

**TOWN OF CHESHIRE ENVIRONMENT COMMISSION  
WEDNESDAY, JULY 10, 2013  
CHESHIRE TOWN HALL ROOM 115 AT 7:00 P.M.**

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**Members present: Chairman Bill Sherman, Matt Abdifar, Carrie Collins and David Mercugliano.**

**Town Council Liaison: Sylvia Nichols.**

**Member not present: Robert DeVylder and Jodee Heritage.**

**Staff: Town Planner Bill Voelker.**

**Mr. Sherman appointed Ms. Collins as secretary pro-tem in Ms. Heritage's absence.**

**I. Call to Order**

**Mr. Sherman called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.**

**II. Roll Call**

**Ms. Collins called the roll.**

**III. Determination of Quorum  
Commissioner Attendance Summary**

**Mr. Sherman determined there were enough members present for a quorum.**

**Members in attendance were Bill Sherman, Matt Abdifar, Carrie Collins and David Mercugliano.**

**Members absent were Robert DeVylder and Jodee Heritage.**

**IV. Pledge of Allegiance**

**All present recited the pledge of allegiance.**

**V. Acceptance of Minutes of the Regular Meeting of June 12, 2013**

**Mr. Sherman called for a motion to accept the minutes from the June 12, 2013.**

**Motion: To accept the minutes from the June 12, 2013 meeting (no corrections).**

**Moved by Mr. Mercugliano. Seconded by Mr. Abdifar. Motion approved unanimously by Commission members present.**

**VI. Communications**

**1. Fall Festival Registration Flyer**

**The Commission reviewed the fall festival registration flyer.**

**This item was discussed in more detail under calendar - events.**

**2. National Public Lands Day Event Listings and Promo Deadline**

**The Commission reviewed the information regarding the National Public Lands Day event listings and promo deadline.**

**Mr. Voelker said Ms. Simone would help with the August 30, 2013 application deadline.**

**This item was discussed in more detail under calendar - events.**

**VII. Calendar – Events**

**1. Fall Festival: Saturday September 7, 2013  
(Rain date: Sunday, September 8)**

**Mr. Voelker explained that the Commission would have to decide soon if they were going to participate in the festival. He said if the Commission did decide to participate they would share a space with the Energy Commission.**

**The Commission discussed the idea of participating in the fall festival and what type of information and open space maps would be available for the public.**

**It was suggested that the Commission ask Ms. Simone for exact details as to what the Commission has done in past years before developing a plan for this year's event.**

**Mr. Sherman said he recalled one year they offered open space maps to the public.**

Ms. Nichols commented about the Commission using the fall festival as an opportunity to inform the public about open space areas and making knowledge more public.

**Motion:** That the Cheshire Environment Commission will participate in the Fall Festival on Saturday, September 7, 2013.

Moved by Mr. Mercugliano. Seconded by Mr. Abdifar. Motion approved unanimously by Commission members present.

Mr. Sherman queried the Commission regarding their availability to staff the festival – he said members could each cover a specific time period.

Members present agreed to be available to staff the festival. Event staffing would be finalized closer to the event date.

2. National Public Lands Day: September 28, 2013 (no rain date)  
<http://www.publiclandsday.org/>

The Commission discussed the September 28, 2013 National Public Lands Day event. There was discussion about August 30, 2013 registration deadline to sign up to participate in the event.

Mr. Mercugliano offered a few suggestions for possible events that could be held in various open space areas in town.

There was discussion about maybe offering more than one event – and the possibility of tying into the proposed cleanup efforts at the Casertano property as well as other cleanup efforts at open pace locations.

**Motion:** That the Cheshire Environment Commission agreed to participate in the National Lands Day Event on September 28, 2013.

Moved by Mr. Abdifar. Seconded by Ms. Collins. Motion approved unanimously by Commission members present.

Mr. Voelker said that Ms. Simone could provide Mr. Sherman with additional information about the event and historically what the Commission had done. He said Mr. Sherman could then share the details with Commission members (email communications would have to be documented for the record).

**VIII. Unfinished Business**

**1. National Public Lands Day; Cheshire event**

This item was discussed under calendar – events.

**2. Social Media**

Mr. Voelker informed Commission members that he had no progress report regarding the Commission starting a social media site.

Mr. Voelker explained that currently there are no protocols regarding Commissions and Boards having social media sites. He said one of the items to consider would be who would manage the sites.

Ms. Nichols said currently there are no policies in place but the town is working to develop social media policies. She explained that legal issues as well as content management issues needed to be considered regarding the town developing social media sites.

Ms. Collins stated that having a social media site would be a way to promote awareness and that the site could be used to share information with the public – many who are accustomed to using social media as a way of getting information.

There was discussion about having a social media site and content management as well as the need for regular oversight to make sure all content is acceptable and any questionable comments posted were removed.

**IX. New Business**

**1. Ketchum Management Plan Draft**

Mr. Voelker reviewed the Ketchum Management plan draft with Commission members.

Mr. Voelker explained that the Ketchum property consists of 1.85 acres located off of Tress Road. The property was purchased by the Town in October 2002.

Mr. Voelker explained that this property like many of the properties along the Prospect Ridge have been conserved by the Department of

Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) and the Cheshire Land Trust in an effort to preserve this regional greenbelt.

Mr. Voelker reviewed the topography – there are no wetlands or watercourses on this site as well as no public access.

The Commission reviewed the draft including the property description, management goals, permitted and prohibited uses and the general area map of the property.

Mr. Voelker explained that the Parks and Recreation Department would be responsible for maintaining the property.

Mr. Voelker reviewed some of the property management goals including about public access to this property. He noted that this property falls within the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) Natural Diversity Database review area – containing rare and endangered species.

Mr. Voelker said that Ms. Simone would be able to provide the Commission with additional information regarding Ketchum property at the next meeting before they considered voting on adopting the plan.

This item was tabled until the next meeting.

## 2. Ben's Homestead Management Plan Draft

Mr. Voelker reviewed the Ben's Homestead Management plan draft with Commission members.

Mr. Voelker explained that the Ben's Homestead was purchased by the Town of Cheshire and the State of Connecticut in 1993. The property consists of 56 acres of mountainous terrain - is heavily wooded and is the location of a historic sawmill.

The property has been a Town of Cheshire conservation interest since 1986 and many properties along Prospect Ridge have been conserved by DEEP and Cheshire Land Trust in an effort to preserve the regional greenbelt.

The Ben's property is located on the Quinnipiac Blue trail, contains a watercourse originating to the west and roughly follows the Blue Trail and there is documentation of the presence of at least one endangered species reported by DEEP.

**Mr. Voelker explained that public access is currently restricted due to the need to cross private property in Cheshire and Regional Water Authority property in Prospect.**

**The Commission reviewed the draft including the property description, management goals, permitted and prohibited uses and the general area map of the property.**

**Mr. Abdifar asked about the town's open space prioritization plan.**

**Mr. Voelker talked about the town having funds allocated for the purchase of open space. He said he wanted the Commission to participate with more open space and less on policy issues.**

**Mr. Voelker explained at the next meeting staff could provide additional information before the Commission made any decision about voting on the draft plan.**

**This item was tabled until the next meeting.**

### **3. Scout Projects**

**Mr. Sherman explained he had no new information about Patrick Hedden's proposed scout project at the Casertano property.**

**Mr. Sherman also noted that additional coordination was needed for the construction of the Ten Mile Low Land kiosk by a scout.**

**Further discussion regarding scout projects would be addressed at the next meeting.**

### **4. Discussion of Legislation Impacts to Cheshire**

**Ms. Collins gave a report regarding legislation (by-laws and regulations) impacting State (and Cheshire).**

**Ms. Collins explained that the Town (and Commission) needed awareness of environmental based legislation.**

**Ms. Collins explained that in June Connecticut Gov. Dan Malloy promised to sign a GMO (genetically modified organism) labeling bill if four other states also passed GMO labeling laws.**

**Ms. Collins went on to explain how the passing of such a bill could impact Cheshire.**

**The Commission discussed how current legislation could impact Cheshire and the importance of being aware of such legislative impacts.**

**Ms. Collins said moving forward she'd be willing to provide the Commission with legislation that could have an impact on Cheshire.**

**Members agreed that having this information would be important to have.**

**Ms. Nichols said that if the Commission would like, they could invite one of the state legislators to a meeting to discuss what current and future legislations could have an impact on Cheshire (the state).**

**Mr. Sherman suggested that moving forward information regarding legislation impacts could be covered on the agenda under communications.**

**X. Adjournment**

**Mr. Sherman called for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:52 p.m.**

**Moved by Mr. Abdifar. Seconded by Ms. Collins. Motion approved unanimously by Commission members present.**

**Respectfully submitted:**

**Carla Mills  
Recording Secretary  
Cheshire Environment Commission**