

**CHESHIRE ENVIRONMENT COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, MAY 9, 2012
CHESHIRE TOWN HALL
ROOM 115 AT 7:00 P.M.**

Members present: Randy Yale, Robert DeVylder, Jodee Heritage, and Bill Sherman.

Members not present: Bonnie Mayer and Daniel Grasso.

Staff Liaison: Suzanne Simone.

I. Call to Order

Randy Yale called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

II. Roll Call

Bill Sherman called the roll. Members in attendance were Randy Yale, Robert DeVylder, Jodee Heritage, and Bill Sherman.

III. Determination of Quorum

Bill Sherman determined there were enough members present for a quorum.

IV. Pledge of Allegiance

All present recited the pledge of allegiance.

V. Acceptance of Minutes of the Regular Meeting - February 8, 2012

Motion: To accept the minutes from the February 8, 2012 regular meeting.

Moved by Robert DeVylder. Seconded by Jodee Heritage. Motion approved unanimously by Commission members present.

VI. Communications

1. Southwest Conservation District, Soil and Water, Spring 2012 Newsletter

Ms. Simone said the first communication was from the Southwest Conservation District, Soil and Water, Spring 2012 Newsletter (handed out at tonight's meeting).

2. Approved 2012 Environment Commission Meeting Dates

Ms. Simone said the second communication was a copy of the approved 2012 Environment Commission meeting dates.

3. February 7, 2012 Meeting Minutes of the Town Council Solid Waste Committee

Ms. Simone said the third communication was a copy of the February 7, 2012 meeting minutes of the Town Council Solid Waste Committee.

Ms. Simone stated this communication would be covered under new business under item number one – Single Stream Recycling Program.

4. CACIWC, The Habitat, Spring 2012 Newsletter

The fourth communication was the CACIWC, The Habitat, Spring 2012 Newsletter (handed out at tonight's meeting).

5. Mixville Hills Management Plan, Planning Committee Revisions 5.1.12

Ms. Simone said the fifth communication was a copy of the Mixville Hills Management Plan revisions made by the Planning Committee.

Ms. Simone stated that this item is under new business item number three.

VII. Calendar – Events

1. Trails Day, June 2, 2012 (Saturday)

Ms. Simone said the Commission has Trails Day on Saturday, June 2, 2012.

Ms. Simone reported that Patrick Hedden, who lives next door to the Casertano Property, is leading a hike and then she had also scheduled a hike that day as well as the Land Trust has schedule a hike that day – they were all occurring at the same time.

Ms. Simone explained that she was contacted by the Connecticut Forest and Park Association and they asked if they (the Commission) could change the time or change the date of at least one of those events because they have found that when there are many scheduled events at one time it minimizes attendance across the board so staff volunteered

to change the hike date to another time because the DeDominicis Property is always a good hike so that hike would be rescheduled.

2. Fall Festival, September 9 (?) 2012 (Sunday)

Ms. Simone said she did not have the actual date – she stated she has not seen anything from the Cheshire Chamber of Commerce for an official date but its usually the second Saturday in September – Sunday is the rain date.

Mr. Yale said in the past the Commission has always manned a booth or half of a booth split with one of the other Commissions. He suggested they do that again or something else – it's at the digression of the Committee; and that they did not have to decide today but they should give it some thought.

Mr. Yale said they usually have a pretty good turnout when they have had half a booth – especially when they have things to give away like the recycling bags and maps of some of the hiking places. He said they do not have much of a budget to work with but if we get the manpower we could try other things.

Ms. Heritage said she went to Suzanne Simone's presentation at the Library around the time of the Earth Day events and she did a wonderful job and it was very well attended; the audience was an older crowd. She suggested that if the Commission does something at the Fall Festival that they may want to orientate it to young families and kids – she said she felt they should try to get young families to know where the hikes are where they can take their kids.

Ms. Simone said the event was "Where to Hike in Cheshire" and there were 48 attendees.

Ms. Heritage informed the Commission that Ms. Simone did a great job – she said it was very well done.

Mr. Yale said that was not a bad idea – maybe they could have more of a theme.

Ms. Heritage said maybe they could do something in conjunction with Cheshire Public Schools. She said she had talked a little bit with Ms. Simone about maybe coming up with a brochure that was more orientated towards the PE classes – she said maybe they could do field trips; she said she thought that would be really neat for kids to see what's available and then they take their Moms and Dads back on the weekends.

Ms. Simone asked if this was an agenda idea the Commission wanted to add to the agenda – to talk about in the future.

Mr. Yale said yes – he thought they probably should to develop a specific partnership with schools. He said he thought one of the opportunities the Commission is missing out on is getting some of the school aged children involved in recycling – he said he has always said they should have school children involved in the parks.

Ms. Heritage said again that Ms. Simone’s presentation was great and she thought if it could be done for a couple of PE classes and meet staff out there and did a field trip it would be very cool or even if they did something that looked at a competition – a writing competition within the school that had to do with what they saw on the trails – they could be creative that way which might get more people to know what the properties are.

Ms. Heritage said she would be happy to work on this item and come up with ideas.

Mr. Yale said he thought that was a great idea.

Mr. Yale asked that staff add this item to the agenda for next month.

Mr. Sherman said the key to this would be to latch on to a couple of teachers. He said teachers would have to integrate the field trips into a lesson plan.

Ms. Heritage said she could do that – she said she has those connections and that she could make that work.

Mr. Sherman said the teachers would have to be able to integrate it into a lesson plan of sorts.

Ms. Heritage said they could sell the idea; it’s there – it’s free – it’s such a neat part of Cheshire that she did not think a lot of young families know about and she said she knew kids don’t know; they are on the ball fields so the Commission just has to figure out what makes sense and how to market it – she said she did think there was an opportunity to promote the trails program; at the Fall Festival you get a lot of younger families with a lot of kids.

Ms. Simone said there are definitely some key properties that could be sold as family-friendly like Ten Mile Lowlands – it has nice flat

topography; DeDominicis that has marked trails that are easily accessed.

Ms. Heritage said how fun it would be to do that on the weekend with your kids.

Mr. Yale stated he thought it was a great idea. He said takes his kids out to do that once or twice a month and they do not see many families out; he said they need to do whatever they can to get the schools involved.

Mr. DeVyllder said at the last meeting they talked about the storm damage at the beginning of the Ten Mile Lowlands – has anything been done about that.

Ms. Simone said that she knew that there was a tree cutting company in the area that was working a hazard tree right in that vicinity but that she did not know if they got to that yet but it is in the works – it is something that is identified that needs to be taken care of.

Mr. DeVyllder said to open up the through of the path.

Ms. Simone said right.

Mr. Yale asked if the National Public Lands day – that is when last year they actually did the clean-up in conjunction with that event.

Ms. Simone said yes – it was right around that time.

Mr. Yale asked if that was the type of activity they are looking for.

Ms. Simone stated yes – they look for volunteers to come out to properties to help restore or clean-up after something like that.

Mr. Yale said last year it was boy scouts more than students – they were high school students and they were very helpful and they got a ton cleaned up last year.

Ms. Heritage said there is always a community serve component is a big piece now that they are looking for portfolios for kids to graduate so those are things the Commission can certainly talk to administrators about – it would be a nice partnership and there are opportunities that present themselves.

Mr. Yale said and both of these events are early in the school year so they can get involved and get their hours in.

Ms. Heritage said and teams and clubs like to do it – so they could sort of brain storm.

Mr. Sherman asked Ms. Simone if she was going to change the date or the time of the hike date also off of June 2.

Ms. Simone said it would be changed completely so it would be maybe in July or September or some other time.

Mr. Yale said so they will have two events on Trails Day itself and Ms. Simone would do the third one at a different time and they would be three different properties.

Ms. Simone stated right.

Mr. Yale said that was excellent.

Ms. Simone stated that June 2 is the hike of the Casertano Property. She said she certainly didn't want to discourage the volunteer who stepped forward to do that and the same with the Land Trust - they had a volunteer that offered to do a hike of their property at Ives Farm.

Ms. Simone said the DeDominicis then is canceled and not part of Trails Day but will be scheduled at another date.

3. National Public Lands Day, September 29, 2012 (Saturday)

Ms. Simone said the third calendared event is National Public Lands Day on Saturday, September 29, 2012.

VIII. Unfinished Business

1. Tip of the Month

Mr. Yale said they did not have a tip of the month in a while. He said he did not know if the last one he sent even got published (that was last September or October).

Mr. Yale asked the Commission if they had ideas on how to update the tip of the month or improve it – he said it might actually tie in to the Single Stream Recycling but he thought they needed to do more than a tip of the month because that is an actual program.

Ms. Simone said one thing she was thinking that when they get to new business is that she is going to do a press release when the webpage is fully loaded. She said the library asked to have that program again on

hiking and then this time she would have the laptop there and be able to go online live so people could see how to access the pages and all of that but it may be useful to then duplicate that work with tip of the month just to keep reminding people and getting it in the paper so not only through the press releases but then also to letters to the editor or something along those lines.

Mr. Yale asked if there were any volunteers for this month – he asked if anyone had any ideas they kind of want to run with spring upon us. He said in the past they have done tips in April on lawn maintenance and how to minimize pesticides and those types of things. He said in May and June they would do more outdoor activities like tick preventions and those types of things.

There was a brief discussion about Garlic Mustard plants. Ms. Simone said at the corner of Jinny Hill Road it is taking over.

Mr. DeVlyder said it looks like it is really becoming a problem for the town.

Ms. Simone said for next Spring she planned on doing an invasive plant removal program at the library for homeowners and to really focus on the most common ones like Garlic Mustard and its sure going to be easy to take pictures in town and show people; she said it has white flowers that grows a few feet tall and it's easy to pull up because it has shallow roots and then you can just throw it out. She said she would not even put it in the compost bin but you want to do it while it's flowering not when it starts to go to seed because those seeds are like spring loaded.

Ms. Simone commented that invasive species are really taking control.

Mr. Yale suggested that the Commission skip the tip of the month since no one has any ideas.

The tip of the month goes to *The Cheshire Herald* for publication (an article that is 300 words or less).

2. Open Space Property Signage/Logo design

Ms. Simone informed the Commission that she contacted their vendor that does their markers for wetlands as well as for conservation – she said they have used them for a number of years and she talked to them about the logo design that John Pepper had worked on and when she was looking through her notes she saw that there was discussion that the Commission was interested in maybe having it be 8” instead of 7”

so she called to get a quote and basically they quoted a quantity of 25 would cost \$10.32 a piece with no set-up fee; if you order more quantities you pay less per individual one.

Ms. Simone explained that the sign would be aluminum – they would have the pre-drilled holes and they would and she did not know if the Commission thought about or if there was a decision as to where to put them, if they were going to be attached to the kiosk or if they were going to stand alone on a sign post next to the kiosk or just at the visible part of a property if there is no kiosk.

Ms. Simone said she thought when she was looking through the calculations 25 would be an ample amount – the majority of the properties have one access point – some of them have two like the DeDominicis property so the quantity of 25 might be reasonable. She said she was looking at that to compare price – Barker had given an estimate also for an 8” round diameter and they quoted four pieces at \$28.92 per sign so that would be over \$100 for four signs and then they also have a set-up fee.

Ms. Simone said just from the budget end of things there is money in the budget – there’s \$300 under program supplies that’s available for the Commission to use prior to June 30 of this year.

Ms. Simone said she did not know if the Commission wanted to think about that or if they are ready to go with the 8”.

Motion: To purchase the 25, 8” signs at \$10.32 per piece.

Moved by Mr. DeVlyder. Seconded by Mr. Sherman. Ms. Heritage asked if they signs were made to be outside – they can take harsh punishment like rain and snow.

Ms. Simone stated yes. She said the aluminum ones that they use currently do withstand the elements – they don’t withstand vandalism so well. The signs do have a reflective quality to it – they are green and white.

Ms. Simone asked if the Commission had an opinion about the shade of green to use – a lighter green as opposed to a darker green.

The Commission agreed on the Celtic green color for the signs.

Motion approved unanimously by Commission members present.

Ms. Simone said the sign company can usually turn orders around pretty quickly so it's likely the Commission will have the signs for the next meeting.

Mr. Sherman asked if the Commission was going to have to deal with purchasing sign posts.

Ms. Simone said she would check with the Public Works Department to see what they have.

Ms. Heritage asked what it would cost to do magnets and decide to give them out at the Fall Festival with the logo or even just stickers for kids.

Mr. Yale said he thought that was a great idea – people would start to see the logo other places in town.

The Commission talked about different items to print the logo on.

Ms. Simone asked if the Commission wanted her to look into quotes for stickers. She said she could look into prices for stickers, magnets, decals and post-it notes.

Ms. Heritage said to have one of the items like a magnet or sticker would be a nice item to give out to families at the Fall Festival or at the library event.

Ms. Simone agreed to check out the prices for the items discussed. She said she could check and see if there is availability to take funds from some other line item such as meetings and seminars or advertising.

Mr. DeVylder asked about nailing the signs into the trees.

Ms. Simone said that nailing the signs into the trees was not ideal – they may grow around the trees – there may be leaves in the way as opposed to being on a sign post that could be situated further away.

Mr. Sherman suggested that the Commission could evaluate at each property what makes the most sense.

3. Connecticut Trails Day: June 2nd

Mr. Yale said this item was already discussed.

4. Boulder Knoll Species Inventory

Ms. Simone said this item is still something that is a work in progress. She said Gunner Norback, the high school student who had inquired about working on a project such as that so she is still sort of flushing it out and figuring it all out so this is definitely a work in progress.

Ms. Simone said at this point they are sort of staging things out so see what the goals are then how they achieve those goals.

No further action is required at this point.

IX. New Business

1. Single Stream Recycling Program

Mr. Yale the Single Stream Recycling Program was something the Commission was going to have to become more involved in.

Ms. Simone explained that the Town Council has started to consider switching over to a single stream system and there are minutes from their Solid Waste Committee meeting which really just sort of gives you the overview of what the impedes of what this is – it is that it would save money and reduce fuel costs and all of that for various reasons.

Ms. Simone said the Town is looking to partner with Committees and Departments to get the word out –there is no unified message right now – they are still hashing everything out but they want to get other parties involved and on-board to help really promote and to educate the people as to what's going on.

Ms. Simone said there have been initial steps made with getting some information in the newspaper and the Town is learning that there are more questions than they had anticipated – they have had a lot of elderly people call and say they were not going to be able to move that bin – she said they do not realize it's on wheels and they did not realize they need to put that in the message.

Mr. DeVyllder said he was going on 65 years old and he lives 1000' from the road – he asked how is was going to get that big thing down to the road in the winter.

Ms. Simone said it's on wheels.

Mr. DeVyllder said the Town Council tested it out in nice weather – and he bet none of them live far from the road.

Ms. Simone said she thought it would be appropriate that since this was a citizen committee that if they had questions or if they identify issues such as that that it can be relied to the Town Council as well as then the Town Council working with the Commission to try to promote ideas or try to promote more feedback.

Mr. DeVlyder said that was a big concern of his – how to get the bin down a long driveway in the winter.

Ms. Heritage asked when you are saying single stream – does that mean all your garbage goes into this one tote.

Ms. Simone said you would have two totes – one for garbage and one for all recycling so all paper, plastics and everything could just be thrown in and it doesn't need to be bundled up.

Mr. DeVlyder said so you would have two big things to drag through the snow. He said that the trash would not be picked up for two weeks instead of a couple of days.

Mr. Sherman said he thought here was something in what he had read that kind of addressed that – that some people just need something smaller that's more manageable.

Ms. Simone said they would be picking up garbage it was recycling that will be switched to every other week.

Ms. Heritage said so garbage would be once a week and recycling every two weeks.

Mr. DeVlyder said that was not clear in the paper.

Ms. Simone said the time was different for recycling.

Ms. Heritage asked if people purchased their totes or was that a present.

Ms. Simone said she did not believe that they did – it comes from the supplier. She said she thought whoever is picking the garbage up would drop one off at your house and that there wouldn't be a fee for that.

Mr. DeVlyder stated that he personally did not like the idea at all – he said it was just too big. He said his neighbor is 90 years old and he has a longer walk to the road and the woman in front of him has to be pushing 90 – he asked how they would get the stuff to the road.

Mr. DeVylder stated he thought it was a bad idea period. He said he thought it was an ill-conceived idea that you have people doing this in the nice weather and gave no thought what so ever to wintertime – this past winter was a nice pleasant winter and you could do whatever you wanted to do – but they didn't have to attend with any kind or snow – we didn't have an icy week all winter.

Mr. DeVylder said he thought it was just an ill-conceived idea from the very beginning and that the town was just trying to scrounge a couple more dollars out of the tax payers.

Ms. Heritage said they are trying to save money.

Mr. DeVylder said and hurt who – he said you get someone 70 years old tumbling down their driveway and their quality of life just goes down the tubes right then and there just so the town can save – what \$.50 a week.

Mr. DeVylder stated again that he thought it was just a bad idea.

Ms. Heritage said it does say that the household can default for the size tote they want so she said she wondered if there were smaller things similar to what they have now.

Ms. Simone said there are small ones – 30" in diameter.

Mr. DeVylder said they haven't come out with anything – he asked how many gallons was the current tote for the recycling.

Commission members did not know what the capacity of the current totes held.

Mr. DeVylder said the new ones were huge compared to that. He said so this is so they can come up with the new truck that has the big loader in front that they showed in the paper two years ago – with that illegal arm in front of the truck. He said the whole idea is ill-conceived because what they were showing two years ago - when they showed pictures of that truck – he said what they showed was illegal because they have these things going in front of the driver and according to state statute there illegal.

Mr. Yale said as a committee they had to decide if they want to help them advertise or not.

Mr. DeVlyder said he thought it was a bad idea; that it was not a safe idea; he said they have a lot of senior citizens in this town that are just being pushed to the side constantly and no one listens and they are getting more and more of them and no one pays attention to them – he said its fine if you live 10' from Route 10 and on flat ground but you have a lot of senior citizens that don't live on Route 10 that do live on some of these back lots.

Ms. Simone asked Mr. Yale if he would like her to check with the Town Manager to see if Senior Services are involved with this and if their working on it.

Mr. Yale said that would be good – to see if they have analyzed this; he said other towns have already gone to this.

Mr. Yale said they may also have some solutions and maybe they are looking to get the solutions out.

Ms. Heritage said she has also seen it in other places.

Ms. Heritage said maybe Patty Harris or Andy Falvey could maybe come to the June meeting before the summer and just sort of hear people's reaction to it and maybe there are questions they could answer for the Commission. She said maybe if they want the Commission's help they should come tell us about it.

Mr. Yale said he agreed.

Ms. Heritage said it sounded like Andy was more involved than Patty but - from the minutes anyways.

Ms. Simone said she would relay the information to the Town Manager and they can figure that out.

Mr. Yale agreed that Mr. DeVlyder has some very valid concerns and someone from the Town should come and talk to the Commission about them (the totes).

2. Open Space Webpage

Ms. Simone said there will be pictures – there is an ability to put video on there so at the very least staff planned on putting the Roaring Brook video on there - she said moving water gets people's attention.

Ms. Simone said so this is something that she was really eager to get done and hopes that it can get done sooner than later – she said there

is just a lot of information that she wants to put up on the website; back-story and all that.

Mr. DeVyllder asked if Roaring Brook was state owned or town owned.

Ms. Simone said there was a section that's town owned and a section that is state owned and a section that is Land Trust and a section that is private property so when you are at the kiosk and walk across that bridge that's private property by the tennis courts.

Mr. DeVyllder said Foster's property is town owned.

Ms. Simone stated as well as the upper part of the brook so it's a whole conglomerate of different property owners that make up the entire open space but the actual brook itself – a portion of it is in town property.

Mr. Sherman said the trail is a rigorous one.

Ms. Simone said there was a public hike in April of that property and it's amazing the tree damage from the storm – there were numerous, numerous trees that have gone just right down into the brook – the root system and everything is just hanging there but it offers you a clearer view of the brook which is kind of nice.

Mr. Yale said he did not know when staff was going to officially go up with the website but when she did if she could send emails to the Commission to notify them.

Ms. Simone agreed to do that. She said she planned on bring the laptop to the meetings so she could show Commission members the site.

Mr. Yale asked how many spaces there were going to be able to have photos and information on.

Ms. Simone said hopefully all of them – maybe not to initially start because they don't have many pictures – she said usually when she goes to these properties she is taking pictures of problems she has identified so she now needs to change ideas and now go out to the property and look for nice shots.

Ms. Simone said so right now they have about three properties that have good pictures – the rest of them she needs to go out and pictures.

Mr. Yale said the maps they have for a couple of the properties – is there a way to put those on in a pdf form.

Ms. Simone stated yes - there will be the ability to hit for each property – a page will come up that will just have an introduction and then there will categories that you can choose from directions to parking to natural history of the property to maps to everything so you are able to hit it and just print it.

Mr. Yale stated that was excellent and thanks staff for all of her work.

3. Mixville Hills Management Plan

Ms. Simone informed the Commission that this went before the Planning Committee of the Town Council and this was actually past by the Environment Commission in 2009 – it got waylaid when there was discussion about parking and access but now it's gone to the Planning Committee and they just had two changes; one of them being on page 3 – item number 5; what was approved said “the steward shall facility arrangement of parking facilities” and Council members had discussion of that – they didn't want to necessarily put that in there because then it almost makes it a requirement on the town's part to do this and their thought was and she could understand was from a litigious point of you – that if this plan is adopted then don't have parking yet and someone parks their car, then get injured, their car gets injured the could sue the town and say this was supposed to be done. She said it was something they were still going to work on but it's not anything that's formalized in this agreement and then the second item is under prohibited uses – that was just a typo – there was just a sentence that did not make sense there so those were the two changes they had.

Ms. Simone said the recommendation was to delete number 5 and that keeps it consistent with the other plans.

Mr. DeVylder asked if they had an access to it yet.

Ms. Simone stated no – they have no access to that one (the property).

Mr. DeVylder said they have no access to the property but they are worried where the people are going to park.

Mr. Sherman said an older business item – the Ten Mile Lowland kiosk materials – the contact he has with the boy scout said he has one maybe two folks that are interested in building that and he'll know better tonight and he was asking him if they could go visit the site this weekend sometime and he (Mr. Sherman) said fine and that he would get back to him on Thursday.

Mr. Sherman said he wanted to ask the staff after the meeting where the appropriate spot would be.

The materials are in storage and a sketch is available to show how to assemble the kiosk.

Mr. Sherman said it would be an Eagle Scout project. He said he would ask staff to clarify the proposed site location for the construction of the kiosk.

Mr. DeVlyder suggested it go 10-12' off the roadway; he said it was brought up at a previous meeting the need to contact Call Before You Dig. The kiosk should be about 10-12' from the road.

Ms. Simone said there may be an opportunity for a clear spot with that tree that's now down on the right side of the trail; the left side of the trail there is that bush that sort of projects out – that if you wanted to put it there you would have to clear the bush back but with the tree down that might be an opportune place to put that because then your eye is going to go right to it because its shrub, tree, overgrowth and then nothing. The location would be facing the road so you could clearly see it from the road.

Mr. Yale said Mr. Sherman could get suggestions from staff and after he goes out and looks at the site – if he had a better idea the Commission could discuss it at the next meeting otherwise they can go ahead with staff's recommendation.

Ms. Simone said she did not know if the trash that was at that location was removed. She said she recalled there was a table thrown there and then it was not there.

Ms. Simone agreed to go over the location of the kiosk with Mr. Sherman.

X. Adjournment

Mr. Yale called for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:46 p.m. The motion was moved by Ms. Heritage. Seconded by Mr. DeVlyder. Motion approved unanimously by Commission members present.

Respectfully submitted:

**Carla Mills
Recording Secretary
Cheshire Environment Commission**