



OLD LYME CONNECTICUT

OLD LYME CONSERVATION COMMISSION

MINUTES

January 2, 2024 6:30 PM

REGULAR MEETING In Person Location: Old Lyme Memorial Town Hall—American Legion Room
2 Pages

1. Meeting called to order 6:35 PM by Chair G Gregory

2. Attendance: Members Present: Chair G Gregory, Vice Chair G Ryan, Members T Sherer, R Patten, M Longfellow, N Kabel, A Daniels, T Russell.

Members Absent: Ex-Officio Member S Thompson

Guests Speaker Mark Comstock; Potential Members Brandy Campbell, Matt McKenzie, Karen Bronson.

Reporter: Kate Hewitt – CT Examiner

Clerk: M Plumleigh

3. Motion made by G Gregory to approve Minutes; unanimous **VOTE** to accept.

Motion made by G Gregory to amend Agenda to include presenter Mark Comstock, and add four additional items from Vice Chair G Ryan. Unanimous **VOTE** to accept.

4. Presenter Mark Comstock was introduced by Chair G Gregory. He is owner of Hydrangeas Galore, an Old Lyme nursery business. He encourages OLCC to dedicate efforts to preserve local stands of pitch pine trees, a planting of which as been established as a Bonsai garden at the garden entrance of Oswegatchie Hills. He hopes to develop a model of using these trees as Bonsai specimens, and to involve high school students. They are versatile and a species in danger of disappearing. But land trusts, conservation groups, and open space groups can play a major role in preserving and highlighting these trees. He has invited OLCC Members to his hands-on demonstration at his business, Saturday, February 10, 10:00 AM, 146 Neck Road. Presentation will repeat for public at 1:00.

5. Earlier Business

AMTRAK reboot of high-speed rail planning between New Haven and Providence. With a Hartford to Providence route unlikely (recall 2016 Federal Railroad Administration failed effort) it remains unclear how a new AMTRAK proposed study will satisfy both the demand for great speed and capacity along the Northeast Corridor, and the opposition to an off-corridor shoreline route. First Selectwoman Martha Shoemaker said the new study is "on her radar", and she has discussed the matter with State representative Devin Carney. – G Ryan

The next three items were approved and voted as additions to the Agenda, with reporting from G Ryan:

- 2024 Recreational Trails Grant Round through CT DEEP** has opened. A Grant Overview webinar is scheduled for January 11, 2024 at 1:00 P.M.. Register for the webinar at <https://forms.office.com/g/CGiu8GBS7t>
- Old Lyme/Pathogen Monitoring Network Data Discussion (Duck River and Lieutenant River) with Nikki Spiller, Director of Harbor Watch.** The goal of the network is to foster collaboration and build capacity for sewage pollution monitoring and source detection in both Connecticut and New York. First Selectwoman Martha Shoemaker is having a meeting with Nikki Spiller on Tuesday, January 9, 2024 from 10:00 to 11:00 A.M. to talk about the data collected and discuss how we can work

together to address potential sewage pollution issues and reduce bacteria loads to Long Island Sound. G Gregory and G Ryan will attend.

- 3. CT DOT application for replacement of Bridge over the Four Mile River on Route 156 in Old Lyme.** The basic project description is that 4 culvert pipes which constitute the existing bridge are being replaced with a span arch bridge structure and the roadway is being slightly realigned to the northwest (upstream direction). There are impacts to both inland and tidal wetlands. Wetland mitigation has been coordinated with DEEP and the Army Corps of Engineers. In addition, restoration of an area of degraded tidal marsh within Rocky Neck State Park will be accomplished utilizing thin layer deposition. For further information, contact G Ryan.

OLCC Budget has been submitted by Chair G Gregory to First Selectperson and will be voted upon in Selectmen's meeting.

OLCC leadership positions – One member of OLCC, Charlotte Lyman, has stepped down but all other members whose terms will expire this month have elected to remain. The result is that there is one vacancy on the Commission.

6. Outreach and Education:

Speaker Series at OL PGN Library begins this month, Wednesday, January 24, 6:30 PM with speaker Matthew McKenzie, Professor at UCONN Avery Point and Old Lyme resident.

G Gregory is extending invitations to other speakers for the upcoming dates: March 13, April 24, May 22.

Freedom Of Information (FOI) training for all members of Commissions and Committees is Wednesday February 21, 7:00 PM

G Ryan will be submitting article for February deadline to Old Lyme *Events Magazine*.

LOL High School science teacher will make and provide bat houses for OLCC to install by March.

R Patten reported that staff members at Rocky Neck State Park have determined that the location of their current bat houses are not efficiently attracting bat residents. Their next efforts will focus on putting up bat houses at the park's pavilion.

G Gregory suggested that members with books and information to share bring them to the meeting.

7. New Business

Review of mission statement of OLCC has been postponed.

- 8. Motion to ADJOURN** made by M Longfellow, seconded by T Russell.

Next meeting: Tuesday February 6

6:30 PM

American Legion Room

Old Lyme Memorial Town Hall

Respectfully Submitted,
Maureen Plumleigh, Clerk
Old Lyme Conservation Commission