to check for the structural integrity – to look for weeds growing up and around – poison ivy - she just wanted to make sure there was nothing that deters people from walking up to the kiosk to get pertinent information – to look at the Plexiglas to make sure that it’s not cloudy – that it’s in good shape – make sure the information that’s posted is relevant and that’s its date appropriate and to keep a stock of public maps available so people can come and take the maps as they needed.

Ms. Simone reviewed the details of the additional items which were 4. Stormwater Controls; 5. Utility Easements; 6. Flora Management; 7. Fauna Management (including endangered species; incomplete section); 8. Trail; 9. Erosion and Sediment Control – Ms. Simone said this category would have the most potential for monitoring; in progress) and 10. Specific Design Issues and Recommendations (in progress).

Ms. Simone covered all the category items that were details in the draft and reviewed by Commission members.

Chairman Sherman stated that seems to be a very thoroughly listing and as staff said in her introductory comments to it that she’s developing an open space maintenance program and this is what she’s trying to incorporate into it.

Ms. Simone stated yes and this will be distributed to other departments and as staff is slotted for each of these items that everyone will sort of be onboard that we’ll know what role the Police will play – whether it be ATV use or hunting or tree stands that we’ll have a protocol laid out.

Chairman Sherman said so you're bringing this to let us know what you're up to.

Ms. Simone said a motion might be helpful from the perspective so then it's documented that there was discussion and if anyone has any ideas or anything came to mind in looking at it.

Chairman Sherman said so staff is asking for our comments.

Mr. DeVlyder asked if we had money in the budget now.

Ms. Simone stated there is money in the budget – yes.

Mr. DeVlyder asked if there was money to finance another kiosk.

Ms. Simone said the last time the town purchased materials just for the lumber – it was about \$400 – the Plexiglas was about \$300 or \$250 she believed so at this point the Commission has six months left on this budget and there's \$668 left and of that we have secretarial fees that will still come out of this budget.

Ms. Simone said what the Commission did last time was ask the town manager if there were other funds available to purchase material for a kiosk and that's material sitting down in the garage waiting to be assembled – that's how that was purchased.

Mr. DeVlyder asked if we could do the same and ask for another kiosk kit – he said there are a lot of sites that don't have a kiosk.

Ms. Simone said there are two properties – one kiosk is being repaired and will be put back and the other one was obliterated and will be paid for by CL&P.

Mr. DeVlyder asked if Roaring Brook had one.

Ms. Simone and Chairman Sherman both stated yes.

Mr. DeVlyder asked if Mixville Hills had one.

Ms. Simone states there was no easy access to that property.

Ms. Simone said the one recommendation that she would have is that the Commission certainly could ask for the funding from the town manager – she thought it would be in the Commission's best interest to already have something planned out – how that materials going to be

used and who's going to do it and its going to be in a timely-ish manner because the other material has been sitting there for a couple of years.

Chairman Sherman asked Mr. DeVlyder is he has a particular property that needs one (a kiosk).

#### **TAPE CHANGE**

Ms. Simone said in the past when there's access and the property is in a easily accessible state and an easily usable state that that's when the kiosk will go up as of right now you may recall when we talked previously that the Ben's Homestead property has no direct access to it so that's something that needs to worked on.

Ms. Simone said she thought with this maintenance plan when it goes through the staff level that that issue with kiosks to trails there's going be an opportunity to discuss that and there are funds available for open space but she thought that it would be best to have an overall plan of understanding where we're going next before money is set aside.

Mr. DeVlyder said his point was to have some continuity – starting with the kiosks and we still have more property that isn't – to carry on until we get all the properties properly identified.

Ms. Simone stated that's a long term goal.

Chairman Sherman said he thought that was a good point as part of the goals that we want to have.

Ms. Heritage said she thought that the kiosk was certainly a plan for the properties but she wasn't sure in her mind if it makes sense to have a kiosk if the property is not accessible so she thought from what she was hearing was when the property was accessible then we come back and say okay it's time for a kiosk.

Ms. Simone said right.

Ms. Heritage said so out of the ten properties we have five or six of those are easily accessible and we have four or five kiosks in the pipeline – right or we've pretty well covered.

Ms. Simone said of the properties that well-travelled right now and easily accessible yes – they have kiosks – the ones that don't have accessible right now that's part of a longer term goal whether the town needs to purchase adjacent property to allow for connectivity or access

– Mixville Hills – Ben’s Homestead – there are several properties that we do need to work on getting the access – Dime Savings - that’s a big property to work on – the Clark property – the Halpern – Ketchum – those are smaller properties – the Moran property – that’s a small isolated ten acre lot off of the Mill River that people can walk on that property but to put a kiosk there at this point she thought would be putting the cart before the horse just from looking at the open space management perspective – then you are inviting people to go out there but you’re not prepared with trails and blazes and maps –accessibility.

Ms. Heritage asked about the materials stored at the town garage and was it earmarked for something.

Mr. DeVylder stated Ten Mile.

Chairman Sherman stated that was subject of our motion.

Ms. Collins asked about the checklist and asked if there were issues would they come back to the Commission and if there was something that needed to be approved by the Commission or is it something that once you have the checklist you go off and –

Ms. Simone said no she’d continue to relay information back to this Commission – this is really just a way of assigning departments and staff to wit particular tasks – as of right now somebody will call say the Police department and say there’s a problem on the trail then the Police department may call my office – they may call Public Works –they may call somebody else – there’s no real formal of who you contact so that’s what we’re trying to narrow down.

Ms. Simone said the goal is that staff will be assigned a particular properties and that they will go out quarterly and do an extensive walk through and looking at all of these points and then relaying that information – if there’s a parking problem that may rely that to Public Works or the Police department but she will get all that information back and that way she can track what’s happening on properties – if we see there’s a lot of dumping or that there’s illegally cutting trees or hunting on the property she will be able to keep track of that and rely that information back to this Commission.

Motion: That the Environment Commission provides its approval for the draft version of the Open Space Maintenance Categories plan as presented tonight.

Moved by Mr. Mercugliano. Seconded by Ms. Collins.

Ms. Heritage said she had made a comment when she was reading through it – is the timeline as to whether the requirements will be covered – so every three months all of these things will be gone through or are items covered one each month so it rotates through.

Ms. Simone stated the goal is that it would be extensive quarterly and then it may be supplemented if she happens to go on a property for a hike and she finds a problem then she's supplement that quarterly report with another report and then identify whatever responsible agencies involved.

Mr. Mercugliano said then to narrow that down and say what systems are going to guide action should (comment not clear on tape)....

Ms. Simone stated this document – the way that she had envisioned it – this is just to introduce the categories – she's going to flesh this out to identify roadway condition and then I'll get specific and I'll say the actually – there's a subsurface problem or whatever – it will go to Public Works – if it's a roadway condition relative to needing to clear trees that's a Parks issue.

Mr. Mercugliano said so this is one of a series of documents.

Ms. Simone stated this is the framework – everything will be built off of this – the responsibility designation will be built off of this (draft document).

Ms. Heritage said that once the social media site is up all the information posted on the kiosk can be accessed via a smart phone.

Ms. Simone said yes – that's a good point.

Ms. Heritage asked if there were any regulations when treating poison ivy and those kinds of things with chemicals that are used – she said she was thinking about when people walk their dogs and other animals – if its treated is there a way for people to know what is used.

Ms. Simone said anyone that would be straying a commercial product would have to have a pesticide license – she said she didn't know what the requirements were on municipal – if they need to post – but she's glad you brought that up because one thing that she's going to share with the Parks Department is that she found a product that's just clove oil – clove oil concentrate – you put that on poison ivy and it kills it in

**24 hours – its smells horrible its Clove times infinity – it sticks but it works and it's not toxic so that's something I hope that the town will be able to incorporate in limited use around public areas like kiosks.**

**Ms. Simone said this is something that she'll ask about that (Ms. Heritage's question).**

**Ms. Collins said she was curious when Ms. Heritage mentioned social media –what was the plan.**

**Ms. Heritage said she was just thinking where it's going in the future – that there could be links to the maps that you could access right from the kiosks.**

**Motion approved unanimously by Commission members present.**

**XI. Adjournment**

**Chairman Sherman thanked the Commission for their regular attendance throughout this past year and for all their participation at the meetings.**

**Chairman Sherman entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 p.m.**

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

**Respectfully submitted:**

**Carla Mills  
Recording Secretary  
Cheshire Environment Commission**