

**NORWALK CONSERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES**

**JANUARY 21, 2003**

**ATTENDANCE:** Matthew Caputo,  
Vice Chairman; Marny Smith; Larry Losio;  
Ed Holowinko.

**STAFF:** Alexis Cherichetti, Sr. Environmental Officer

**OTHERS:** Anne Cagnina

The Meeting was called to order at 6:15 PM by Mr. Caputo. He stated that there was one item on the agenda, which was the prioritization of topics to tackle during these non-regulatory Conservation meetings.

Mr. Losio suggested that each of the Commissioners at the meeting write down a list of their own priorities and then combine the lists and prioritize what is there.

Mr. Caputo stated that he doesn't need to make a list because his only priority is open space.

Ms. Smith agreed with Mr. Caputo, but added that before anything really gets done, the Commission needs a full complement of Commissioners. She noted that two of the alternate positions were vacant and some regular members were not active.

Mr. Losio began to compile the start of this verbal list on a large pad of paper.

Mr. Holowinko suggested that the Commission work on changing the zoning regulations. Mr. Losio suggested that everyone should first focus on topics that the Conservation Commission has direct control over. Mr. Holowinko then stated that he would also like to see positive changes along the Norwalk River Corridor. Mr. Losio agreed that he would like to see a variety of changes along the River Corridor himself.

Ms. Smith suggested that the Conservation Commission work on a variety of regulation amendments and listed stormwater and run-off, effects of blasting, controlling upland activities, drought management, and septic system requirements as possible areas to focus on. Ms. Cherichetti stated that some of those could be Conservation, acting as the Inland Wetland Agency, regulation changes, but that others could be a statement of recommendation to other agencies. It was then agreed that the topics were all considered important and that the mechanism of affecting those issues is another discussion.

Mr. Holowinko stated that he would like to revise the Conservation Commission by-laws, particularly the areas that are contradictory. He also noted that some basic Conservation Commissioner education would be very helpful.

Mr. Losio added that he would like to see more information sharing with other Commissions. He quickly added that he was referring to other Conservation Commissions in other towns and would welcome a regional Conservation Commission gather of some sort. Ms. Smith noted that the local League of Women Voters had hosted an evening seminar for regional Conservation Commissions last year in the town of Greenwich and that staff of Greenwich Conservation and Inland Wetland Commission spoke.

Mr. Caputo interjected that the list was growing big and that there was just too much. Ms. Smith countered that she thinks open space is important, but there is just no money right now, so the focus should shift to issues that don't cost the City so much. Mr. Losio challenged Ms. Smith's comment by pointing out that it does not take much money to establish a framework. He added that you have to start somewhere and the City must have an established framework to address the acquisition of open space before any actual action will ever take place. Mr. Caputo agreed with Mr. Losio and explained that maybe right now the City can't afford to build the airplane, but that doesn't mean that the Conservation Commission can't work on building the runway.

Mr. Caputo asked if there were any other topics to add to the list and Mr. Holowinko expressed his desire that there be more public involvement with regard to what the Conservation Commission is doing. He suggested that, for example, the Commission have articles placed in the newspapers. Ms. Smith added that a newsletter would be grand. Mr. Caputo added that he would like to send the Senior Environmental Officer into the public schools to talk about conservation issues. Ms. Cherichetti stated that she believes that the production of a Conservation newsletter would be an excellent start, and added that the process of getting the articles together would be a good stepping stone to addressing some of the other topics suggested tonight.

Mr. Losio asked if everyone agreed that the following were either a major priority or could be accomplished concurrently with other priorities: 1) open space, 2) achieving the full compliment of active commissioners, 3) commissioner education, and 4) public education via a newsletter. There was a consensus that these were the best topics to tackle first. It was decided that the meeting on February 18, 2003 would begin with an overview of Conservation Commissioner function and protocol by the Senior Environmental Officer.

A motion was made to adjourn, and the meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.