I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chairman David DeFusco at 7:02 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Bonnie Mayer called the roll.

Commission Members present: David DeFusco; Robert DeVylde, Sr.; Bonnie Mayer; John Pepper; Staff present: Suzanne Simone, Environmental Planner; Town Council liaison: Anne Giddings.

III. DETERMINATION OF QUORUM

A quorum was present.

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge was recited.

V. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

March 10, 2010, Regular Meeting Minutes. MOTION was made by David DeFusco to accept the minutes, SECONDED by Bonnie Mayer. The motion to approve the minutes was unanimous.

VI. COMMUNICATIONS

Suzanne discussed that this section is listed under new business and will be discussed later.

VII. CALENDAR – EVENTS

Ms. Simone discussed the black bear event in which 40 people attended.

Events scheduled for next week are:

The canoe trip which is filled is scheduled on Friday April 23rd; Vernal Pool walk is scheduled for Wednesday April 21st, 10-11:30 a.m.; and DeDominicis Hike is on Thursday April 22nd, 10-12:00 p.m.
Ms. Simone assisted a Brownie troop who will name the vernal pools with wood plaques.

VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Open Space/ Open House Event, Thursday April 22nd, 2010, 6:00 p.m., library

According to Ms. Simone, the library room is available at 6:00 p.m. for the open space event. The Regional Planning agency will make updated maps of the open space properties free of charge for town. Information on the open spaces will be provided on the website for public.

Mr. DeFusco stated that he will attend the open house event.

2. Tip of the Month

Mrs. Giddings suggested a tip of planting native species as opposed to invasive species.

Mr. DeVylder described Bittersweet as an invasive species. Mrs. Mayer described Burning Bush as another invasive species.

3. Easement of Mixville Hills property:

Commission made motion to purchase property to have access to open space across from Darcy School. Anne Giddings stated that it will be difficult to purchase property during these tough economic times.

Mr. De Vylder, Sr. asked if there is money put aside for purchase of property. Mrs. Giddings stated that there isn’t actual money available only the potential for bonding. Mr. DeVylder wants a definite answer on this item.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

1. Staff Recommendations for Commission 2010

Mr. DeFusco stated that the purpose of the commission is to promote public awareness of the open spaces in town. The mission of the environmental commission includes the following:

   1. Electronic Cheshire Trails Book

Ms. Simone described that the information is out of date in the Cheshire Trails Book. The properties of Dime Savings, DeDominicis and Boulder Knoll are not even listed in the book. The information is supplemented on the website. Ms. Simone stated each open
space property needs a comprehensive review to include parking, topography descriptions, etc.. The Commission could assist in the update of maps.

Mr. DeVylder described that a brush hog is needed on the Casertano property to create the trails. Ms. Simone described that a comprehensive review is needed of each property.

Mr. DeFusco stated that the Commission could start with a review of the Casertano property and perform a walk-through. Ms. Mayer recommended that the members bring clippers to help on the walk.

The Commission decided to meet on Wednesday April 28th at 6:00 PM to review the Casertano property.

2. Updating of Open Space Management Plans

Mr. DeFusco described the properties that need updates to their management plans: Boulder Knoll, DeDominicis and Dime Savings and asked the Commission for volunteers to update the plans.

Mr. DeVylder stated a concern about crossing the 100 feet of brook on the DeDominicis property. Ms. Simone described that a motion needs to be made to bring items of concern up to the Commission.

Mr. DeFusco stated that the Commission should start with the review of one property. Mrs. Mayer volunteered to update the DeDominicis plan. Ms. Simone will forward the documents to Mrs. Mayer.

3. Volunteers and Educational Outreach

Ms. Simone is hoping that the boy scouts and girl scout troup and volunteer groups can help with marking of trails and assisting with the upkeep of the open spaces.

Ms. Simone described that the holidays are another useful tool to help with the cleanup and upkeep of the open space properties. CT. Trails Day might be a useful holiday to do this. The Conn. Forest and Park Association will advertise and promote town events.

Ms. Mayer described that the outreach events should be discussed again at the next meeting when there are more members in attendance.

4. Passive Recreation Program

Ms. Simone described that the Commission members should lead hikes to introduce the public to the open spaces. Mr. DeFusco stated that the Commission members should get together and review the properties first to become more acquainted with them.
Ms. Simone described that currently only one member (herself) leads hikes. Ms. Simone stated that the Conn. Forest and Park Association has an annual training program on leading hikes for families.

Mrs. Mayer stated that Roaring Brook Falls might be a good park to start. The Commission agreed to meet on Monday May 3rd at 6:00 p.m. to review Roaring Brook Falls. Ms. Simone will put together highlights of the property for Commission members.

Mr. DeVylder made a MOTION to seek volunteers to assemble a kiosk at the beginning of Ten Mile Lowlands on Dundee Drive. Mr. Pepper SECONDED the motion. The motion to assemble a kiosk was unanimous.

Mr. Pepper volunteered to be a boy scout liaison. Mr. DeFusco asked Mr. Pepper to report back on scout appropriate projects. Mr. DeFusco brought up that the Commission should decide what is described on the kiosk. Ten Mile Lowlands is currently vandalized again and covered with trash according to Ms. Simone.

5. Capitol Project Suggestions

Mr. Defusco asked the commission to get together Capitol project ideas. Ms. Giddings described that the Environmental Commission has one idea being the purchase of a property for access to Mixville Hills.

Ms. Simone stated that a comprehensive list needs to be compiled and recommended that one meeting should be set aside for capitol issues which can be reviewed and forwarded to the Town Council.

Mrs. Giddings showed the map of a potential purchase of a property to get access to Mixville Hills property and it was decided that it will be discussed at next meeting.

MOTION to fix wetlands on DeDominicis property by Robert DeVylder. Ms. Simone stated that more specifics need to be gathered to identify the area. Mr. DeFusco stated that this will be discussed as first item on the next meeting. Ms. Simone will bring maps to next meeting on that property. No action was taken on this motion.
X. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION was made by Robert DeVylder to adjourn the meeting, SECONDED by Bonnie Mayer. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous, and the meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:35 p.m.

The next regular meeting of the Environment Commission is scheduled for Wednesday, May 12, 2010, at 7:00 p.m. at Town Hall, Room 115.

Respectfully submitted

Erin Bennett, Recording Secretary
Cheshire Environmental Commission