

Natural Heritage, Open Space, and Watershed Land Acquisition Review Board

Regular Meeting (via Zoom/teleconference)

September 8, 2022

Minutes

Board members present: Karen Burnaska, Linda Francois, Joe Gresko, Eric Hammerling (Co-Chair), Walker Holmes, Eric Lindquist, Amy Paterson (Co-Chair), Elanah Sherman, John Triana, and Joe Welsh (all by Zoom except Elanah, who attended by phone)

DEEP representatives: Allyson Clarke, Property Agent; Andrew Hoskins, Chief of Staff; Jamie Sydoriak, Environmental Analyst, LAM

Guests: Yaw Darko, Project Specialist, Connecticut Land Conservation Council (CLCC); Emely Ricci, Sandy Breslin Conservation Fellow, CLCC; Catherine Rawson, Executive Director, Northwest Connecticut Land Conservancy.

Welcome and Introductions

Eric H called the meeting to order at 10:32 AM.

Approval of August 11, 2022 Meeting Minutes

On a motion by Amy, seconded by Karen, the Minutes were approved with one correction. (John Triana was mistakenly left off the attendance list.)

DEEP Staff Updates

Status of 2021 Annual Report (due February 15, 2022): Andrew reported that he will review drafts of the 2020 and 2021 reports by the end of this week. He added that he will share the final versions with the Review Board prior to publication.

Updating 2016-2020 Green Plan: Andrew announced that DEEP staff is in the preliminary process of establishing a timeline. He will share more at the next Review Board meeting.

OSWA, RNHT, Coastal Land Acquisition, Other Funding News:
No news

Other: Andrew and Allyson have heard from some applicants about problems submitting appraisal reviews by the application deadline. DEEP will extend the deadline for submission of the reviews to November 15. Amy will announce the extension in the next CLCC weekly update.

Old Business

OSWA/UGCG working group - proposed technical corrections to C.G.S. Sec. 7-131d: The language for all technical corrections was submitted to the Attorney General's Office a week after the last Review Board meeting.

Courant article (July 30): In response to Eric H's suggestion at the last meeting, Elanah contacted the reporter, Stephen Underwood, to express her concern that the OSWA program was misrepresented, especially regarding accessibility for people with disabilities. He agreed with her comments and said he would pursue writing another article.

Review Board Member Updates: Tabled

Other

Walktober: Elanah announced that The Last Green Valley has released its calendar for the annual Walktober series of activities. Eric H will send out a link to Review Board members.

Water Planning Council Advisory Group quarterly meeting: Karen reported that the Group will meet tomorrow morning by ZOOM. John Triana will be the first speaker. Anyone who wants to be added to the list should contact Eric L.

STEAP (Small Town Economic Assistance Program): Eric L announced that OPM will soon review STEAP applications. Eligible projects include recreation and outdoor facilities. Amy asked Walker if STEAP could align with LWCF money; Walker will investigate.

Climate Group: Eric H reported that the Governor's Council on Climate Change (GC3) meeting topics in September include smart agricultural practices and forestry. Amy said she will attend the first meeting of the Resilient Infrastructure and Nature-based Solutions group on September 15.

Public Comment: No public comment

Adjournment

On a motion from Amy, seconded by Joe W, the meeting unanimously adjourned at 11:01 AM.

Respectfully submitted, Elanah Sherman, Secretary

Next meeting: Thursday, October 13, 2022, 10:30 AM – 12:00 PM