Regular Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, March 10, 2010, 7:00 p.m.  
Town Hall - Room 207-209

I. CALL TO ORDER  
The meeting was called to order by Chairman David DeFusco at 7:03 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL  
Randy Yale called the roll.

Present:  David DeFusco; Robert DeVylder, Sr.; Randy Yale; William Sherman; Suzanne Simone, Environmental Planner, Anne Giddings, Town Council liaison.

III. DETERMINATION OF QUORUM  
A quorum was present.

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE  
The Pledge was recited.

V. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES  
January 13, 2010, Regular Meeting minutes. MOTION was made by Randy Yale to accept the minutes, SECONDED by Robert DeVylder. The motion to approve the minutes was unanimous.
VI. COMMUNICATIONS

1. Spring Events 2010 flyer
2. Outdoor events 2010 flyer
3. Mixville Hills access report
4. Casertano Management Plan - Planning Committee Draft
5. February 11, 2010 Planning Committee meeting minutes
6. Conflict of Interest Ordinance

VII. CALENDAR - EVENTS

1. April Events (spring events and outdoor events flyers)

Mr. DeFusco stated that April 13th and 14th are reserved at the library for whatever activities the Commission wants to sponsor. He is still in the process of trying to secure a speaker for one of those evenings. He has yet to hear back, but noted that he will more vigorously pursue the issue over the next few days.

Mr. DeFusco asked for other ideas from commissioners.

Mr. DeVylder asked what hours are reserved. Ms. Simone noted the hours are 4:00 to 9:00 p.m.

Mr. DeVylder asked if there was a particular topic to cover, and Mr. DeFusco noted it is open to ideas at this point. He questioned at what point should the library be notified of the Commission's plan. Ms. Simone said that library staff has inquired of her office about any plans for those dates. As soon as a decision is made, her office can notify the library.

Mr. Yale offered to hold an informal discussion with library patrons about various books on the environment that he has read.

Regarding the Commission's regular meeting on April 14th, if an event were being sponsored at the library on that evening, that event would preempt the meeting.
Mr. DeFusco suggested that if he is not able to secure a speaker for the 13th or 14th by midweek, that the commission yield those dates back to the library. He asked commissioners who would be available to be at the library between 4:00 and 6:00 p.m. No one would be available during those hours.

Ms. Simone noted that the Open Space Open House on April 22nd is the forum for the commissioners to talk to the public about town owned properties and access to them. That is actually being billed as the date and time to come in and bring materials and maps.

VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. April 2010 events calendar

Ms. Simone referred to the flyer highlighting April events, which is on the Town website, and also posted in Town Hall and in the library. This ties in to invitations that are being sent out to Boards, Commissions, council members, and community groups to attend these events, and especially the Open Space Open House. Ms. Simone had extra flyers and asked if anyone would like to post one at any other place such as Stop and Shop and Everybody's. Mr. DeFusco took a few.

Mr. DeFusco asked about the extent of advertising. Ms. Simone said that the event is being well advertised around town, and there will also be press releases. Mr. DeFusco volunteered to draft press releases for the April events. Mr. Yale asked whether this information has been publicized at the schools, noting that children would be interested particularly in the presentation about black bears in Connecticut. Ms. Simone said that it has not been specifically sent to the schools, although it is on local cable access. Discussion followed about interest in the subject, increased sightings in Connecticut, including in Cheshire. Ms. Simone stated that there is information on the DEP website, but that is not up to date. It was also noted that there are sightings that go unreported.

a. Commission invitation to other town commissions

b. Commission open space 'open house' display/distribution materials

Ms. Simone said that some of the open space information for display and distribution is out of date, one reason being that the Town has


purchased other properties adjacent to existing open space properties. The Regional Planning Agency of Waterbury has agreed to do some of the mapping for Cheshire. Ms. Simone will be working with them to get maps together. She is hopeful that these updated maps will be ready in the first week of April, and that they will be user friendly for the general public.

Mr. DeFusco suggested that these be made available for the public at the April 22nd event.

c. Commissioner participation with 'open house' event

Mr. DeFusco asked about commissioner participation on that night. Ms. Simone stated that would be ideal in order to put the word out to the community to come in and talk about town owned properties.

Mr. Yale confirmed that the time was 6:00 to 6:45 p.m. Mr. DeFusco and Mr. Yale plan to attend. Ms. Simone will make all of the information available ahead of time to commissioners.

d. April 13th/14th program

Mr. DeFusco clarified that he will try to obtain a lecturer for the 14th, and if that is not possible, the commission will have a regular meeting at the Town Hall on that date.

2. Mixville Hills property

a. Mixville Hills access report

Ms. Simone said that based on discussion at the January meeting, she put together the access report summarizing what the Commission had discussed, along with copies of the motions, and submitted it to the Town Manager. She had a conversation with the Town Manager after he had received the report, who suggested that she start working with the Town Attorney to approach private property owners to see if a right-of-way easement or an access agreement can be obtained. The budget process is the priority at this point in time, so the Town Council would not be able to review anything regarding property purchase for a couple of months. Ms. Simone will start working on this process with the Town Attorney immediately and keep the Commission informed.
Mr. DeVylder asked if there was money available for open space. Ms. Simone said that there is an open space account, but this issue goes through the Town Council.

Ms. Giddings noted that the Council has to be done by April 13th. After that, the Council will review what has been postponed.

Mr. DeVylder inquired whether there is currently money that could support a property purchase.

Ms. Giddings said yes, because it has budget implications. If there is money that has been allocated at referendum to be used for possible open space, that is the way the money is historically obtained. But the money isn't borrowed unless they are ready to purchase property, then borrowing the money has budget implications.

b. Outhouse removal

Ms. Simone confirmed that the outhouse on the Mixville Hills property has been removed by Public Works. They obtained permission from property owners to cross over to remove it. They will need to go back in the spring with heavy equipment to fill in the hole at the site.

3. Casertano Management Plan

Ms. Simone reminded the Commission where this issue currently stands. The draft of the management plan for this property had been drafted and sent to the Parks and Recreation Department, and then forwarded to the Planning Committee and the Town Council. In September, the Planning Committee had sent a request to the Environment Commission to reconsider some of the language, and proposed some changes. In September, the Commission reviewed those proposed changes, reviewed their original draft, and came out with their response. At the last meeting of the Planning Committee, they took a look at the response by the Environment Commission and their original comments for change, and included in the packet what the changes are. They kept some of the language from the Commission, and then made some additional changes. They are seen in the text, and Ms. Simone pointed them out.
Mr. DeFusco asked Ms. Simone what changes in the text concerned her the most. She can see that some of the language is not consistent with other management plans that have been adopted. The Commission had taken care in the language of previous management plans that were drafted. Ms. Simone pointed out specific changes to language in this management plan. She does not see anything that jeopardizes these properties, but that there are inconsistencies between this and previously adopted plans.

Mr. DeFusco said he is unclear what their logic is, and would be interested in drafting a letter to the committee again asserting previous positions and asking for clarification as to why they did what they did.

Ms. Giddings remembered a fairly long discussion about this issue at a Planning Committee meeting she happened to attend. She recalled Mr. Schrumm was concerned about the fact that in ten years everything changes, and someone else is looking at this with new eyes.

Mr. DeVylder questioned the exact location being discussed.

Ms. Giddings also discussed changes in climate that would perhaps necessitate the change.

Mr. DeFusco felt that it was important to get that put on the record, and reiterated his interest in drafting a letter to ask what their reasoning was. Mr. Yale agreed that communication could clarify the matter.

4. Tip of the Month

Mr. DeFusco drafted an article about Minimizing your Exposure to Man-made Toxins, which he offered to commissioners for feedback. He will email it to everyone.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

1. Conflict of Interest Ordinance

Ms. Simone said that this is annually provided by the Town Manager's office in the beginning of the year for commissioners to review. If there are any questions, Ms. Simone or the Town Manager can be contacted.
X. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION was made by Randy Yale to adjourn the meeting, SECONDED by Robert DeVylder. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous, and the meeting was adjourned at 7:37 p.m.

The next regular meeting of the Environment Commission is scheduled for Wednesday, April 14, 2010, at 7:00 p.m., at Town Hall, Room 207. In the event that a lecture is scheduled for that evening at the Library, the regular Environment Commission meeting at Town Hall will be cancelled.

Respectfully submitted,

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Cindy Riccitelli, Recording Secretary
Cheshire Environment Commission