



TOWN OF OLD SAYBROOK
Conservation Commission

*Richard Esty, Chair
Christine Picklo, Vice Chair
Kelly Hartshorn, Secretary*

302 Main Street • Old Saybrook, Connecticut 06475-1741
Telephone (860) 395-3073 • FAX (860) 395-1216
www.oldsaybrookct.org

*Donna Leake
Larry Ritzhaupt
Glenda Sohl
Thomas Gezo*

Joe Bradley, Student Rep.

MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING

Tuesday, November 12, 2019 at 7:00 p.m.

Second Floor Conference Room, Town Hall
302 Main Street, Old Saybrook, CT 06475

I. CALL TO ORDER

There was no quorum so the Chairman began the informational meeting at 7:00 pm.

II. ROLL CALL

Members Present

Richard Esty, Tom Gezo, Kelly Hartshorn (arrived at 7:20), and Student Rep. Joe Bradley

Members Absent

Christine Picklo, Donna Leake, Glenda Sohl and Larry Ritzhaupt

Land Use Department Staff

Patrick Hegge, Environmental Enforcement Officer; Lynette Wacker, Recording Clerk

Guests

Larry Bonin, Department of Public Works Director; Jim Therrien

III. NEW BUSINESS

A. Guest Speaker – Larry Bonin, Director- Department of Public Works

Mr. Bonin stated that public works does not have a commission, the Board of Selectman acts as its commission. DPW handles most physical things within the Town including the town roads, buildings, parks, beaches and parking lots. They also run the transfer station. Mr. Bonin made some recommendations for improving the operations of the transfer station to save money. He suggested that residents should be educated about the best ways to dispose of their refuse and the Conservation Commission might be able to help with that. There are donation bins at the transfer station but many textiles are still being thrown away. Food scrap recovery may be undertaken in the future, where scraps are collected and brought to a piggery. He is trying to start that within the school system. R. Esty suggested commercial composting of food scraps might be an option and asked Mr. Bonin to contact the Conservation Commission with any projects he

might need help with. Mr. Bonin suggested a recycling committee would be beneficial to help them identify what can be recycled. T. Gezo mentioned Brita filters can be recycled if there enough of them and suggested a consolidation point at the transfer station. He then asked about thin film plastics- the transfer station is currently not handling thin film plastics but they can still be taken to grocery stores and Walmart. Mr. Bonin stated that there is still a good market for recyclable materials but the key is they must be clean. J. Therrien mentioned that a great deal of returnable bottles and cans are going into the recycling bin and that could be a revenue source for a local organization. R. Esty stated that a lot of the containers are not returnable in CT. Mr. Bonin explained that the boy scouts and a number of other groups have collected bottles and cans in the past but it can be a very dirty job. There was also a program with SARAH which gave challenged individuals a job collecting the recyclables, but state funding for that program was cut and now the bottles and cans are going into the recycling stream. Mr. Bonin has tried to get some of the bottle and can companies to take the recyclables back to make it easier to redeem them rather than having to bring them to the machines at the grocery store.

T. Gezo mentioned that Old Saybrook has a lot of bicyclists and could use more signage to accommodate them safely. Mr. Bonin responded that they used to stripe the roads so they were narrower (9'6"-10") and just moving the line to make the lane appear smaller was very effective at slowing traffic. After he was informed by the police department that travel lanes are supposed to be 11 feet wide, that was no longer permitted. He suggested looking for grant money for signs. R. Esty noted the pedestrian crossing signs are above the sight line for most motorists and asked if the height was state mandated. Mr. Bonin stated they must be at least 7 ft. high, and that the state put in several new crosswalks throughout the town.

Mr. Bonin is also the chairman of the Shellfish Commission. He reported that they have a great commission, but with funding being cut there is no money to hire people to do water sampling. Mr. Bonin does a lot of the water sampling himself. He explained the restrictions on oyster consumption from the CT River due to contamination, and the oyster depuration process. He then described the commission's efforts to increase oyster growth in the Oyster River and other rivers in town. They would like to get the Oyster River back to being a commercial resource. In the 19th and early 20th century shellfish was a huge business in Old Saybrook. He suggested a container could be put at the transfer station to collect clam and oyster shells which can be used to create shellfish habitat. R. Esty offered to write a letter from the commission to the state regarding a bridge project in town that might impact an oyster habitat. Mr. Bonin went on to explain that there are also a lot of clams in the Old Saybrook beaches, but they can't be eaten due to water quality problems. Old Saybrook has been working to fix the septic system problems throughout the town. Pollution from Hartford, Middletown, Cromwell and other towns had been contaminating the CT River, which empties into the LI Sound. Mr. Bonin explained the new septic system at the town garage that uses woodchips and septic sand, which has been very successful. The system works so well that the state is now widely approving its use. R. Esty suggested the commission write an article about the septic system. Mr. Bonin suggested Dave Potts from Geomatics would be the best person to speak to about it.

IV. **REGULAR BUSINESS**

A. **Meeting Minutes** of October 8, 2019

There was no quorum so the minutes will be accepted at the next meeting.

B. Correspondence & Announcements

R. Esty reminded the commission that the CAIWC conference is Saturday, November 23rd, and anyone who would like to attend should register and let him know.

- C. Budget Review** – R. Esty mentioned that C. Picklo and T. Gezo met to discuss budget allocations. R. Esty will get copies of that to the commission members. If additional money is needed at the end of this budget year there may be leftover money available from another commission. Beginning in January the commission will need to go through a budget review process to request money for the next budget.

V. COMMITTEE, REPRESENTATIVE & STAFF REPORTS

- A. Inland Wetlands and Aquifer Commissions** - R. Esty stated that there was a special meeting on October 30th for a violation that was going on. No items came up that the commission would need to provide advisory services for.
- B. Preserve Management Committee** – G. Sohl was not present to report.
- C. Gateway Conservation Commission** - T. Gezo reported that the Gateway Commission had their annual meeting which dealt primarily with administrative items. He noted that the according to the September 4th Planning Commission meeting minutes, what the developer reported at that meeting was not consistent with what was reported at the Gateway Commission meeting, and he let C. Nelson and C. Costa know. R. Esty noted that there is a problem with what developers are building vs. what they agreed to build. If complaints are received then they can look into them.
- D. Sustainable CT Team** - K. Hartshorn reported that they are continuing to apply Conservation Commission activities to the program. Old Saybrook was just awarded bronze recertification and is now certified through 2022.

PROJECT WORK: Plastics Initiative

Film Series Update – R. Esty stated they want to have an event which includes films and possibly lectures. Depending upon the extent of the event they will determine whether they should look into having it at the Kate or the Middle School. P. Hegge reported that the OSMS auditorium seats about 425 and the High School seats 750. If they want to request the use of any facilities they must fill out a form and submit it to the school administration. R. Esty suggested they discuss it at the next meeting when they will be able to vote. They might also consider using the Vicky Duffy Pavilion. T. Gezo did not follow up with the Kate because he thought it was clear the OSMS looked like best option, and R. Esty agreed.

VII. OTHER PROJECT UPDATES

- A. Commission Focus** – R. Esty reported that they all need to regularly contribute information for social media and should send it to J. Bradley to post.
- B. Quarterly Newsletter – Next Topic** - R. Esty is looking for ideas for the next newsletter. He told J. Bradley that last month D. Leake suggested asking high school students to contribute to

the newsletter. J. Bradley will write an article about the snack bags project. R. Esty would like other commission members to contribute articles to the newsletter. He will reach out to L. Bonin to see if the Shellfish Commission would like to contribute an article. Articles are due to R. Esty by December 15th.

- C. **Saybrook Events Magazine – Deadline for Q4: 11/27/19** - R. Esty suggested submitting articles about the coastal cleanup follow-up and the upcoming film series and asked for volunteers to write them. R. Esty mentioned that the Ecology Club could also contribute an article.

VIII. **ADJOURNMENT**

R. Esty ended the meeting at 8:33 pm. The next meeting will take place on December 10th, 2019, 7:00 P.M. in the 2nd Floor Conference Room of Town Hall, 302 Main Street.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lynette Wacker
Recording Clerk