

**NORWALK CONSERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES**

**MAY 20, 2003**

**ATTENDANCE:** MATT CAPUTO, VICE CHAIRMAN; MARNY SMITH; ANN CAGNINA; LARRY LOSIO; ANDY KYDES; JANE CORCILLO; ED HOLOWINKO

**STAFF:** ALEXIS CHERICHETTI, SENIOR ENVIRONMENTAL OFFICER; ERIN LEONARD, CONSERVATION STAFF

**OTHERS:** RYAN JOCKERS OF THE NORWALK ADVOCATE

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 6:15pm.

**DISCUSSION**

**A. PUBLIC EDUCATION**

Marny announced that she submitted an article about buffers for review by Alexis. Ann suggested an addendum at the end of the article that included a little explanation of the Conservation Commission-i.e. members and their role.

- The Commission would like to see a profile of the Senior Environmental Officer in the local newspapers-The Hour, The Norwalk Advocate, The Norwalk Citizen.
- Larry suggested that rather than a commissioner write the article, perhaps a paper would be interested in doing a weekly spread on various city government employees. (A "who's who" in City Hall). Larry asked Ryan Jockers from the Advocate to check at his next staff meeting if the paper would be interested in a story like this. Ann said she would contact The Hour.

**A. OPEN SPACE**

- Larry lead this discussion and wrote down ideas on an easel at the front of the conference room
- The 'Action Plan' read as follows:
  - Definition of open space
  - Define objectives of open space
  - Develop open space inventory(s) (committed; uncommitted ;etc.-see pg. 19-21 of Commissioner's handbook)

- Assess requirements and gather existing and outstanding items needed for a natural resources inventory
- Identify open space associated with inventory(s) by owner; parcel; and property characteristics. Create database.
- Reevaluate the Open Space Criteria from 2001 Task Force
- Re-Engage City Agencies (Planning Commission) to update Plan of Conservation and Development

## **A. INLAND WETLAND REGULATIONS**

- Alexis explained to the Commission that the Fee Schedule has not been increased since 1989 and that the Finance Department has asked the Commission to re-evaluate the fees.
- Alexis compiled the fee schedules from Bridgeport, Greenwich, and Westport and explained how Norwalk has relatively low fees. The two areas in need of significant fee increases are violations and multifamily/multi-lot developments.

Norwalk Conservation Commission

5/20/03

Page 1 of 2

- Alexis described Norwalk's current fee schedule that included specific fees for each specific proposal. Another option for fee schedules was introduced that started with a base fee and increased with the intensity of the proposed activity. Both types of fee schedules would achieve the same net increase in fees-just in a different way. This base fee/activity fee schedule would be in a chart form rather than a list form. Alexis asked which style the Commission would prefer. The overall consensus was to have a base fee/activity fee schedule.
- Larry asked for a comparison table of fee schedules from surrounding towns to be brought to the next meeting.
- Alexis informed the Commission that this change in fee schedule is actually an amendment to the Conservation Commission regulations because the fee schedule is an addendum to the regulations.
- Amending the regulations requires a public hearing to be held. The Commission asked how long this process would take. Alexis told the Commission that she would check with the DEP as to whether or not they are required to submit the proposed amendment to them 35 days prior to the hearing.
- At the next Conservation Commission meeting, Alexis will hand out a proposed fee schedule for Norwalk; a comparison chart with other towns; and the DEP decision of notification prior to hearing.
- Discussion will continue next week at the May 27, 2003 meeting.

## **B. OPEN SPACE DISCUSSION CONTINUED.**

- Larry began a discussion of defining open space by focusing on the few pages in the Commissioner's Handbook (pg.19-21). He described the definitions of committed and uncommitted open space.
- Larry suggested the Commission consider using these specific types of open space in the Commission's definition.
- Marny suggested a one-sentence definition of open space that excluded all man made structures.
- The Commission briefly discussed how this exclusion of man made structures may not be specifically what they were looking for.
- The discussion ended with a decision to include this topic on next week's agenda and to further the conversation of developing a definition of open space.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05pm.

