

**Minutes of the Regular Meeting of
The Conservation Commission – City of Milford
Tuesday, January 15, 2013 – 6 p.m.**

- 1. Call to Order/Roll Call** – Bill Poutray, Steve Johnson, Bill Blotney, Claire Casey, Keith Dunn, Maureen Mauro, Jerry Loiselle, Dan Drago and Oden Seaholm.
- 2. Public Comments** – There were no public comments.
- 3. Election of Officers** – The officers will remain the same for 2013:
 - Bill Poutray – Chairperson
 - Steve Johnson - Vice-Chairperson
 - Claire Casey – Secretary

Bill thanked Claire and Oden for signing up for three more years on the Conservation Commission. Bill feels that last year was a turning point for the commission with several milestones including the creation of the Open Space/Natural Resource Agent position. The City of Milford has hired Steve Johnson for this position.

4. Unfinished Business

- a) **Eco-Collaboration Meeting** – This meeting is being coordinated by Maureen Mauro and Claire Casey. Maureen thanked Dan Drago for his assistance in securing a meeting room at Subway World Headquarters to hold the meeting in. The meeting will take place on Friday, April 5th from 6 – 8 p.m. Maureen and Claire will be meeting after the Conservation Commission meeting this evening until 9 p.m. to discuss plans and develop an agenda for the Eco-Collaboration meeting using the Plan of Conservation and Development as the base. The meeting will be a perfect forum to collaborate with other conservation based groups in Milford, introduce Steve Johnson, the Open Space/Natural Resource Agent and to hear what concerns and suggestions people in the community have. Some of the groups to be included will be the Mayor's Open Space Advisory Committee, ECC, Tree Commission, etc. Also suggested was the Walnut Beach Association and the Woodmont Beach Association. Maureen and Claire will discuss further at 7:30 p.m. who to invite and how to open it up to the public. Bill Blotney mentioned that the Milford Striped Bass Club might be interested in attending. Jerry Loiselle thought that DPW should be involved. Maureen said her goal is to collaborate with city departments.
- b) **Milford Litter Challenge** – Maureen mentioned that last year's litter challenge exceeded its goal. She feels the challenge this year should include the entire city which has 50,000 residents and the challenge should be 50,000 pieces of litter. Bill Poutray suggested beginning the challenge in mid-March when the weather improves and ending it on Earth Day which has been postponed until May. The Earth Day Facebook page might be used as a vehicle for people to post how much litter they

picked up along with any pictures. Vincent Piselli was looking into getting colored bags for the litter pickup to differentiate them from other garbage. Another suggestion was made to have people “adopt a spot” for litter pick up. Another suggestion was made to reach out to all the schools in Milford. Maureen would like to have an official kick-off of this program. Maureen said she would like to form a committee to make further plans. Claire Casey and Dan Drago volunteered to join the committee.

- c) Open Space & Natural Resource Agent Role – Steve Johnson was hired for this position. He has an office in the Parsons Complex which used to hold the archived files for the Milford Conservation Commission. Steve is working on going through all the files in the office and organizing this valuable information. He feels his role is threefold:
1. To work with the City of Milford to develop a comprehensive listing of all open space in the city. There are 550 city owned undeveloped properties and 30 land conservation properties. Not all city owned undeveloped properties are permanent open space, but this comprehensive review is needed to create a reference able baseline inventory.
 2. To find ways to connect with members of the communities in Milford, i.e., scouts, volunteers, etc.
 3. To seek grant funding for Open Space & Natural Resource projects and for sustaining the role of his position beyond the first year. This is funded for this year through the open space account for acquisition and maintenance of open space.

Bill Poutray asked Steve if there was any role that the Conservation Commission could play to help with the inventory process of open space. Steve said he is working with GIS on the open space process and will reach out to the Conservation Commission at one point to assist. Steve mentioned that the Conservation Commission did an open space survey in 1989 of approximately 150 parcels, but he said there have been changes in both the number of recognized open space properties as well as their conditions. Steve gave an example of Heritage Sound; 1991 vs. 2013. He would like to start a stewardship process and reach out to scouts, community neighborhood groups and organizations. As an example he spoke about invasive species and working with volunteers, but at the same time making sure the work is done properly. He spoke about possibly having outside experts help provide guidance to a coordinated volunteer invasive plant management effort at a demonstration site.

- d) Silver Beach Post-Sandy Cleanup – Steve reported that between 200 and 300 people helped to do trash pickup after Hurricane Sandy on November 25th at Silver Beach and Ft. Trumbull Beach. He said the cleanup was very effective and gratifying. DPW was there the following day to pick up all the bagged trash.

5. New Business

- a) Great Marsh Cleanup on Martin Luther King Day (1/21/13) – Steve has organized an MLK day of service at Silver Sands State Park for Monday, January 21, 2013 to clean up the Great Creek Marsh at Silver Sands which is a vital habitat area. He said since the hurricane, the marsh has been littered with gas cans, fencing, back yard sheds, building debris and plastic. The clean up will take place between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. He has reached out to many groups to ask them to stop by for anytime they have available to volunteer with this project. He said the marsh is accessible by foot, but to dress warm for the weather and wear winter work gloves and appropriate foot wear. DPW will be bringing equipment to assist with picking up the large items.
- b) Bill Blotney spoke about the dredging of the ponds. Bill Blotney mentioned that there are two new access points to the Solomon Property on Wolf Harbor Road. Steve said he has spoken to the police about this and agreed that the ATV's are still a problem. Steve mentioned that Shelton is addressing their ATV issues with a media campaign. Milford has sent approximately 1,400 letters to people within the West River Street area to raise awareness of the problem. Steve would like to see open space boundaries posted with signage. He also said people need to be made aware of the penalties for destruction of wetlands.
- c) Maureen asked the commission members to look at the Bigelow Tea website. Bigelow Tea, which is headquartered in Fairfield, has acquired 127 acres of the Charleston Tea Plantation in South Carolina to protect it from future real estate development. They have also acquired 220 acres of land in New Hampshire to maintain it as undeveloped land.

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Berberich

Minutes not approved by the Commission