

**CONSERVATION COMMISSION  
TUESDAY JANUARY 9, 2024 at 6:30 P.M.**

The Town of Berlin, Conservation Commission held its regular meeting in-person and by remote video conference call on Tuesday January 9, 2024 at 6:30 p.m. This meeting was held in person in the Engineering Room 120, Berlin Town Hall, 240 Kensington Road, Berlin, CT and remotely by ZOOM video and telephone conference as provided on the agenda.

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**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Chairman Michael DeLorenzo, Vice Chairman Hoffman arrived at 7:35  
Mary Kathryn LaRose, Thomas Heisler, Karl Lewis

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Rob Ramsey, Karen Pagliaro

**STAFF**

Maureen Giusti, Town Planner, Alexa Gorlick, Assistant Town Planner

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman DeLorenzo called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

**AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS**

Chris Thomas, Toby Sznaj, Rob Lemire

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Vice Chairman Hoffman moved to approve November 14, 2023, seconded by Commissioner LaRose, passed unanimously.

Commissioner LaRose made a motion to add Community Garden to Use of Town Lands, seconded by Commissioner Heisler, passed unanimously.

Commissioner Heisler made a motion to move Recreational Trails Grant to the to the top of the agenda, seconded by Commissioner Lewis, passed unanimously.

**Recreational Trails Grant with City of Middletown - upcoming Grant proposal application:**

Jim Mahoney, Economic Development Coordinator, explained to the commission the proposed grant would be used for things such as remaining cart path improvements, connections between Pistol Creek, Lamentation Mountain and the Mattabesset Trail. Additional improvements would be: Bog bridges, foot path along Atkins Street, additional accessibility for the hearing impaired and wheelchair grades with gentle slopes.

Commissioner Lewis made a motion to support the 2024 Grant Proposal Application in conjunction with the City of Middletown as outlined on the application, seconded by Commissioner LaRose, passed unanimously.

Commissioner Lewis made a motion to move the Trail Updates up on the agenda, seconded by Commissioner LaRose, passed unanimously.

**Trail updates - Post storms trail repairs:** Maureen Giusti reported trail damage occurred after the last storm, CFPA and Public Grounds have been working on the repairs.

**Sign damage and repair:** Vital Signs is finishing and repairing signs. The Ragged Mountain trailhead on West Lane map, board and kiosk was vandalized and needs updating. The Commission discussed an updated sign with a modular trail map and open space branding would be appropriate.

## USE OF TOWN LANDS – Audience of Citizens

### Pistol Creek: Parks and Recreation discussion regarding installation of a Disc Golf course:

Rob Lemire, Disc Golf Course builder presented to the commission. Mr. Lemire explained Disc Golf to the commission. This is a high agility sport and is an alternative to sports such as soccer and football. He has built a few of these courses in the State of Connecticut. Disc Golf is for all ages and consists of throwing a Frisbee in the woods. It's the second fastest growing sport in the US. The goal is to create clubs in the school system. This sport can be played by disabled people. It consists of practice, focus, and timing. Stores such as Dicks Sporting Goods and specialty sports shops carry the items to play this game. Trees are great in this game because they are obstacles. There is an App for this sport (UDisc). Mr. Lemire's suggestion would be One basket / Two T Pads for each "hole" at the Pistol Creek property. The commission questioned what the physical alternations would be made to the property. Beside the baskets and the T Pad the only enhancement would be an elevated basket surround by dirt, rock or wood. This would not interrupt any of the walking paths on the property as presented to the commission. The limited locations where the fairway crosses a path, hikers on paths always have the right of way in this sport. There are also portable baskets, which can be removed. Mr. Thomas noted he has used them with his family at Pistol Creek. Disc Golf etiquette allows groups to play through, just as a group may in ball golf. Mr. Lemire reported Park and Recreation staff has verbally supported the project. His next step after Conservation is to get a formal approval from the Parks and Recreation Commission. Commissioner Lewis is in support of this proposal but would like assurance that the property is kept esthetically pleasing. The commission would also like reassurance that the off-leash dog use will not be disturbed. The commission loves the idea but noted detailed plans and multiple departments' vetting the use should be done before giving formal support.

Vice Chairman Hoffman made a motion to encourage the group to continue to meet with other town personal and encourage further vetting. The Commission would like to see a finalized plan, seconded by Commissioner Lewis, passed unanimously.

Community Garden: Maureen Giusti reported the applications were updated for 2024. March 1, 2024 is the date returning gardeners can reserve plots. The garden will be open April 1, 2024 through November 3, 2024. The well and composting verbiage was updated to reflect changes at the garden and the map was corrected.

Commissioner Heisler made a motion to open the Community Garden April 1, 2024 - November 3, 2024 as well as support changes to the rules, seconded by Commissioner Lewis, passed unanimously.

Conservation easement restriction compliance issues: Maureen Giusti reported several issues with town land areas. She noted the Planning and Zoning Commission requests builders put up a permanent stone marker on conservation easements. The Conservation Commission supports this concept due to the current post & sign markers being removed by adjacent property owners. There was discussion to propose an amendment to the Subdivision Regulations to mandate stone monuments along easement and open space areas, as they would be more permanent than the current requirement of signs on a post. Properties subject to current enforcement investigations include Natures Edge, Brittany's Path, Watch Hill, Walden Court, Great Oak and Silver Island.

### PZC APPLICATION COMMENTS

- I. Site Plan Amendment  
Complete Sheet Metal  
Jeff Michaud  
496 Four Rod Road  
No Comment

Vice Chairman Hoffman gave an update on Plan of Conservation and Development. He is working on the summary of what the Conservation Commission is responsible for. He will scan and forward the summary to Ms. Giusti for distribution to the commission.

### ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Lewis made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 pm. seconded by Commissioner Heisler, passed unanimously.

Submitted by,  
Marlo Thomas Matassa  
Recording Secretary

RECEIVED FOR RECORD  
BERLIN TOWN CLERK

2024 JAN 16 AM 10: 29

*Katrina Wall*

BERLIN, CT.