

APPROVED MINUTES

**Ridgefield Conservation Commission
Flood and Erosion Control Board**
Town Hall Annex, 66 Prospect Street
Ridgefield, CT 06877 (203) 431-2713
January 9, 2006

A meeting of the Ridgefield Conservation Commission was held at the Town Hall Annex, 66 Prospect Street Ridgefield, Connecticut 06877 on January 9, 2006 at approximately 7:40 p.m.

The following members were present:

Susan Baker
Doug Barile
Carroll Brewster
Dave Cronin
Ben Oko
George Orlan
Patricia Sesto
Carol Stoddard

Dr. Oko chaired the meeting. Nancy McDaniel was present to take minutes. Kitsey Snow observed part of the meeting.

MINUTES

The minutes of the December 12, 2005 meeting were reviewed. Upon motion duly made, seconded and unanimously carried, it was

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the meeting of December 12, 2005 be and hereby are approved and ordered filed in the minute book of the Commission and the Town Hall minute book.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Mr. Brewster reported that no bills had been received since the previous meeting. At the next meeting, he will make a progress report on the budget at the midyear point.

Dr. Oko reported that he and Mr. Brewster had made a \$40,000 down payment on the Old Sib property, which should close at the end of April.

OPEN SPACE

Maintenance/Posting/Projects

Cell Phone Tower at Hemlock Hills - Mr. Cronin brought up the proposal to erect a cell phone tower at Hemlock Hills. A letter will be written to the Board of Selectmen stating that Hemlock Hills, part of Ridgefield's prime open space, is not an appropriate location for a cell tower. Mr. Orlan will check the wording of the deed before any letter is written on the subject.

Trail at Beaver Brook Road – After receiving a suggestion that a trail be built along Beaver Brook, Mr. Cronin checked the area and the pertinent deeds. One early deed described a conservation easement conveyed to the Conservation Commission, but subsequent deeds omitted that information. Mr. Orlan suggested asking the Town Clerk to help sort out the problem.

Kiosks at Ives Trail – The Ives Trail Committee plans to erect map kiosks for the trail. Mr. Cronin mentioned Pine Mountain Road and Lake Windwing as sites for the kiosks. Dr. Oko said that Bennetts Pond and the Lookout already were planned. He will pass the other locations on to the Ives Committee.

2006 Open Space Projects – Mr. Cronin distributed a list of projects for the coming year and asked for assistance from members in accomplishing them. He recommended a townwide trail-maintenance day that would require some oversight by members. Mr. Cronin and Dr. Oko will meet to plan the implementation.

Active Rangers – Mr. Cronin described the two letters sent to all Rangers asking them to check their properties and report on their condition to the office. Only one-third of the total number of Rangers responded. There is some question about the others' commitment to the program. Time will be devoted to discussion of the subject at the next meeting.

SHARING SESSIONS

December 13 – Mr. Barile reported that neighbors opposed the proposed riding ring at 85 Spring Valley Road. The applicant's engineer acknowledged that the owner had already filled wetlands. The issue of using wetlands for grazing was raised. The application was continued to January 17. 214 Wilton Road West, concerning a stream diversion, was also continued.

December 20 – Meeting cancelled

January 3 – Ms. Baker reported that most of the testimony about Bryon Avenue involved drainage problems. The town's consultant expressed concern about the biofiltration system, which would send water off the property. The conduit off Barry Avenue is inadequate to carry the greatly-increased runoff. Data necessary to prove that the proposed plan would work was missing. The public hearing was closed.

PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION, INLAND WETLANDS BOARD

Meetings for Attendance
January 10 – Mr. Cronin

January 17 – Mr. Orlan
February 7 – Mr. Brewster
February 14 – Mr. Barile
February 21 – Ms. Stoddard

NEW BUSINESS

31 Country Club Road – Ms. Sesto summarized the Commission's position on the pond-dredging application. The spoils should be composted on site to kill off Japanese knotweed in the area to be graded. There should be a 5-15 foot buffer back from the water's edge plus a five-foot shelf with emergent vegetation within the pond itself to enhance habitat and water quality. A tree or two should be planted to protect water quality. Dredging will not affect the water level of surrounding areas, but may affect thermal pollution in the pond itself. The Commission would welcome comments from the applicant's landscape architect.

143 Wilton Road West – Dr. Oko pointed out a barrier to correct the problem of sedimentation. The existing dam will remain, and the culvert will be repaired. Water will be pumped down the hill. The Commission's position was that plantings along the edge should be increased to six-eight feet and care should be taken to avoid damage to the buffer. The trees and plantings on the far bank must not be damaged. Spoils will be taken off site.

Ms. Sesto was concerned that comments made in the field by the individual who will dredge the pond are not on the record. The applicant should be requested to add to the plan those details that were discussed on site: sediment forebay area, maintenance of a separating distance from the work area to the dam, work on the overflow riser, and the possibility of removing excess spoils from the site.

352 Florida Hill Road – Dr. Oko described the dredging application in which water will be taken from the pond to two sedimentation basins prior to dredging. The spoils will remain on site in an upland area. Ms. Sesto enumerated the points to be incorporated in the Commission's letter. There should be more documentation on the disposition of spoils and assurance that the treated water will be returned to the pond and not allowed to run down the hillside to the Norwalk River. Workers must be careful not to disrupt the banks of the pond and the emergent area within five feet of the pond. More information on the disposal of spoils and proper erosion and sedimentation controls should be incorporated in the plan. Disposal areas must be beyond the regulated areas.

At the conclusion of discussion of the three properties above, upon motion duly made, seconded and unanimously carried, it was

RESOLVED, that the conclusions stated in the record of discussion on 31 Country Club Road, 143 Wilton Road West and 352 Florida Hill Road be detailed in letters to the Inland Wetland Commission

OPEN SPACE ACQUISITIONS AND DONATIONS

Boy Scout Property - Dr. Oko displayed a map of the Boy Scout property and an adjoining lot also owned by the Scouts. Both properties totaling 53 acres are now being offered for sale. Dr. Oko has discussed the subject with John Frey, who is investigating the availability of state funding for open space lands.

OTHER BUSINESS

Walk Book – Ms. Baker distributed copies of the revised Walk Book. She asked members to read it before the next meeting and then make suggestions and corrections. She is working on obtaining a photograph for the cover.

Email Member Schedules – Dr. Oko asked all members to email their schedules to the office when they plan to be out of town and to let him know if they will attend walks and meetings by replying to reminder emails.

Deer Committee Ordinance Amendment – The Committee will propose an amendment to allow deer hunting on Town open space lands. Ms. Sesto asked members to think about the amendment and its implications for discussion at the next meeting. Ms. McDaniel will ask Tom Belote to email his documentation to the office for distribution to members.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion duly made, seconded and unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned at 9:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy McDaniel