



**MINUTES
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING
April 8, 2025
7:00 PM - TOWN HALL-ENFIELD ROOM
820 Enfield St, Enfield, CT**

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Cote called the meeting to order at 7:10pm.

2. ROLL CALL

Present: William Cote, Karen LaPlante (via virtual participation), Gretchen Pfeifer-Hall, Kathleen Vose, Nancy Wyzga

Absent: Michael Dynia

Also present were Director of Planning, Laurie Whitten; and Recording Secretary, Rebecca Jones.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. March 11, 2025

MOTION by: Gretchen Pfeifer-Hall **seconded:** Nancy Wyzga to approve the March 11, 2025 minutes as amended to revise 'Char' to 'Chair' on page 2.

UPON A SHOW OF HANDS VOTE, the Chair declared the motion approved. Yes: William Cote, Karen LaPlante, Gretchen Pfeifer-Hall, Kathleen Vose, Nancy Wyzga No: None Abstain: None.

4. PUBLIC HEARINGS

None.

5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

A. Grava Properties Presentation

Grava Properties partner Richard Conner was present for discussion. The Conservation Commission has an interest as this project is next to the Connecticut River, and they want to ensure the area is protected. This project is for a 156-unit development across from Bigelow Commons at the former Leavitt's site. It is a Brownfield site and a grant has been awarded to fund cleanup. Mr. Conner shared a preliminary site plan that highlighted a walking trail along the river. Commissioner Vose asked about tree plantings and tree removal. Chair Cote confirmed that all work will be done on the outside of the retaining wall. Commissioner LaPlante asked about snow removal. Mr. Conner believes it will likely be hauled off-site. Commissioner Pfeifer-Hall asked how the developers chose 156 units. It is

a mix of flats and two-bedrooms. They are limited by parking requirements as underground parking is not feasible at this site. It is transit-oriented development and this is the type of housing you see in these districts. They have not presented their application to the Planning and Zoning Commission yet. Commissioner LaPlante noted that the importance of the trees and shrubs slows down water flow going directly into the river and keeps the water cooler during hot summer months during heavy rainfall. Mr. Conner spoke about lighting and that the developers are mindful of Enfield being a dark sky community. Commissioner LaPlante recommended bollard lighting on the river walkway. The developers plan to hold this property longterm as their financing requires them to hold for at least 10 years. Mr. Conner shared a brief history of the company and its values. Mr. Conner will get more information related to the runoff treatment plan. They will have full-time on-site property management. They are opening another transit-oriented development in Windsor called Founder's Square in June. Their sole focus is transit-oriented development. Commissioner LaPlante asked about a pipe seen on the site plan. Mr. Conner shared information related to amenities. Ms. Whitten confirmed that the conservation overlay zone does not exist as it was disbanded by the State of Connecticut. Trash storage was shared. Generators on site are privately owned. Ms. Whitten explained that in order to remediate the site, many of the trees will have to come down. The developers will replant as many as is reasonable, but this must happen in order to remediate the coal ash all over the site. There is a property owned by Eversource nearby that is also a Brownfield site. There is a long-term vision of rehabbing this property and creating a business center with various shops. This is why the parking is designed as such. The commissioners thanked Mr. Conner for his time.

6. CORRESPONDENCE/STAFF REPORT

Ms. Whitten is working on the budget and would like the commissioner's feedback on what conferences they would like to attend so she can plan accordingly. Chair Cote would like to budget for all current members to attend CACIWC. Commissioner LaPlante reminded Ms. Whitten that there are still open positions on the commission. Commissioner Vose discussed training opportunities at UConn.

Commissioner Pfeifer-Hall asked Ms. Whitten about the proposed recycling center in East Longmeadow that borders Enfield. It is a state requirement because it is an adjacent community. Ms. Whitten confirmed leadership will be commenting on it.

Chair Cote spoke with Aaron Markavitch, Director of Economic and Community Development, and they will be getting on a call later this week to discuss a grant for urban trees. Commissioner Pfeifer-Hall explained that the commissioners must be thoughtful as to what trees they plant. Chair LaPlante did not receive the email with the call instructions and asked Commissioner Cote to send it again.

Commissioner LaPlante reminded the commissioners of the upcoming Hazardous Waste collection.

Commissioner Pfeifer-Hall asked why the PZC liaison has not attended the recent meetings.

7. APPROVAL OF INVOICES/OTHER FINANCIAL MATTERS

None.

8. REPORTS OF OFFICERS, COMMITTEES AND STAFF

Economic Development Commission has been invited to several business openings. UConn girls basketball players will be at Raising Cane's the next day.

The Spring Splash at the Scantic River went well. There were fewer registered boats than in past years, but the event ran smoothly.

Chair Cote asked Ms. Whitten about an update to the Town's GIS system. Unfortunately, there has been little movement on this.

Commissioner LaPlante asked Ms. Whitten if the parcel of land behind All American Assisted Living was preserved as farmland. Ms. Whitten believed it was rented by a nearby farmer but will go out and confirm.

9. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. ECC Goals for 2025

- Create a list of potential or valued open space parcels and establish a process for submitting open space parcels to Town Council for consideration and purchase
- Search for and submit a grant request for natural resources
- Identify a location in town that would benefit from planting trees
- Identify vernal pools in Enfield
- Elm/Shaker Community Garden project
- Creating a trail map

The lists received from the Assessor's Office is not clean per Chair Cote. They do not understand what the terminology is, and the codes can only be explained by the Assessor's Office. They need to find where the open spaces are and evaluate for value. Chair Cote also has to figure out the process for submission once priority parcels has been finalized.

Commissioner Wyzga spoke with Jane Seymour of UConn who recommended contacting a professor to see if they have a grad student looking for a project. This is now the end of the semester, so this must be done in September. She also would like to speak with Mr. Markavitch as he had used a UConn grad student for a project before. There is a TIF meeting on April 23rd and Chair Cote will speak with him then.

There is no way for the commissioners to identify all the vernal pools in Enfield, but they would like to gather enough information to prepare information to share with the elementary schools. Ms. Whitten explained what qualifies as a vernal pool. Commissioner Vose spoke about a property on Oliver Road and Post Office Road that is very swampy.

B. List of Open Space

None.

10. NEW BUSINESS

None.

11. DATE OF NEXT REGULAR MEETING

A. May 13, 2025

12. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by: Nancy Wyzga, seconded: Kathleen Vose to adjourn.

Upon a **SHOW-OF-HANDS** vote being taken, the Chair declared the motion adopted unanimously, and the meeting stood adjourned at 8:31pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Vose

Secretary

Rebecca Jones

Recording Secretary