

**TOWN OF SALEM
PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, MAY 22, 2018 – 7:00 P.M.
SALEM TOWN OFFICE BUILDING**

PRESENT

Joseph Duncan, Chair
Vernon Smith, Vice Chair
John Gadbois, Secretary
Margaret Caron
Ruth Savalle
Eric Wenzel
Ray Gionet, Alternate (*seated*)
Diba Khan-Bureau, Alternate (7:13 p.m.)

ABSENT

David Miller
Terri Salas, Alternate

ALSO PRESENT

Town Planner Kate Rattan
Selectman Liaison David Kennedy (7:30 p.m.)

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Duncan called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Alternate Member Commissioner Gionet was seated for Commissioner Miller.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT: *none*

4. PUBLIC HEARING: *none*

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING(S):

Regular Meeting Minutes: April 24, 2018

M/S/C Smith/Savalle, to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of April 24, 2018.

Discussion: None. Voice vote, 5-0-2. Voting in Favor: Commissioners Gadbois, Gionet, Miller, Savalle, and Duncan. Voting in Opposition: None. Voting in Abstention: Commissioners Caron and Wenzel.

5. OLD BUSINESS

a. Regulation Re-write Discussion

1) Section 25-A – Riparian Corridor Overlay Zone

Chairman Duncan proposed and the Commissioners agreed to discuss the section following the presentation regarding the Eightmile River Watershed in June.

2) List of Definitions

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6. NEW BUSINESS:

a. Campground and Gravel Excavation Permit Renewals

Chairman Duncan reported that the Zoning/Wetlands Official has reviewed the Gravel Excavation Permit Renewal Applications and found that there are no outstanding issues, with the exception of the Avery Quarry, which will be inspected in June.

M/S/C: Smith/Savalle, to approve the Excavation Permit Renewals for the Renz Quarry, G's Ruff Stuff Quarry, Getty Granite Co., LLC, and Henrici Quarry. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 7-0, all in favor.

Similarly, all of the campgrounds have been inspected and are in compliance with the Salem Zoning Regulations and there are no known issues with regard to other local or state agencies.

M/S/C: Savalle/Smith, to approve the Campground Permit Renewals for the Witch Meadow Campground, Indianfield Cooperative Campground, Salem Farms Campground, and Sna-Z Spot. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 7-0, all in favor.

b. Presentation by Tom Worthley, UConn regarding Forestry Management

Tom Worthley, Associate Extension Professor at the University of Connecticut Cooperative Extension Service and the University of Connecticut Department of Natural Resources and the Environment, thanked the Commission for inviting him to speak and provided a brief background of his experience in the field of forestry management. He posed the questions, "why does the Town of Salem own forestland?" and "how does the Town benefit from the forestland?" and felt that it would be a worthwhile endeavor for the Town to determine what and how much the Town owns and how they can enhance the benefits or enjoyment of the property they own. Interested in engaging, educating, and providing hands-on experience to the community as well as his students, he presented a PowerPoint presentation regarding issues that have been addressed with other communities, including the Haddam School District and the towns of Southington and Guilford. To begin the process, a piece of land is selected and an inventory/assessment is made of the property's flora, fauna, and trees and their quantity, quality, condition, and characteristics. By calculating the number of stems per acre and utilizing a metric known as the basal area, i.e., the cross-sectional area of a given tree at approximately 4.5 feet off the ground, foresters are able to determine the density, volume, and growth of the forest stand and establish the forest's needs and requirements for wildlife habitat. Utilizing these metrics, along with an analysis and assessment of the property's features and characteristics, foresters are also able to determine whether the forest is over- or under-stocked and, depending upon their determination, take any necessary measures to create the optimal conditions for the maintenance/promotion of a healthy vegetative and/or animal habitat(s). With this in mind, Professor Worthley introduced the possibility of selecting a piece of land, conducting an assessment of the property, and determining the options and identifying its most desirable needs, keeping in mind how it could benefit the community.

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To begin managing their existing forestland, Commissioner Khan-Bureau felt that the Commission's initial goal would be to inventory the forests for native species in the Town. In response to Commissioner Savalle, who suggested the possibility of assessing the health of the trees located alongside the road, which present a public safety issue, Professor Worthley stated that UConn currently has a forest vegetation management program known as *Stormwise*, which aims to reduce the risk of tree-related storm damage to power lines. He has also contacted the local and State Officials in an effort to bring together the necessary resources to remove those dead trees alongside the road. Town Planner Rattan also noted that the CT DOT (CT Department of Transportation) has established a highway log in which a photograph is taken approximately every 50 feet that can be used as an additional tool. A brief discussion ensued regarding gypsy moths and lichen.

Commissioner Wenzel cited the following recommendations in the POCD (Plan of Conservation and Development):

- 3.1. Objective: Protect the integrity of Salem's working forests while harvesting forest products.
 - 3.1.1. Recommendation: Encourage private landowners to have a professional Forester write a long-term Forest Stewardship Plan for their working forests....
 - 3.1.3. Recommendation: Salem should have a Forest Management Plan for its town-owned forest land.

Professor Worthley stated that a project on Town-owned property could serve as an example for others to develop a Forest Stewardship Plan. Commissioner Khan-Bureau felt that the first step would be to assess an area(s) to determine the existing conditions and develop ideas based upon their findings. A similar assessment was conducted of the Town's Wetlands. Commissioner Wenzel suggested assessing an area along/near a nature trail, which would be easily accessible to the public, and, possibly, engaging the Salem School students. An assessment would provide them with the knowledge of what the Town has to work with, where it is, how it is situated, and in what ways it may improve the lives of the residents. In response to Town Planner Rattan, Professor Worthley stated that there is a market for the foresting of other forest products such as witch hazel, all of which is manufactured in East Hampton, ramps, holiday greens, and quality logs.

He thanked the Commission for their time and attention and provided some literature. The Commission thanked him for an informative and interesting presentation.

The Commission discussed their next step(s). Chairperson Duncan felt that it might behoove them to assess a piece of Town-owned forested property, but felt that utilizing Town-owned property for the purposes of economic development or the development of trails would not fall under their purview. Commissioner Smith felt that the project would be more about educating the public about their own land and the natural balance of species rather than about

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regulations. Along these lines, Commissioner Wenzel suggested and Commissioner Caron agreed that it would be ideal to select and assess a piece of property that is easily accessible, allowing the public to witness the benefits, thereby educating and providing awareness of the value of their natural resources, inspiring their imagination, and setting an example.

Commissioner Savalle recommended they consult with the Recreation Commission should they wish to assess a piece of property that is located along the trail.

Commissioner Khan-Bureau volunteered to work with Professor Worthley and their students to review the maps and select a parcel of land to assess.

7. ENFORCEMENT OFFICER'S REPORT/INLAND WETLANDS AND CONSERVATION COMMISSION REPORT: *none*

8. TOWN PLANNER REPORT:

a. THCS to be discussed at June 5, 2018 Board of Selectmen Meeting

Town Planner Rattan introduced Justin LaFountain, who will be transitioning into the Town Planner position in June.

A letter from the town of Colchester regarding changes to the Zoning Regulations was received. The regulation changes include aligning their subdivision and zoning regulations and the prohibition of medicinal marijuana dispensaries and production. She did not feel that any of the proposed regulations would be detrimental to the Town.

The Commission's decision to opt out of CT Public Act 17-155, An Act Concerning Temporary Healthcare Structures, was sent to the Board of Selectmen and will be discussed at their next regularly scheduled meeting on June 5, 2018.

9. CORRESPONDENCE: *none*

10. PUBLIC COMMENT: *none*

11. PLUS DELTAS:

Commissioner Khan-Bureau will arrange the presentation regarding the Eightmile River Scenic Watershed for either June 19 or 26, 2018.

12. ADJOURNMENT:

M/S/C: Smith/Caron, to adjourn the meeting at 8:42 p.m. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 7-0, all in favor. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Agnes Miyuki, Recording Secretary for the Town of Salem