

Wallingford Parks and Recreation Department
OPEN SPACE USER GROUP
Meeting Minutes for Wednesday, May 31, 2023
Room 1 @ 5:30 pm

Attendees: Mike Miller, Ellie Tessmer, Officer Raffone, Officer Kehoe, Peter Polack, Chris, Amy Anderson, Larry Stowe, Doug Clark, Lars Edeen, Scott Gray, Dianne Lendler, Jeff Borne, Dianne Saunders, Conor Makepeace, Erik Severson, Erin O'Hare, Mary Mushinski

1.) Introductions

Kenny asked to go around the room so everyone could introduce themselves and state what their interest is for Open Space and the group they represent.

2.) New Wallingford Trails Work Group

About a year and a half ago, Scott Gray proposed the idea of starting a Trails Work Group under the guidance of the Parks & Rec. There was a meeting with the Mayor six months ago and the Work Group was approved with Kenny Michaels named the Administrator of the group. The group is made up of volunteers from various user groups.

A. Introductions of 3 Members Appointed By Mayor

Mike Miller, Scott Gray & Dianne Lendler

B. Mission of the Group

Kenny Michaels read the mission statement to the group.

C. Trail Proposal Process

This group was put together so trail users / residents can make proposals. The proposal will go to Kenny Michaels. He will send it to Erin O'Hare, Inland Wetlands, and Mike Miller, Conservation Commission. They will then be able to provide feedback if the proposed project should be approved or denied and the reason why. Work to be completed on trails by Trails Work Group.

D. Projects Completed/In Process

Scott Gray reported that a bog bridge was constructed on the green trail at Tyler Mill. It was constructed by volunteers. A major project was recently completed which was the re-route of the pink trail at Tyler Mill around a real bad erosion. A similar re-route will be done on

the blue/black trail off Woodhouse Road that goes along the river. The Work Group will be re-blazing trails at Tyler Mill and improving signage. More kiosks are being considered and improving existing kiosks as well. The volunteers of the Work Group will be interfacing with the public to get feedback of what the users would like to see done or improved. Closing of some trails may be looked at. Kenny Michaels will make final decision, if a trail will be closed. Diane Saunders wants to give Kenny a draft submittal form so the proposals will have certain generic information that would always be needed for each proposal. Kenny agreed to take a look at the form.

3.) Police Department Report

Officer Raffone and Officer Kehoe from the Community Impact Unit at the Wallingford Police Department were present at the meeting.

Officer Raffone said that a minimum of two bike patrol officers will be out at Tyler Mill on Saturday mornings. They will be out interacting with the public. If there is an incident while bike patrol is on duty, they can handle the matter. The focus of bike patrol at Tyler Mill is for citizen contact.

4.) Conservation Commission

A. Role Town Wide – Mike Miller & Erin O’Hare

Mike Miller gave a brief introduction of the Conservation Commission. The Commission is 60 years old this year. It was formed in 1963. It consists of nine commissioners all appointed by the Mayor. The Commission meets monthly. It is an advisory commission with no regulatory authority. It functions by working together with DEEP & Wallingford Land Trust. Their purpose and goal is to act as the Wallingford’s environmental conscious. There is around 3,000 acres of open space in town. The Commission identifies and prioritizes the open space that might be coming available. They manage a farm lease program for the town. There is approximately 430 acres of farm lease land that generates \$15,000 per year for the town. The Commission also manage the volunteer stewards for Tyler Mill. Erin O’Hare stated that there are 38 fields in the farm lease program. They were either donated or acquired over the years. Most of the fields are hay fields. Each commissioner is assigned 1-5 fields and a few parcels of open space properties to report on. They report on these properties three times a year.

B. Property Acquisitions in last 3 years

There were two recent acquisitions. The first is 124 Liney Hall Lane, which is a five-acre property at the end of Liney Hall Lane on an undeveloped road. This was bought in August 2022. The second is 264 Williams Road, which is a 95 acre property recently bought by the Water Company this past March. The property has several cold water streams that drain into the McKenzie reservoir.

C. Property Management Contractual Work in last 3 years

The \$15,000 generated from the farm lease program gets used towards the maintenance of the farm land. The Conservation budget is \$6,000 per year to use on any projects. In the last three years, a study was done on the pond on the Furgeson Woods property. A GPS evaluation was done on an unauthorized trail that was built on the west side of Tyler Mill. A contractual work done on eliminating Trees of Heaven. A turtle study was done at Tyler Mill. A Habitat Mosaic study was also done.

5.) Tyler Mill Preserve

A. Preserve's Attributes, designations, farm leases, and various recreational uses

Tyler Mill is approximately 900 acres. It is one piece of continuous land that is not fragmented and is surrounded by farmland and residential land. It is very rugged land. There are 13 farm lands inside Tyler Mill that the town leases out. There are 13 miles of official trails. The status of Tyler Mill is held as a future water shed. DEP stock it with fish and pheasants.

B. Northford Road Bridge Construction Project Preserve Impact.

Northford Road Bridge Construction project started last week. A map from the Engineering Department was available to view. Road closures can be found on the Wallingford Town Website.

6.) Quinnipiac Linear Trail Report/Update

Mary Mushinski stated they are on Phase 3B which is the bridge from Fireworks Island to Rte 150 Main Street Yalesville. They are waiting for fire permits before they continue. Phase 4 is extending the trail towards North Haven line. They are working on three side trails which are off the main trail and are woodsier. They are working on putting up markers and wood chips. Erin suggested that the three side trails get put on a map by the Engineering Department.

7.) Stewards of Tyler Mill Report by Diane Saunders

The Stewards of Tyler Mill work to the standards of DEP nature conservancy and the use of PRT reports. ERT reports are given to the town to update them as to the stewards status. No more intensive developments to the parking lots at Tyler Mill. Historic wells are on the property and most were capped.

8.) Open Discussion

Dumping problems at Tyler Mill in the late 90's. Public Works takes good care of the property and there is a fast turn-around time with Public Works. Erin O'Hare wanted the Police Department to be aware of a field by North Branford Road and George Washington Trail. A lot of problems out there. Trucks are entering the property illegally. The Police officers will put it on the roll call board and have patrol drive by routinely to keep an eye on it.

Meeting ended at 7:27 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Loriann Ouellette, Sr Clerk