

**Conservation Commission**  
**Regular Meeting February 11, 2016**

The meeting opened at 7:10 with the following in attendance:

**MEMBERS:**

Christine Yannielli  
Shagufta Zahid  
Jimmy Ayash  
Felipe Flores  
Brian Vaugh

**OTHERS:**

Vivian Englund  
Jim Dunn

1. **VOTED** unanimously on a motion by Shagufta Zahid and seconded by Christine Yannielli to **APPROVE** the minutes of last meeting on 1/14/2016.
2. Education Program: Len Yannielli presenter on Climate Change, Passive Open Space and Natural Resources.  
A clarification of passive open space and active open space was explained and defined. Mr. Yannielli explained the difference between impervious and permeable surfaces and the relationship of the filtration of water going into the soil. He explained that passive open space is land with no impervious surfaces, no hard surfaces and allows nitrogen to feed microbes in the soil to help materials such as enzymes and proteins, which help green things grow. He also explained how climate change is impacting all areas of the globe e.g. Yemen, Syria, war and mass migrations. He reminded everyone to Think Globally, Act Locally and to be educators.  
  
Mr. Yannielli suggested projects that the Conservation Commission might want to consider including a Succession Study on Gunntown Passive Park and Nature Preserve for Middle to High School Students and a Solar Field on Laurel Park Landfill.
3. Discussion Jimmy Ayash commented that GPPNP is passive open space. Questioned what the piece of land is between the edge of the asphalt walkway and the river edge at Linden Park. Len Yannielli answered it is a Greenway. It is a nuance, a grey area. Jimmy inquired if there is a formula for what % of land can be taken? Shagufta Zahid stated that passive open space is necessary for survival. It is important for sustainability for people, wildlife, all life forms and said that it would be ideal to create a formula for passive open space. A certain amount of land should be set aside and mandated for passive open space when subdivisions are being talked about. Also delineation between passive and active open space is necessary to carry out plans for trails and corridors.

**Old Business**

1. Visiting passive and active open spaces: Felipe Flores and Brian Vaugh walked part of the Naugatuck State Forest and the new dog park on Andrew Mountain. They mentioned planting butterfly bushes, flowers, other plants to ensure the survival and sustainability of the disappearing insects along the trail and connections into Gunntown Open Space as well.  
  
Brian Vaugh learned that the 50 acres or so of passive open space on Andrew Mtn. will be difficult to work on because of hard geology, rocky area underneath, wet areas that are part of the 50 acres. There needs to be fencing for boundary between the Naugatuck State Forest.
2. Fracking wastes and contamination of ground: Christine Yannielli attended a public forum on Fracking and Fracking Wastes on Jan. 28, 2016. A proposal or ordinance prohibiting the storage, disposal or use of waste from oil and gas exploration or extraction activities or any derivative thereof in the town of Naugatuck, Connecticut is needed. See minutes from Jan. 14, 2016. Christine Yannielli will research whether or not fracking wastes are dangerous if used on Naugatuck roads as a de-icing agent or if fracking wastes could be harmful if stored or disposed in town.
3. Felipe Flores discussed open space trails for hiking and suggested a community garden creating colonial, native, and actual gardens with students' involvement at the Gunntown Farm.

4. Felipe Flores reminded everyone about Melissa Leonard's efforts to get approval from the town to put notices at catch basins that remind residents to stop the flow of toxic chemicals, fertilizers, pesticides going into the catch basins and into streams & brooks that flow into the Naugatuck River.
5. Gunntown Farm House: Shagufta Zahid mentioned the historic value on the Gunntown Farm house and suggested that students could take a survey about the purposefulness or uses of this building and how to link the barn to educational purposes, i.e. environmental classrooms. Another way of using the buildings and farm house could be through energy efficiency or other options the students might be thinking about.

Grants would be needed to secure funds to buy the house.

Jimmy Ayash commented on the resources necessary to maintain the farm house and learning center. People would have to volunteer full time which does not seem realistic.

6. Jimmy Ayash assigned a task for all to write 2 sentences about what they think the Conservation Commission's accomplishments and missions should be.
7. Information brochures passed out Bali Animal Park Adventure, Fracking Wastes ie why should Connecticut Towns Ban Fracking Wastes, Town of Coventry Ordinance, The Connecticut Conservation Council Forum announcement card for registration and dates.

Jim Ayash noted that meetings should be held to 1 hour and 30 minutes.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Meeting adjourned 9:03p.m.

Minutes submitted by Christine Yannielli 2/19/2016