

**Preston Conservation and Agricultural Commission
Preston Town Hall
Monday, July 23, 2018
7:30 pm.
Regular Meeting**

1. Call to Order

Chairman Piszczek called the meeting to order at 7:35 pm

2. Roll Call

Regular Members

Gary Piszczek, Chairman
Matthew Snurkowski, Vice Chairman
Susan Mattern, Secretary - excused
Lynwood Crary
Margaret Gibson
Ted Zajac

Also Present

Striker Snurkowski
Mitch Gibson
Sean Nugent, PRA Chairman

Alternates

Roberta Charpentier - seated
Sandy Pimental

Recorder

Roberta Charpentier

Chairman Piszczek seated Roberta Charpentier

3. Approval of the June 25, 2018 Regular Meeting minutes.

A motion was made by L. Crary and seconded by M. Snurkowski to approve the June 25, 2018 Regular Meeting minutes as presented.

All in favor. Motion carries.

4. Comments from the Public

None

5. Communications

- a) Review of Subdivision Application #2018-01, Gaston Cyr, Cyr Construction, Applicant/Owner, 10 Branch Hill Road; review of 11 lot subdivision.
- b) Future conservation in Preston.
- c) Letter dated June 18, 2018 from Connecticut Land Conservation Council to Preston Conservation Commission regarding an annual membership gift.
- d) The Habitat, Spring/Summer 2018 (to be passed out at meeting)

6. Public Hearings

None

7. Old Business

a) Clustered Zoning Regulations.

L. Crary stated Planning & Zoning will be voting on their new regulations in September.

b) Farm Dating Program

No discussion

c) Hniatuk & Grossman properties – future use.

No discussion

d) Kendall Property

Avalonia received the grant.

e) Farm Tours

Planned for August 4th.

f) State Hospital Development

Sean Nugent, Chairman PRA;

- Will be forwarding a document to the CAC that is part of the permitting process; the permitting process right now is to clean up the property.
- At this stage no formal action needed by the CAC.
- When property is transferred to the Mohegan Tribe, they will be required to go through the Town's process.
- The PRA will not weigh in on Conservation or Inland Wetlands as that is not the role of the PRA.
- When the Town acquired the property in 2009, there were 59 blighted buildings.
- The Town will be transferring 388 acres to the Tribe.
- Received all required permits from Planning & Zoning, approval from Inland Wetlands, and Storm Water permit from DEEP.
- Coastal permit will be approved by Fall.
- The needs of DEEP and the SHPO have been met regarding protection of the Tiger Beetle's habitat and the Story Tavern archaeological site.

S. Nugent explained that the coastal permit requires that the documentation be sent to the CAC, however the cover letter did not explain anything. S. Nugent and Tighe & Bond crafted an explanation letter to go with the documentation so the CAC will understand the process.

Chairman Piszczek stated the CAC has its own conceptual wish list for the development of that property and would like to discuss that before the permitting process.

S. Nugent suggested having the Tribe come in and meet with the CAC.

L. Crary asked if the property transfer would be in 2020.

S. Nugent answered that his vision is next summer.

g) Notable Tree of CT: 149 River Road

Members will hike to the tree in the Fall. T. Zajak noted that he will be mowing the edges of the property.

h) Management update letter for Mrs. Przyborowski

Chairman Piszczek will take care of the letter.

i) Comprehensive Zoning Revisions

Planning & Zoning is working on this and does not need input from the CAC at this time.

L. Crary stated Planning & Zoning will be voting on their new regulations in September.

j) Joint meeting with Avalonia

Chairman Piszczek will invite Sue Sutherland, Vice President Avalonia to CAC's September meeting.

k) Roadside Blight

Will plan for Spring. Earth Day is April 22nd.

l) Eversource/Mary Dora Preserve – Tree Planting

Chairman Piszczek has not yet contacted Eversource.

8. Boots on the Ground – Paddles in the Water Report

Chairman Piszczek noted that members should keep track of their time when working on CAC projects, so the hours can be submitted as match hours for grants.

9. New Business

a) Review of Subdivision Application #2018-01, Gaston Cyr, Cyr Construction, Applicant/Owner, 10 Branch Hill Road; review of 11 lot subdivision.

CAC members looked over the plans for the proposed subdivision.

Chairman Piszczek noted that there is no land of conservation value within this subdivision.

The CAC saw no conservation issues with the plans.

b) Future conservation in Preston

Chairman Piszczek noted that he and Margaret Gibson had a conversation regarding the direction of the CAC; There will be a lot of changes in the Town due to the State Hospital property (Preston Riverwalk)

- New priorities should be set.
- What the CAC should do, to increase the quality of life in the Town.
- Present older farmer's with other opportunities besides calling a developer.
- Develop guidelines.

M. Gibson explained that Avalonia is a different organization raising money, getting grants, and are looking to partner with various groups that are interested in conserving land, including Conservation Commissions.

Chairman Piszczek stated that he would like to get an agreement on paper before the CAC does anything to pursue this relationship.

M. Gibson noted the CAC needs to know what land connects to what, and decide where the green-ways should be located.

CAC members discussed using the ranking system they developed in 2015 (see below)

*This document was not available during the meeting; L. Cray emailed the document to CAC members after the meeting adjourned.

*Town of Preston Conservation and Agricultural Commission
Community Farms Preservation Program Priority Ranking System
Adopted April 27th, 2015*

Five areas that rank the importance of a parcel of farmland to the future agricultural wellbeing of Preston are considered, with a value of one to three points assigned for each area as per the guidelines listed below. A higher point value indicates a higher priority in preserving that parcel for continued agricultural purposes.

1. Soil Type
 - a. 1 point - Large areas of wetland soil
 - b. 3 points – Large areas of clay soil

- c. *5 points – Large areas of Locally Important or Prime Farmland Soils*
 - 2. *Current Level of Agricultural Activity*
 - a. *1 point – No current activity*
 - b. *3 points – Limited current agricultural activity*
 - c. *5 points – Considerable current agricultural activity*
 - 3. *Location Relative to Conservation Areas (as identified in the Town Plan of Conservation and Development)*
 - a. *1 point – Greater than 1 mile away*
 - b. *2 points – Less than 1 mile away but not abutting*
 - c. *3 points – Abutting*
 - 4. *Location Relative to Other Preserved Areas*
 - a. *1 point – Greater than 1 mile away*
 - b. *2 points – Less than 1 mile away but not abutting*
 - c. *3 points – Abutting*
 - 5. *Likelihood that Agricultural Activities Will Cease Without Preservation*
 - a. *1 point – Will continue to be farmed*
 - b. *3 points – May continue to be farmed*
 - c. *5 points – Land will not be farmed unless preserved*

Chairman Piszczek stated that CAC Members will discuss the ranking system at the next CAC meeting, then have a sit-down at M. Gibson's, then invite Sue Sutherland, Vice President Avalonia to the September CAC meeting.

Chairman Piszczek offered to get interested CAC members a copy of the Cove study.

10. Meanderings

None

11. Adjournment

A motion was made by G. Piszczek and seconded by T. Zajak to adjourn the meeting at 8:50 pm.

All in favor. Motion carries.

Respectfully submitted,

Roberta Charpentier
recorder