MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
Tuesday, July 12, 2022 at 7:00 p.m.
Hybrid Meeting
Town Hall 2nd floor conference room
302 Main Street

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Picklo called the meeting to order at 6:59 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Members Present – Christine Picklo, Donna Leake, Michael Osnato (remote), Peter DeLisa, Laurie Aparo (remote)
Members Absent – Larry Ritzhaupt, Kelly Hartshorn, Carlina Castro
Land Use Department Staff – Lynette Wacker, Assistant Town Planner; Carolina Maharbiz, Recording Clerk
Audience – 7 audience members present (5 in the room and 2 remotely)

III. REGULAR BUSINESS

A. Minutes – 6/14/2022

MOTION to approve the regular meeting minutes of June 14, 2022, as presented; MADE by P. DeLisa and SECONDED by D. Leake; VOTED IN FAVOR: C. Picklo, D. Leake, M. Osnato, P. DeLisa, L. Aparo; OPPOSED: None; ABSTAINED: None. APPROVED: 5-0-0.

B. Correspondence & Announcements – None

C. Committee and Representative Reports (Significant Update Only)

i. Inland Wetlands and Aquifer Commissions – P. DeLisa was unable to attend the meeting. L. Wacker provided an overview of the two projects discussed, including one for a retail center at Spencer Plains Rd that is at
the public hearings stage and the other for the construction of an owner’s apartment at the Econo Lodge that was approved.

ii. **Preserve Management Committee** – C. Picklo reported that the GEI Study is moving forward, but the issue of hunting is still outstanding. Additionally, Mike Clemens, who conducted an extensive ecological study, has supported the CC’s stance not to allow tree removal because of its effect on vernal pools.

iii. **Land Trust** – no report.

iv. **Parks and Rec** – no report.

v. **Student Rep.** – no report.

| MOTION to amend the agenda to move to item IV.C. Kayak Launch & Other Improvements; MADE by C. Picklo and SECONDED by D. Leake; VOTED IN FAVOR: C. Picklo, D. Leake, M. Osnato, P. DeLisa, L. Aparo; OPPOSED: None; ABSTAINED: None. APPROVED: 5-0-0. |

IV. C. **Kayak Launch & Other Improvements** – Old Saybrook residents from South View Circle were present to provide their opinions on locating a kayak launch at the end of their street.

Richard Swan provided history of the neighborhood, specifically that it was originally owned by James Crowley and later conveyed to the State with stipulations. The area being discussed was made for recreational use by the neighborhood. He also explained that when the Town put in the splash pad at Trask Park, they took away the grassy area that was being used by the neighborhood for football with the understanding that another place would be found for such use. The result was that in the 1980’s, the neighborhood received permission from DEEP for the area under discussion to become the neighborhood football and picnic area. He further stated that the State does not mow that area, local residents do. Additionally, since crabbing and fishing have become so popular, there has been an ongoing problem with cars filling up the cul-de-sac. There are currently no parking signs that were put in at the neighborhood’s request not only due to cars blocking the kayak launch, but also to prevent the area from being accessible because the current under the bridge can be dangerous to kayakers. He described an incident involving two kayakers. He is concerned about safety, privacy and cleanup.

C. Picklo explained that this location is one of the potential choices, but no decisions have been made.

Richard Swan added that the location by the leaf dump is also treacherous and when he was a police office, he was involved in having to pull several kids from that area, including two that drowned.
M. Osnato stated that no decisions have been made and discussed several other alternative locations.

Mike Franklin stated that after no parking signs were installed last year, crabbing is still taking place. He has seen individuals change diapers and throw them in the marsh. He expressed concern over who will take care of the property, individuals continuing to take small crabs, and the garbage that will be generated.

John Romano stated that the neighborhood takes pride in the area and they have had to go out with garbage bags to clean the trash left behind.

Sandy Romano reiterated that they do pick up a lot of garbage. She also stated that the currents can be strong and she once had to pull someone out.

Mike Franklin asked about how to contact L. Ritzhaupt and the other individuals working on the project. C. Picklo stated that she will discuss the matter with L. Ritzhaupt and acknowledged that the location does not appear to be opportune for placement of a kayak rack.

Matthew Chotewa mentioned that it is a quiet street with a lot of kids and having a public access point at that location would be in conflict with the neighborhood’s character.

Return to agenda item III. D:

D. Fiscal Year 2022-23 Planning – C. Picklo reviewed the Beautify and Sustain document created earlier in the year to see if the Commission is on target with what is on the list, and discussed some of the items listed. M. Osnato mentioned that the section for plans on the CC webpage needs to be updated. He also mentioned that the North Cove Yacht club is partnering with an ocean resource group that helps communities along the shoreline do cleanups and suggested partnering with this group for the coastal cleanup. L. Wacker stated that a representative from Sustainable Essex reached out to partner with a sustainable group in Old Saybrook on various efforts, including the Source to Sea cleanup, a grant for an electric school bus, and a repair café. C. Picklo encouraged members to review the Beatify and Sustain list to suggest ideas for what is included.

IV. LAND STEWARDSHIP

A. Open Space Monitoring – C. Picklo stated that the plan is still to mark Great Cedars East in the fall. L. Wacker mentioned that the Great Cedars MOU will be formalized soon and includes several goals and actions that CC might want to help with. Decision made to discuss it at the next meeting. D. Leake expressed her concern that the Commission needs to be careful about the number of projects it needs to sustain and who will maintain them. Members discussed the potential of the Conservation Commission being involved in providing opinions or recommendations on town projects as well as advocacy. L. Wacker and C. Picklo will discuss the matter with Chris Costa.
Pollinator Pathway & Education – L. Wacker stated that there is $350 in the account and that she ordered large signs. The money from sale of the signs is for supporting their local Pollinator Pathway efforts.

B. Kayak Launch & Other Improvements – discussed above.

V. OUTREACH & EDUCATION

A. Conservation Circular & Saybrook Events Q3 – C. Picklo needs to finish the Circular. For Saybrook Events, L. Wacker plans to write about the Lights Out program and will work on an article prior to the deadline.

B. Special Projects

i. Invasive Species Program 6/18/22 Recap – C. Picklo stated that the event was very successful with a full house. Members discussed ideas for future events and C. Picklo suggested that the Commission think about future programs that can be held in the winter.

ii. Plastic waste in LI Sound – M. Osnato stated that the problem is primarily the result of boaters. He suggested putting together a note that can be given out by the Harbor Commission when it issues permits for moorings as well as posted up at the marinas. L. Wacker stated that she added a post to the Facebook group on Plastics Free July and will continue posting during July. M. Osnato will contribute a post on trash in the Long Island Sound.

C. Commission Webpage and Additional Outreach – L. Wacker reported that she prepared a list of topics that can be included as links on the Commission webpage and asked members to take a look at it. Decision made to discuss the list at the next meeting. D. Leake suggested adding an agenda item for public participation going forward, which C. Picklo agreed to discuss with Chris Costa.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION to adjourn the meeting at 8:36 p.m. until the next regularly scheduled hybrid meeting of the Conservation Commission on August 9, 2022, 7:00 p.m., Town Hall 2nd Floor Conference Room, 302 Main St., Old Saybrook; MADE by C. Picklo and SECONDED by D. Leake; VOTED IN FAVOR: C. Picklo, D. Leake, M. Osnato, P. DeLisa, L. Aparo; OPPOSED: None; ABSTAINED: None. APPROVED: 5-0-0

Respectfully submitted,
Carolina Maharbiz, Recording Clerk