

EAST LYME PLANNING COMMISSION
PUBLIC HEARING I
Tuesday, NOVEMBER 17th, 2009
MINUTES

FILED IN EAST LYME TOWN
CLERK'S OFFICE

Nov 23 20 09 at 10:45 AM
PM

Leah B. Willett

EAST LYME TOWN CLERK

The East Lyme Planning Commission held a Public Hearing on the Planning Commission's 2009 Draft of the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) on November 17, 2009 at Town Hall, 108 Pennsylvania Ave., Niantic, CT. Chairman Picarazzi opened the continued Public Hearing and called it to order at 7:10 PM.

PRESENT: Lisa Picarazzi, Chairman, Francine Schwartz, Secretary, Chris Sandford, Mike Bowers, Paul Dagle, George McPherson, Alternate

ALSO PRESENT: Gary Goeschel, Planning Director
Drew Kenny, Alternate
Jack Hogan, Ex-Officio, Board of Selectmen

ABSENT: Tom Perron, Alvin Sher, Alternate

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge was observed.

Public Hearing I

1. Town of East Lyme Planning commission, 2009 Draft of the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD)

Ms. Picarazzi thanked everyone for coming and apologized for the brief delay in waiting for a member to arrive. She noted that she had seated George McPherson, Alternate at the table this evening. She noted that they had opened this Public Hearing on Tuesday, November 10, 2009 and that they had left it open for further comments.

Ms. Picarazzi called for anyone from the public who wished to speak regarding this application to please come forward and state their name and address for the record –

Ruth Reluga, 10 Bronson Street, Niantic, CT said that she is a member of the Natural Resources Commission and that this evening she was speaking as a member. She said that she is advocating for the inclusion of tidal wetlands in the open space plan. She noted their importance in forming a food base in the sound and that they provide a habitat for shore birds among other important functions. She and other members would like to see tidal wetland acquisition included in the open space plan as it allows for a greater emphasis on bio-diversity as a reason for land protection. (Copy of statement attached at end of Minutes)
Ms. Reluga submitted a copy of her statement for the record and to the Commissioners.

Ms. Picarazzi asked if anyone else wished to speak –
Hearing no one – She asked if the Commissioners had any further questions at this time –
Hearing none – She asked that they leave this Public Hearing open for any further comments.

****MOTION (1)**

Mr. Dagle moved to continue this Public Hearing to the December 1, 2009 meeting of the Commission.

Mr. Bowers seconded the motion.

Vote: 6 – 0 – 0. Motion passed.

Ms. Picarazzi adjourned this Public Hearing at 7:22 PM and continued it to December 1, 2009.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Zmitruk,
Recording Secretary

POCD hearing, 11/17/09

I am here tonight to advocate for the inclusion of tidal wetlands in our open space plan, and an emphasis on biodiversity, a reason for acquiring open space, which is not present in the open space plan accepted both by the CNRC and your commission. I believe that this was simply an oversight which can be easily remedied.

We know that tidal wetlands are areas of high nutrient and biological productivity forming a food base in Long Island Sound. They provide habitat, nesting, feeding and refuge for shorebirds. Very importantly they are the nursery grounds for many species of fish and shell fish for the sound and the ocean. They clean the water, they buffer storms and wave energy and stabilize shorelines. We use them for recreational fishing, wild life observation and hunting. They are important to fisheries and a major source of open space. This we know. We also know that they are in danger.

I think, along with other members of my commission, that we should look to acquisition of tidal wetlands, just as we do to woodlands and watershed lands. We need to do this so that we can protect them, so that they can protect us.

I also believe that biodiversity is the primary reason for protecting open space within our town and, indeed, the world. The more you study science the more you appreciate the interdependence and connection within nature. By giving biodiversity it's due place in considering acquisition of a parcel of land, you strengthen its value and reason for acquisition.

I would like to quote from a poster I prepared for East Lyme Days this summer:

East Lyme's native biodiversity improves the quality of our lives.

The plants, animals and ecosystems we share our town with affect us every day in ways we rarely have time to appreciate. From the fish that attract sportsman to the microbes that keep our drinking water clean, we are indebted to our biodiversity.

Streams, bogs and marshes filter nutrients and pollutants from our drinking

Submitted Planning
Attachment POCD — EHI 11/17/09

water, while also working to keep our clam and scallop estuaries healthy and productive. Marshes are some of the most productive ecosystems in the world and shelter many baby fish.

There could be as many as 8 species of bats in town, and a single bat can eat 1,200 mosquitoes an hour. Bees and other harmless insects pollinate our flowers and crops on local farms, providing thousands of dollars in free work.

Our Niantic Forest cleans and cools the air, while producing the oxygen we depend on with every breath. Such forests are one of our few useful tools for ameliorating global warming and sea-level rise.

We treasure our views from Grassy Hill to the Niantic River to the sunsets on Pattagansett Marsh. We watch the spring warblers land after their flight across Long Island Sound and await the coming of the osprey, egrets and herons. The biodiversity of East Lyme has accumulated over millions of years. It is our most valuable resource, and is, "The key to the maintenance of the world as we know it."--E. O. Wilson

For these reasons, I advocate for the inclusion of tidal wetlands in the open space plan, and a greater emphasis on biodiversity as a reason for land protection.

Ruth Reluga
10 Bronson Street
Niantic, CT 06357