

MINUTES OF OLD LYME CONSERVATION COMMISSION

REGULAR MEETING In Person Location: Old Lyme Memorial Town Hall--Mezzanine Room
October 3 2023 6:30 PM

1. **Call to order** was by Chair G Gregory at 6:40 PM
G Gregory welcomed new OLCC member Rachel Patten

2. **Attendance:** Chair G Gregory, Vice Chair G Ryan, Members Rachel Patten, H Lyman, T Russell, N Kabel; M Longfellow. Clerk M Plumleigh
Members Absent – T. Sherer, A Daniels
There was a quorum.

3. **Vote:** G Gregory asked for new items for this meeting's agenda. There are no new items. Members **Voted** unanimously to accept Agenda as presented.

4. Old Business:

- o Budget submission for Old Lyme Conservation Commission – G Gregory reported that he and G Ryan attended the Board of Selectmen meeting on October 2, where the proposed OLCC budget was approved. This funding is intended to support OLCC projects such as displays, outreach, brochures, publications, donations to open space, wetlands, water quality testing for Black Hall River, postage.
- o G. Gregory opened a discussion about the possibility of replacing the OLCC banner logo. Members agreed to continue use of the existing banner which was designed and made several years ago.
- o T Sherer wrote a letter to Old Lyme Land Trust stating OLCC's support in their effort to acquire land parcel at 188 Four Mile River Road belonging to David and Mary Eklund. Our thanks and gratitude to T. Sherer for an excellent writeup. The Property will be available to the public as Open Space land, creating an expanded loop of trails for hiking and walking.

5. New Business:

- o G Ryan shared his copy of the submission of OLCC's input to 2022 Old Lyme Annual Town Report and expressed thanks to T Sherer for his writing skills and timely submission.
- o G Gregory and G. Ryan researched the history of water testing of the Black Hall Pond and River. There is no history, unlike the other tributaries, which have been water tested. Written communications with CT DEEP and Ledge Light Health District determined that there is no routine, scheduled water testing of either the Black Hall Pond or River. The only reason either organization would perform such testing would be in the event of a health issue or identified pollution.
- o G Ryan and G Gregory attended Save the Sound's September 16th Beach Cleanup Day at Rocky Neck State Park in support of International Coastal Cleanup (ICC). Their focus was Rocky Neck State Park.
- o G Ryan reported on the Save the Sound 2023 Long Island Sound Beach Report for Connecticut. Key findings of Save the Sound's 2023 Long Island Sound Beach Report include:
78% of Long Island Sound beaches earned an "A" or "B" grade.
That leaves 22% of Sound beaches with moderate to poor grades, from C+ and below. Three beaches received an "F" grade in 2022.

- The Beach Report offered good news for swimmers, noting that 78% of the more than 200 Sound beaches highlighted earned “A” or “B” grades for water quality in the 2022 swimming season. The biennial report included a list of the 10 highest scoring public beaches in New York and Connecticut based on a three-year average of water quality grades (10 each in NY and CT), and presented comprehensive grades for 207 swimming beaches 2020, 2021, and 2022. White Sands Beach, Old Lyme and Hole-in-the-Wall Beach in East Lyme both received an A+ rating. The full report can be found on Save the Sound's website at [Beach Report Card - Save the Sound](#). www.savethesound.org
 - G Gregory will attend the October meeting of Rogers Lake Authority to learn of actions concerning water quality, invasive plants and Ledge Light Health District reported pollution at Hains Park.
 - G Gregory and G Ryan reported on the need to identify and protect Old Lyme’s many vernal pools. A satellite map can be obtained to mark the locations. This may be a project for a LOLHS student. Chair G Gregory will contact Michael Aurelia, Vice Chair of the Open Space Commission, regarding his comments about OLCC responsibilities re: vernal pools and ponds that he made at a previous OLCC meeting. R. Patten explained how a “peeper prow” is held in Clinton, to educate and protect the early-spring migration of peepers. In the Spring, people explore vernal pools after dark with flashlights, boots and nets. They watch firsthand as the tiny peeper frogs sing their spring courtship songs along with many other amphibians emerging from the winter doldrums.
 - UCONN CLEAR Webinar: A New Stormwater Quality Manual for CT: September 26 - overview and history of the Manual from 2004 to this latest revision - G. Gregory. Reference: [Stormwater Manual \(ct.gov\)](#)
 - G Ryan explained the purpose of the proposed Upper Connecticut River Partnership Act - S. 1117 (111th Congress). The Upper Connecticut River Partnership Act directs the Secretary of the Interior to establish a Connecticut River Grants and Technical Assistance Program to provide financial and technical assistance to the states of New Hampshire and Vermont, through the Connecticut River Joint Commissions of New Hampshire and Vermont and to improve the management of the upper Connecticut River watershed. H.R. 5216 - Connecticut River Watershed Partnership Act, was introduced to the 118th Congress (2023-2024) on August 15, 2023. The latest action occurred on August 16, 2023 when it was referred to the House of Representatives Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment. Follow on status will be presented when available. Reference: [Summary of S. 1117 \(111th\): Upper Connecticut River Partnership Act - GovTrack.us](#)
 - G Ryan explained that a letter was received by the OLCC from Mill Pond Lane residents, dated September 18, concerning a perceived conservation issue regarding construction of a new 1,800 sq. ft. guest house which would block the view of Mill Pond. G Ryan and G Gregory visited the Mill Pond Lane property, spoke with the Town Building Department and the Land Use Coordinator, and found that the construction met the zoning requirements of the issued town building permit. G Ryan’s letter to Mill Pond residents informed them of the legitimacy of the construction and determined that the only action for them is to appeal to the Zoning Board of Appeals within 30 days of the approved, issued building permit.
6. **Outreach and Education:**
- G Gregory reported on the Deep River Public Library’s presentation, the Secret Lives of Owls, August 21, which he attended.
 - G Gregory proposed a motion re: OLCC’s becoming a member of Connecticut Association of Conservation and Inland Wetlands Commission (CACWIC). H Lyman seconded; Vote was unanimous. CACWIC's stated mission is to promote the statutory responsibilities of Connecticut

Conservation Commissions and Inland Wetland Commissions and to foster environmental quality through education and through the conservation and protection of wetlands and other natural resources.

- G Gregory urges that recruiting new OLCC members could be achieved if OLCC posts updates and information on the Old Lyme Town website, which will be submitted to Assistant to the First Selectman Katie Balocca. He also would like OLCC to create a Facebook page.
- G Gregory will meet with LOLHS science teacher re: seniors in need of a senior project.
- There is no new information re: remediation of invasive growth in CT River by CT River Conservancy.

7. Additional Business:

G Ryan reported that obtaining access to Old Lyme Conservation Commission e-mails is being addressed by the Town Hall IT administrator.

G Gregory encouraged members to review the handout General Guidelines for all Commissioners/FOI.

G Gregory reviewed General Operating Rules for Meetings.

Adjourn:

G Gregory proposed a Motion to Adjourn. H Lyman seconded. The **vote** was unanimous.

Next meeting **November 14, 2023**, second Tuesday due to first Tuesday being Election Day,
6:30 - 8:00 PM, American Legion Room, Old Lyme Memorial Town Hall

Respectfully Submitted,
Maureen Plumleigh
Clerk, Old Lyme Conservation Commission