

Commission on Conservation & Agriculture



Chairperson	Evan Peterson	
Vice-Chair	Bob Daniels	
Members	Kate Miller	Jane Brawerman
	Barbara Schukoske	Daniel Penney
	William Harris	Diana Martinez
	Vacant	Vacant
Alternates	Vincent Senatore	William Wilson
	Vacant	
Staff	James Sipperly, Environmental Planner	
	Corinne Milardo, Administrative Assistant	

REGULAR MEETING Minutes

DATE: Tuesday, February 17, 2026
TIME: 7:00 p.m.

Meeting was held in person in Room 208, Municipal Building and via WebEx.

In person attendance: Commissioners: Evan Peterson, Bob Daniels, Barbara Schukoske, William Harris, Vincent Senatore.

Public: Peter Smith.

WebEx Attendance: Commissioners: Kate Miller, Diana Martinez, Jane Brawerman (arrived at 7:10pm)

Public: David Winkel.

Absent: Commissioners: Daniel Penney, William Wilson.

Staff in Attendance: James Sipperly, Environmental Planner
Corinne Milardo, Administrative Assistant

A. Call to Order

Chairperson E. Peterson called the meeting to order at 7:04pm.

B. Accept the Agenda

E. Peterson requested to add Future Bonding to Old Business.
Motion to accept the agenda as amended.
Moved by B. Daniels, seconded by B. Schukoske.
Passed unanimously: 7-0.

C. Public Forum

D. Winkel asked if the Red Maple Swamp plans have been finalized.

J. Sipperly responded not yet.

D. Approval of Minutes

1. October 21, 2025

K. Miller requested revisions be made to clarify her comments.

Motion to approve the minutes as amended.
Moved by J. Brawerman, seconded by B. Daniels.
Passed unanimously: 7-0.

2. December 16, 2025

Motion to approve the minutes.
Moved by B. Daniels, seconded by V. Senatore.
Passed unanimously: 7-0.

3. January 20, 2026

Motion to approve the minutes.
Moved by B. Schukoske, seconded by B. Daniels.
Passed unanimously: 7-0.

E. Request for Comment

None.

1. Urban Act Grant – Central CT Loop

J. Sipperly reported that this is part of the multi-use trail that is going through Newfield to Kaplan Drive to Tuttle Road. Last Wednesday night, the Inland Wetlands commission accepted the application. A public hearing was set for March 4th. J. Sipperly recommended that commission members attend the wetlands meeting to hear about the project in detail if they're interested.

F. Officers and Committee Reports

1. Chair's Report

i. Open Space Acquisition Fund Balance

J. Sipperly stated there is nothing new to report.

ii. Conservation Page for the Website

C Milardo reported that there have been no changes to the webpage.

K. Miller requested that an updated version of the Sustainable Buying Guide be posted on the webpage once it's completed. This guide is a listing of environmental organizations in town, places to buy sustainable goods and more.

The commission agreed with K. Miller.

K. Miller will send the commission a draft of the document for them to provide feedback.

iii. Meeting with Mayor and others regarding CT State Statutes for Farmers

B. Daniels reported that they met with the mayor who responded positively to hearing about the State Statutes for Farmers. This is mainly for tax abatements for farmers on equipment and structures. There

were questions on what constitutes a structure and also what are the negative impacts. B Daniels also reported that they received good feedback from the meeting.

2. Agriculture Committee

E. Peterson reported that the Ag committee just met an hour ago.

B. Daniels stated that this meeting was to discuss the Animal Ordinance and to draft a document with the feedback they came up with. They will share this with the commission, and then submit it to the Health Department.

3. Outreach Committee

i. Conservation Corner Update

J. Sipperly reported that he still hasn't heard back from his Middletown Press contact.

K. Miller stated that according to the by-laws the main function of the Outreach Committee is to produce and disseminate the trail guide. Trail Guide Updates should be placed under the Outreach Committee.

4. Open Space Management Committee

i. Open Space Signage

J. Sipperly reported signage has not changed.

ii. Open Space Priorities

J. Sipperly stated that trails need to be walked again to see what properties require the most attention for maintenance.

K. Miller began the discussion on having the Wilcox Management Plan that has yet to be implemented be a priority. There should be a timeline for this to move this plan forward.

J. Sipperly will finalize the scope of services by the next meeting.

Motion to pursue this to see if it's an appropriate pathway for the commission from the office's point of view.

Moved by K. Miller, seconded by B. Daniels.

Passed unanimously: 7-0.

K. Miller requested that the commission receive a report at the next meeting.

iii. Trail Maintenance

This goes with open space priorities.

J. Brawerman commented that it would be very difficult to identify trail maintenance needs right now. This is something that definitely will need to be done as soon as the trails are more walkable when the snow is melted.

5. Open Space Acquisition Committee

i. 44 Chamberlain Hill Road

W. Harris reported that he found someone, Mike Lutz, which can cut trails at 44 Chamberlain Hill Road. They just need a map that shows where the trails should be cut and written authorization from the property owner and/or from the City. This won't happen until the conditions at the property improve.

J. Sipperly commented that it will need to be an authorization from the property owner. He will reach out to the property owner.

G. Old Business

i. Trail Guide Update

E. Peterson reported that they were unable to meet due to misaligned schedules.

K. Miller suggested that staff to at least attend the first meeting.

E Peterson will go ahead and schedule a meeting.

ii. Red Maple Swamp Update

J. Sipperly reported that they have a new surveyor, SLR. Due to the weather this project is on hold until the snow melts.

D. Winkel asked if the new bike path will be affected by the rest of 830370.

J. Sipperly responded no. The trail will be carved out of the open space parcel that they're going to protect in perpetuity.

iii. CCA 2025 Annual Report and 2026 Goals

K. Miller asked if there was a 2025 report approved and if there is a draft.

E. Peterson responded no it hasn't been approved and yes there is a draft. E. Peterson suggested tabling voting on the 2025 annual report until everyone has had a chance to review the draft. E. Peterson began discussing what the 2026 goals should be for the commission.

B. Daniels suggested bonding as a goal. Another goal is to finish updating the trail guide, there's trail maintenance, and the Wilcox Management Implementation.

K. Miller suggested drafting a written protocol for the acquisition of properties.

J. Brawerman commented that they should set some priorities for how we would use the funding so as to build support for the idea of having another open space bond.

W. Harris asked what the process is if a really good piece of property becomes available for purchase but the funds we have are for maintenance.

J. Brawerman responded they could pursue grant funding.

J. Sipperly stated that the Plan of Conservation and Development lists where they should be prioritizing open space acquisition.

K. Miller requested to put on the next agenda a review of a proposed protocol for acquisition of development rights and open space. K. Miller will create a draft for the next meeting.

E. Peterson commented that if they do go out for a bond, the bond should have three individual pieces for use of the funds, agriculture, maintenance and acquisition and keep those funds separate.

iv. Wilcox RFP

v. CT Farm Bill

J. Sipperly stated that this should be taken off the agenda.

H. New Business

J. Sipperly discussed being approached by a farmer who runs a cut your own flower farm in Portland. He's looking in Middletown for an acre of land to open his business. He would need a water source. One option would be to use an acre at Guida's. There is a pond there.

K. Miller commented that she doesn't think that pond would be a good water source. The water level gets low during the summer and it's filled with vegetation and critters.

B. Daniels suggested the property on Randolph Road where they used to play volleyball.

J. Sipperly stated that the Randolph Road property is an option as well.

J. Brawerman thinks that's a good location as well.

I. Member Forum

None.

J. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:26 pm.

Moved by B. Schukoske, seconded by B. Daniels.

Passed unanimously: 7-0.