I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m.

II. Roll Call

Randy Yale called the roll.

Commission members in attendance were David DeFusco, Randy Yale, William Sherman, and Bonnie Mayer.

Staff present: Suzanne Simone, Environmental Planner.

Absent members: John Pepper and Robert DeVylder, Sr.

Guest: John Sherman, UCONN student.

III. Determination of Quorum

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

IV. Pledge of Allegiance

All present recited the pledge of allegiance.

V. Acceptance of Minutes – May 5, 2010 – Special Meeting

Motion: To approve the minute of the May 5, 2010 special meeting; no corrections noted.

Moved by William Sherman. Seconded by Bonnie Mayer. The motion to approve the minutes was approved unanimously by Commission members present.

VI. Communications


   Ms. Simone stated the plan incorporated the changes that the Town Council had made previously; they changed some language specifically the phase “not limited to”. She said that change was submitted.
Ms. Simone stated the recommendations the Planning Committee made were adopted by the Town Council; the Planning Committee decided to go with their proposed changes and not the changes recommended by the Environmental Commission.

Ms. Simone said a memo did come from this Commission detailing why this Commission felt that some of the proposed changes were not in keeping with the content of the original draft; that did go in writing to Council members.

The Commission discussed the process regarding the submission of the proposed changes and how they should approach future discussions before the Planning Committee.

2. Parks and Recreation Bulletin Submission Deadline Schedule

Ms. Simone stated that the Parks and Recreation bulletin does cover some of the 2011 deadline dates; she said if the Commission was interested in having anything advertised in the bulletin – which in her opinion reaches the wide audience the Commission is looking for.

The Commission discussed their desire to publish Environmental Commission related events in the bulletin; it was agreed that a date for a Commission sponsored event (fall event) would be decided on by the next meeting as well as which edition of the bulletin to advertise it in.

3. Cheshire Fall Festival Vendor Application

Ms. Simone informed Commission members the Fall Festival will be held on Saturday, September 11, 2010 with a rain date of Sunday, September 12, 2010.

Ms. Simone explained that this Commission still has the ability to use the Town tent; she said if the Commission is interested, they could see if the Energy Commission would like to share tent space.

The Commission talked about their desire to distribute the tote bags donated by Whole Foods; Whole Food donated bags the last two years.

Ms. Simone said there is a company that can produce a similar bag that was given out the last two years; cost of the bags is approximately $1.00 per bag; the Commission could have their name printed on the bag.

Ms. Simone commented about the maps the Regional Planning Agency in Waterbury was going to help with; they sent one map that was not correct. The map was sent back for changes; they corrected that one.
Ms. Simone said she has asked the Town Planner to pass information along that the Commission is still waiting; they haven’t received a reply; she said it was not likely they would have the maps for September but they would have to wait and see.

VII. Calendar – Events

1. Cheshire Fall Festival- Saturday, September 11, 2010
   Rain date: Sunday, September 12, 2010

   Commission members discussed their attendance at the Fall Festival; members present thought it was likely they could attend the event.

   Mr. Yale said at the next meeting they could decide the schedule for the event.

   Commission members agreed they would like to have the reusable bags to give out at the event; there was discussion about the number of bags, the positive response the public had to the bags, funds available in the Commission’s budget to purchase bags and the possibility of having the bags donated for the festival.

   Mr. Sherman said he could ask a local grocer about the possibility of donating the bags; he would inquire and get back to the Commission with an answer.

   Ms. Simone agreed to contact Whole Foods to see if they would be interested in donating bags again this year.

2. National Public Lands Day- Saturday, September 25, 2010
   Rain date: Sunday, September 26, 2010.

   Ms. Simone said no event has been planned so far; she said there is no requirement that it be something as far a working day, it could also just be exploring a property.

   The Commission agreed to hold a hike of Roaring Brook to mark the National Public Lands Day on Saturday, September 25, 2010 at 9:00 a.m.; a flyer would be created to publicize the event at the Fall Festival.

3. Fall Lecture Series at the Cheshire Public Library
   Commission led public walk scheduled in conjunction with this series?

   Ms. Simone said the timing of this might work with trying to get some people to come in to give lectures on wildlife at the library; she said she was trying to get them in for that week in September – it would be a good tie in so everything could be advertised at the same time.
Ms. Simone said she was trying to get a speaker through DEP Wildlife Commission on Coyotes and Fisher Cats.

Ms. Simone said she is trying to get two events within one week and then the hike would make three events.

VIII. Unfinished Business

1. Tip of the Month

Mr. Yale said he has not yet submitted the tip of the month yet. The tip addresses the new recycling procedures.

Mr. Sherman said that he spoke with Public Works Director Joe Michelangelo regarding the recycling flyer; he said by now, everyone in Town should have received that information. The flyers would also be made available at the Fall Festival.

Mr. Yale said that he would like the issue addressed with the Town Council regarding the return of recycling bins to the Town parks; he said it seems like there should be a recycling bin at all the Town parks.

IX. New Business

1. Casterano Subcommittee

Mr. DeFusco said he attempted to get a few people to walk the site but it did not work out; he said he would double his efforts to get Commission members together and schedule a walk though and determine how they are going to proceed as to cleaning up the trails.

Ms. Simone said if there is a compressive plan then there would be a better likelihood that the Commission could get support from other Town agencies to help them out with heavy equipment and doing some of tough work opposed to having volunteers trying to battle the terrain.

There was discussion regarding parking to access the site but no formal plan has been established as of yet. Ms. Simone said she would contact with the appropriate Town agency to address the parking issue.

2. Discussion of Roaring Brook Property Walk: May 24, 2010

Mr. Yale said no one showed up to attend the walk; he said he thought the event was not publicized enough.

There was discussion about a large tree blocking the walking path.
Ms. Simone said she will follow up on this issue; she explained she had contacted the Park’s Department and they said they were going to take care of the issue with the tree.

Mr. Sherman commented about the deterioration of the water bars on the trail. He asked staff if the Town has some kind of maintenance plan for the park.

Ms. Simone said there was no plan for maintenance plan in place but the Parks Department and Public Works has been able to correct things that the Commission and staff have been able to identify. She said if there was more of a focus on maintenance issues then something might happen regarding maintenance.

The Commission discussed the need for a park maintenance plan including the use of volunteers to help clean up park areas; safety issues using volunteers is a concern.

The Commission agreed to have this item added to the agenda; this item would be addressed at the next meeting as a formal discussion.

3. Logo design/contest

Mr. Yale said that John Pepper had designed something; he said Mr. Pepper came up with a nice design but the question was did the Commission want to get folks in the community involved.

Commission members agreed to consider Mr. Pepper’s design before reaching out to the community.

Further discussion on this item would be addressed at the next meeting.

4. Quinnipiac Trail Extension Proposal

Ms. Simone said this was a proposal submitted by the Connecticut Forest and Park Association which is an organization that does a lot of trail maintenance; they design trails as well as maintain them and they have a large volunteer group and they do a lot of training.

Ms. Simone said the Connecticut Forest and Park Association is looking to extend the Quinnipiac Blue Trail that does go through Cheshire; they are looking to extend it on two Town properties – one being the Benz property at the intersection of Cornwall Avenue and Mountain Road and the second being an established part of Mixville recreation area.

Ms. Simone gave a brief report on the information that was submitted as part of the staff report. She said basically what the organization is looking to do is follow
the existing trail on the Benz property and take it out of low lying wetland areas in an effort to avoid all the wetlands that they can and to work further to connect this to the Mixville recreation area.

Ms. Simone explained that as part of the project the Connecticut Forest and Park Association would clear the area where the trail is to be; it's not their goal to cut down any trees; not only would they be doing this the one time to clean this area out and re-establish the trail, they would also mark it and then there would be periodic maintenance to it. She said so basically, it would be taking a trail that exists, at least on paper, and upgrading it and trying to get more people out on to that trail – she said the Blue Trail is fairly popular but did not know for sure what the user ship of the current trail is but she imagined the user ship of the property would increase once the trail was clearly established.

Ms. Simone explained that this property has access issues and private property needs to be accessed to get to Town property; the Connecticut Forest Department Association is aware of this and they are going to be working with this private property owner as well as all the other private property owners that go along the way from the Benz property to Mixville.

Ms. Simone said the Association is looking for comment from the Commission regarding the project; they are looking to get this project done sooner than later, ending in November 2010 and then designate a volunteer trail manager who would be the person who would go monitor this area and organize work parties to conduct clean-ups of maintenance.

Mr. DeFusco asked if this project would affect the management plan for Mixville Hills.

Ms. Simone said no – it shouldn't; she said there is not management plan for Mixville Recreation area.

Ms. Simone said the Connecticut Forest and Park Association would like to further extend the trail but they are aware of the existence of extensive wetlands; other options are being explored.

The Commission discussed the plan, other trails in Cheshire and future plans to extend the trail and access to the site.

Motion: That the Environment Commission give its formal approval for the project and forward it to the Town Manager or Town Council.

Moved by Randy Yale. Seconded by Bonnie Mayer. Motion approved unanimously by Commission members present.

Mr. DeFusco asked about the status of the request for easement for the property across the street from Darcy School.
Ms. Simone stated she would follow-up on this item.

Mr. Sherman asked if the Commission has given out tree seedlings in the past in honor of Earth Day events.

Ms. Simone said she thought that was something the Beatification Committee used to do.

Ms. Mayer said she thought that was for Arbor Day.

Mr. Sherman said the Commission might want to consider using some of their budget to purchase seedlings to give away.

Mr. John Sherman said you could purchase 1,000 seedlings for $250 from the DEP.

The Commission discussed the possibility of purchasing seedlings to give out for Earth Day 2011.

X. Adjournment

Randy Yale called for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:59 p.m.

Moved by Bonnie Mayer. Seconded by Dave DeFusco. Motion adjourned unanimously by Commission members present.

The next regular meeting of the Environment Commission is scheduled for Wednesday, September 8, 2010, at 7:00 p.m. at Town Hall, Room 115.

Respectfully submitted

Carla Mills
Recording Secretary
Cheshire Environmental Commission