

**CHESHIRE ENVIRONMENT COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 11, 2014
TOWN HALL 84 SOUTH MAIN STREET CHESHIRE CT
ROOM 115 AT 7:00 PM**

Members present: Bill Sherman, Bob DeVylder, Dave Mercugliano and Jodee Heritage. Matt Abdifar arriving at 7:04 p.m.

Members not present: Carrie Collins-White and Daniel Grasso.

Staff: Suzanne Simone.

Guests: Mrs. McKinley, Donna Gaglardi, John McKinley and another member of the McKinley family were present.

I. Call to Order

Chairman Sherman called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

II. Roll Call

Ms. Heritage called the roll.

Members in attendance were Bill Sherman, Bob DeVylder, Dave Mercugliano and Jodee Heritage. Matt Abdifar arrived at 7:04 p.m.

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

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

Members not present were Carrie Collins-White and Daniel Grasso.

IV. Pledge of Allegiance

All present recited the pledge of allegiance.

V. Acceptance of Minutes: Regular Meetings of April 9 and May 14, 2014

Motion: To approved the minutes of the regular meeting of April 9, 2014 with corrections. Page 10 “decimate” to “disseminate” and page 11 “dispersed” to “dispensed”.

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

Motion: To approved the minutes of the regular meeting of May 14, 2014 with no corrections.

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

VI. Communications

Chairman Sherman said he did not have any communications to report.

Ms. Simone said she had no communications to report on.

VII. Calendar – Events

- 1. Fall Festival – September 6, 2014**
- 2. National Public Lands Day – September 27, 2014**

Chairman Sherman suggested members mark their calendars for the Town and Chamber of Commerce Fall Festival for September 6 and the National Public Lands Day on September 27.

Chairman Sherman said we can chat about these under new business.

VIII. Unfinished Business

Trails Day Event Summary

Chairman Sherman gave a summary of the June 7 Trails Day Event.

Chairman Sherman explained that in advance of the event advertisements were placed in various newspapers and approximately 17 folks had pre-registered with the Planning Department.

Ms. Simone said the event was advertised in the *Cheshire Herald*, *The Record Journal*, *The New Haven Register*, and *The Hartford Courant*. She explained after it was advertised in *The Hartford Courant* we started getting quite a bit of calls so it did seem it filled up quickly and in addition to the booklet from the CT Forest & Parks Association put out.

Ms. Simone stated the event did get a lot of interest. She explained during the pre-walk of site with Chairman Sherman they talked about capping the registration because Chairman Sherman was the only one leading the it

(the hike) so we did cap it then but we did continue to get more calls; she said we would have likely had close to 30 people.

Chairman Sherman said that the event wasn't even posted to Facebook for those very reasons (capped event).

Chairman Sherman explained that Carrie Collin-White represented the Commission at the walk; he said they had a canopy set up; the Environment Commission banner was hanging there; a folding table with water, ice and first aid kit; one of our open space signs was posted at the parking lot entrance.

Chairman Sherman explained that Carrie greeted and registered the attendees and offered the other literature that we had displayed on the table for folks that came; he said he introduced himself, Carrie and Patrick Hedden; he gave a brief orientation to the property; Allen from *The Cheshire Herald* appeared promptly before 9:00 am and took a couple of pictures so you may see a group photo in this week's or next week's edition of *The Cheshire Herald*.

Chairman Sherman went on to explain that Patrick Hedden led the hike since he knew the property like the back of his hand and because he did so much work on creating that blue trail with some classmates and other boy scouts and helpers.

Chairman Sherman explained there are now two trails – the existing orange trail and the new blue trail. He shared a copy of a trail map of this property with Commission members showing the orange and the new blue trail.

Chairman Sherman said it took about one hour to go up and then come back down the trail.

The guests in the audience asked to see the copy of the map.

Ms. Simone stated for the record that they (the guests) should recognize that that's not an official map – that's it's just an approximate so it's not anything the Commission is producing for the public as of right now.

Chairman Sherman said not until the site gets formally measured and asked Ms. Simone to explain how that gets done.

Ms. Simone explained that we do have a new GIS system and she is hoping they can produce this (map) in-house or at very least we have a vendor that supports our system then they could assist with that but now that we have the trails completed in the field then we can start getting the maps.

Chairman Sherman went on to say the trail was in very good condition and especially the new trail that was blazed – he stated that he and Ms. Simone were very impressed with the work that Patrick Hedden had done with the new trail.

Chairman Sherman said 21 people started the hike two folks only partially walked because of the steeper condition then they could handle; he said at the end of the walk 5 other people came to go on to the property as well – to walk it. He said there is no kiosk there yet – the kiosk is under construction at this point.

Ms. Simone asked Chairman Sherman if anyone expressed issues with finding the location.

Chairman Sherman stated no.

Ms. Simone said people that registered through email were sent directions on how to get there but she was curious to know if other people had any issues getting there.

Chairman Sherman stated no one expressed issues getting to the site.

Chairman Sherman said there were members of the McKinley family here visiting with us this evening – he asked if they had any observations or questions about the walk.

Mrs. McKinley said there are a lot of other trails on the property.

Chairman Sherman commented that at the end of the walk he did publicly thank Patrick Hedden and we showed our appreciation with a little round of applause.

Donna Gaglardi, Eileen McKinley's daughter addressed the Commission. She said she grew up on the property. She said in her opinion she was concerned about a lot of misrepresentation that she understood was going on; she said her sister attended the walk and she was troubled by some of the things she (her sister) said were said about her (Donna Gaglardi); she explained that her nephew is Patrick Hedden.

Ms. Gaglardi said she her sister told her that it was said on the walk that she planned on developing the property and she does not have those plans to develop the property; she said this concerns her. She said her Dad who was a builder did have plans at one time to develop the property – he never wanted the property to be turned into a park.

Ms. Gaglardi went on to talk about her position regarding the property and her concerns – she said she was concerned about things were said about her; she said she finds it very troubling.

It was noted that the property Ms. Gaglardi is discussing is the McKinley Christmas Tree Farm (not the Casertano property which was the subject of the Commission's discussion).

Chairman Sherman stated that we (the Commission) don't have any jurisdiction over that farm – we are just dealing the open space property.

Ms. Gaglardi continued to comment about was reported to her what was (or wasn't said) about what she planned or did not plan to do on her property; she said she has no plans to develop her property; she said she's concerned about what's being said about her; other family members are concerned to; and about her father who is now deceased.

Mr. Mercugliano stated the jurisdiction of the Environment Commission is the publicly held lands that were purchased by the Town of Cheshire to conserve open space so the adjoining property – your family's property is actually not at all a subjection of discussion to us.

Mr. Mercugliano stated whatever may or may not have been said by an individual – a private citizen on a walk (is not part of the Commission's concern).

John McKinley made comment about his concerns about what his other sister reported what was said on the walk.

Chairman Sherman said he appreciated them (the McKinley family) expressing their thoughts – he said he didn't hear any comments or any discussions like that that they were referring to on the walk.

Ms. Gaglardi said she and her sister are environmentalists; she wanted to go on the record to say that her dad was not an environmentalist (he was a builder); she said expressed her concerns about what she thinks is being said about her.

Ms. Simone stated that this Commission held a public event to introduce the public to this new trail and to come to the new parking lot – that the town is putting in a lot of time, money and effort to get this property – the Casertano property available to the public so this is the focus of discussion.

The Commission clarified that Patrick Hedden is not a member of the Environment Commission and the work he did on the trail was for a scout project.

IX. New Business

1. Next Commission Meeting: Chairman Sherman stated the next meeting would be held Wednesday, July 9, 2014.

2. Fall Festival – September 6, 2014

Ms. Simone said for fall festival the Commission may recall that in the past that this Commission shared a space with the Energy Commission; she said she has not spoken with the staff to the Energy Commission about fall festival yet but would this Commission like her to initiate that conversation and to sign both Commissions up if they are both into it.

Commission members agreed to have staff sign them up for the fall festival.

Chairman Sherman asked members to mark their calendars with this event; they can do some split shifts to cover the event like they did in the past. He said if he recalled a number of people would come up to the booth and take literature.

Ms. Simone said in the Planning Office they were able to dovetail an Environment Commission order with an order the department was placing so we are able to get more of the window decals – a 100 more of those – we have them as a give-a-way at the set up in the lobby (town hall) and they fly out of here pretty quickly.

3. National Public Lands Day – September 27, 2014

Chairman Sherman explained this event had been used to encourage members of the public to come out and help maintain the trails.

Ms. Simone stated yes – we’ve done that and tried to get volunteers to help out.

Chairman Sherman asked at this point did Commission members have a particular open space in mind or they could use it on a day to go on another hike.

Mr. Abdifar said they should do another clean up – whatever area needs it and wait to see what site needs it.

Mr. Mercugliano said he agreed with Matt – he said the opportunity to even walk the land or collect trash is always worthwhile – he said that with all our open spaces debris tends to collect so maybe they could do a couple of hikes and clean them up.

The Commission talked about cleaning up open space properties and the general conditions of a few of the sites.

Mr. DeVlyder suggested that where the kiosks are they install benches – nothing expensive – it would just be a few poles with a top (bench seat); it would be something inviting to the public; he talked about a few possible bench construction options.

Mr. Mercugliano asked if this cost of such came out of our budget or is there a town budget that we can recommend funds be given; where does that come from (the funds).

Ms. Simone said the Commission could pass a motion asking the town manager to release funds for the Commission for a bench; she said she knew in the past have been funds available for purchasing materials for a kiosk and things like that – paint for trail markings.

Mr. Mercugliano asked if they could get a cost of what it would take to build a bench.

Mr. DeVlyder said his thought was to have two poles – utilities like poles; something on the primitive side.

Ms. Simone asked if Mr. DeVlyder could come up with a simple design and a materials list for a bench so he could give the Commission some guidance as to what type of materials were needed and then they would be able to price that out and know what materials were needed.

Mr. DeVlyder stated yes.

Mr. Mercugliano said it's a great.

Ms. Heritage said she liked the idea.

Mr. DeVlyder said maybe Public Works had some old utility poles.

Ms. Simone said she could check with them (Public Works) and then Mr. DeVlyder could have an idea of what other materials that were needed she could get a price for that.

Chairman Sherman asked about some of the fancier benches at other parks and how those were funded and installed; and that Parks & Recs probably has jurisdiction over them.

Mr. Mercugliano said there's a memorial donation for those benches; he said there's a sizable donation to have one of them installed.

X. Adjournment

Chairman Sherman called for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:32 p.m.

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

Respectfully submitted by:

**Carla Mills
Recording Secretary**