

BOLTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Regular Meeting
Monday, April 7, 2025, at 7:00 p.m.
Hybrid Meeting at Town Hall

Members Present in Person: Chair Rod Parlee, Brenda Cataldo, Matt Rivers

Members Present via Zoom: Treasurer Peter Van Dine, Alan Bicknell, Alternate Kimberly Fofana

Others Present via Zoom: Board Clerk Kacie Cannon

1.0 Call Meeting to Order – Roll Call

Chairman R. Parlee called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. He noted that Kimberly Fofana is present as an alternate and will not vote during the meeting since all members are in attendance.

*(*Board Clerk Note: K. Fofana was subsequently seated under Item 4.5 when P. Van Dine left the meeting due to technical difficulties; however, she only voted on Item 5.5)*

2.0 Minutes Review of March 3, 2025, Regular Meeting

R. Parlee requested the following change to the minutes:

- Item 5.2: Strike the erroneous statement from the latter part of the second sentence in the first paragraph that states, "...Bolton had the highest fatality rate in Connecticut for pedestrians last year."

A. Bicknell requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Item 4.4 under NCCD/Plant Seedling Order:
 - Change all instances of "bareroot" to "bare root" under the item and throughout the minutes.
 - Correct the second sentence of the second paragraph to remove the extra word, "that," from the sentence.
 - Change the vote in the last sentence of the item under Earth Day T-shirts from "5:0:1" to remove the abstention to "5:0."
- Item 5.1: Change "work station" to "workstation" in the first sentence of the first paragraph.
- Item 6.4: Correct the spelling of Connecticut after CACIWC in the last paragraph.

The Commission came to a consensus to approve the minutes as amended.

3.0 Public Comment

There was no public comment.

4.0 Financial Report

4.1 Onset Weather Station on Bolton Lake funded with CAF – Peter Van Dine

R. Parlee provided an update on behalf of P. Van Dine, since he was having difficulty accessing the audio feature through Zoom. He explained that P. Van Dine is interested in collecting precipitation

data with respect to droughts and flooding. He emphasized the importance of associating rainfall data with the level indicators at all three lakes for comparison.

M. Rivers asked what the BCC would do with the data and how it would benefit the Town. He suggested determining those practices prior to collecting the data. R. Parlee agreed and asked P. Van Dine for his comments. P. Van Dine continued having technical difficulties; therefore, the item was tabled for the next meeting.

4.2 FY 2025-26 Budget – Payroll & Transfer

R. Parlee reported that the budget request has not been approved yet. He explained that the request includes an increase to payroll for the board clerk and noted a shortfall this year of \$225.00. R. Parlee stated that the payroll balance will be \$30.00 after tonight's meeting, and requested a transfer of \$195.00 to cover the May and June meeting.

M. Rivers made a motion to authorize P. Van Dine to transfer \$195.00 from Professional Services to Payroll. B. Cataldo seconded. The motion passed 4:0:0.

R. Parlee will inform Jim Rupert of the transfer in an effort to get the status of the budget request. M. Rivers suggested keeping meetings under two hours to save on payroll costs. R. Parlee noted that it is not always possible due to members not reading draft minutes ahead of time and technical difficulties with Zoom; however, he agreed that the June meeting will need to be shorter due to the remaining balance in the account.

4.3 Invoices for VP Brochures, E-Day T-shirts & NCCD Plant/Seedling Other

Vernal Pool Brochures:

R. Parlee stated that the Vernal Pool brochures have been printed and paid for and have been placed in the Library and Town Hall.

Earth Day T-shirts:

R. Parlee advised the BCC to be careful when ordering from third parties as B. Cataldo recently experienced an issue with ordering the t-shirts. He explained that the company failed to provide an invoice outlining the amount paid, and documentation providing the amount paid is required by the Finance Department to approve reimbursement requests. R. Parlee noted that, in this instance, Jenna in the Finance Department has agreed to accept a credit card statement from B. Cataldo as proof of the purchase due to the lack of an invoice. He encouraged BCC members to ensure the companies they order from in the future will provide an invoice with the amount paid.

NCCD/Plant Seedling Order:

R. Parlee reported that the Finance Department received an invoice for \$404.00 for the plant seedling order; however, he had to complete a form for the Finance Department due to the invoice being \$4.00 more than anticipated.

4.4 Fairy House building Contest & Mini Bio-Blitz Prizes

B. Cataldo noted that she is ordering prizes through Amazon at a cost of \$78.00 as well as pens and pads at a cost of \$18.00. The total cost of the items is \$99.00. R. Parlee noted that the Town does

not have an Amazon Prime account and suggested appropriating additional funding to cover any shipping costs.

A. Bicknell made a motion to appropriate up to \$130.00 for the fairy house contest prizes, pads, and pens to include shipping. B. Cataldo seconded. Motion carried 5:0:0.

4.5 100% Recycled Office Paper and Ink

R. Parlee stated that the BCC has utilized 100% recycled paper for at least 30 years and orders a case of 100% recycled paper every two years for printing purposes. He suggested ordering through the town's Staples account at a cost of \$83.89 using funds from the Conservation Activity Fund. He determined that there is not enough funding left in the general supplies budget and noted that an appropriation is needed to purchase the paper.

M. Rivers made a motion to appropriate up to \$90.00 from the Conservation Activity Fund for a case of 100% recycled paper. A. Bicknell seconded. Motion carried 4:0:0.

(R. Parlee seated K. Fofana for P. Van Dine since P. Van Dine left the meeting.)

5.0 New Business

B. Cataldo shared the Earth Day shirts with the BCC and noted that she used a waterproof stamp to add the BCC logo to the sleeves. R. Parlee will mail a T-shirt to Ed Pawlak to thank him for being the special guest at the Vernal Pools event. He also requested that T-shirts be reserved for Marlene Cole, the winner of the Mini-Bio Blitz, and the third-place photo contest winners, and possibly the winner of the fairy house building contest. B. Cataldo confirmed that she purchased 15 shirts.

5.1 Importance of Archiving BCC Data – Rod Parlee

R. Parlee and M. Rivers met prior to today's meeting to review data stored on the computer for archiving purposes. R. Parlee explained that the Town is working on getting clearance to allow the data to be stored on an external hard drive. He also advised the group that any future correspondence with BCC members or official business will be conducted through his Town e-mail address at RParlee@boltonct.gov. He added that his personal e-mail address can be used for anything personal in nature.

R. Parlee emphasized the importance of preserving all of the BCC citizen science data, natural resources inventories, photo contest entries, and amazing work the Commission has done over the years. He mentioned that the BCC has previously requested three Environmental Review Teams (ERT) and noted that he was recently invited to participate in an ERT for the Town of Hebron to help determine reasons for the Town to fund an open space purchase.

5.2 Complete Streets in Bolton

R. Parlee asked K. Fofana for an update on the Complete Streets presentation to the Board of Selectman. K. Fofana explained that that the presentation centered more on the Complete Streets plan for the Town rather than the safety issues on Vernon Road due to time limitations. She added that her husband provided public comment on the Vernon Road issues, and she provided binders to the Board consisting of personal stories, crash data, and a crash map as well as the Complete Streets presentation.

K. Fofana noted that issues related to unsafe pedestrian and bicycle conditions and difficulty crossing roads were highlighted during the meeting. She reported that the next steps include getting on the May 6, 2025 BOS Agenda to work on securing the Board's support to establish a Complete Streets committee, advocating for low-cost safety improvements, and developing an implementation plan. R. Parlee recommended inviting more residents to voice their concerns to encourage action from the BOS. K. Fofana asked the BCC members to e-mail any personal stories they have to share related to safety issues they have experienced. R. Parlee highlighted some of his experiences and will e-mail them to K. Fofana.

5.3 Reformatted Photo Contest Flyer PR – Brenda Cataldo

R. Parlee shared the reformatted contest flyer and noted that it includes a QR code. K. Fofana asked which format to use to upload photos for the contest from her phone and was advised to use the .jpeg/.jpg format. R. Parlee noted she can use Adobe or a free app to convert the photos to the correct format. B. Cataldo recommended that she e-mail the photos to the Bolton Photo e-mail address, which is boltonphoto@aol.com.

R. Parlee reported that he has been sharing the flyer on the Everything Bolton FB page on a weekly basis and also distributed flyers at the Vernal Pools event and Bentley Memorial Library. The library also added the contest on their event calendar. He asked for additional advertising ideas and noted that he will issue a press release in the next two weeks.

The BCC decided to hold an online meeting to judge the photos after the May 5th submission deadline but did not set a date. B. Cataldo will send the forms and photos to the members once the deadline has passed.

5.4 Earth Day (Fairy House Building Contest & Mini-Bio Blitz)

R. Parlee shared the Earth Day brochures and noted that Marlene Cole, a Yale forestry graduate and forest ecologist, will be helping to identify the flora and fauna at the Earth Day event. He stated that the time of the event has changed to 2:00 p.m. this year, and a rain date has been scheduled for the following Saturday.

B. Cataldo made a motion to move forward with the Earth Day Celebration on April 19, 2025 at 2:00 p.m. A. Bicknell seconded. Motion Carried 4:0:0 (K. Fofana did not vote).

5.5 Kids to Parks Day new date of 5/18 on 5/17 and Trails Day on 6/7

Kids to Parks Day: R. Parlee stated that he has been working with Recreation Director Stephanie Crane to coordinate the Kids to Parks Day in an effort to tie it in with the regatta. He stated that the event will be held at Indian Notch Park instead of Herrick Park. Matt Largess, a nationally-known arborist and retired college sailing coach, has agreed to sail his boat over before or after the event to educate the kids on the mechanics of the sailboat and how to sail safely. The event will take place on Sunday, May 18, 2025 and will include a bounce house and various games for the kids to play.

M. Rivers made a motion to hold the Kids to Parks Day Event on May 18, 2025 in conjunction with the Bolton Recreation Department. B. Cataldo seconded. Motion carried 5:0:0.

Trails Day: R. Parlee noted that Trails Day is a national event that the BCC has been participating in for approximately 15 years. The event will take place on June 7, 2025 on the Nathan Hale Greenway, and Matt Largess has offered to attend as a special guest. M. Rivers reported that the access area on Stony Road is looking well-maintained but noted that the parking lot is small. He suggested placing trash and recycling bins in the area. R. Parlee agreed and noted that he observed an unsafe ditch in the area that needs to be corrected. He will e-mail Gwen Marrion to ensure the access point will be ready by June and, if not, the access point will be moved to the area behind Munson's.

A Bicknell made a motion to move forward to prepare for Trails Day on June 7, 2025 at 10:00 a.m. M. Rivers seconded. Motion carried 4:0:0 (K. Fofana did not vote).

R. Parlee asked if K. Fofana was still present and whether she will be able to attend Trails Day. She replied that she is unsure at this time but will add the event to her calendar.

6.0 Continuing Business

6.1 BNSP Parking Lot Expansion Opposition Meeting

R. Parlee stated that there has been difficulty coordinating a meeting between the Town, DEEP, and Senator Rahman due to scheduling conflicts. Instead, Jim Rupert has advised that the meeting will be held without the Senator. M. Rivers shared the correspondence Jim Rupert provided which included updates but did not address the safety issues. The BCC discussed the safety concerns and speeding hazards in the area that need to be addressed.

6.2 Replacement of Deer Crossing Signs Response

R. Parlee shared M. Rivers' letter to Jim Rupert regarding the Deer Crossing signs and commended him for the well-written letter. He noted that Jim Rupert is not in favor of putting up signs and asked K. Fofana if the signs could possibly be placed through the Complete Streets plan. The BCC also discussed purchasing the signs from Amazon for the Town, and R. Parlee stated that he will propose the idea to J. Rupert.

6.3 Recycling at Town Events and Composting

R. Parlee reported that there has been no movement on getting recycling bins added to Town events. The BCC discussed the effectiveness of placing signs on or near the bins. M. Rivers proposed that the BCC initiate a campaign over the next few months to educate the public on recycling. The item will remain on the agenda with the goal of creating an educational campaign and getting recycling bins placed at events before the next Winter Faire.

6.4 Results of Vernal Pool Sunset Serenade & Library Kiosk or Sign Proposal

The BCC discussed the great turnout at the Vernal Pool Sunset Serenade. R. Parlee noted that it was intended to be a live serenade; however, the peepers were quiet during the event. He stated that Ed Pawlak came prepared and provided a recording of the peepers for the serenade instead. The BCC agreed to hold the event again next year. They also discussed setting up an informational kiosk near the pool at the library to educate and attract more visitors and the potential risks of doing

so. A. Bicknell stated that the pool could be advertised as long as the public is educated on the importance of respecting, preserving, and protecting the pool.

R. Parlee suggested providing sign-up sheets at future events so that attendees can be notified of future opportunities and events. He also shared a poster from LandTech, which is a consulting firm that helps property owners to identify and evaluate vernal pools on private property and suggested creating a similar program. He stated that Ed Pawlak may be able to assist and noted that he previously conducted a survey in Bolton for the BCC identifying 41 potential vernal pools in Bolton that could be helpful. The BCC came to a consensus to create a vernal pools poster in the coming year to encourage residents to notify the BCC if they believe they have a vernal pool.

6.5 FBL, BLWCA, SRWP, CACIWC Reports

FBL (Friends of Bolton Lakes): There was no report since P. Van Dine was absent. R. Parlee mentioned that the FBL is holding a forum on the first Saturday in May at Camp Newhoca in Vernon regarding the small mouth bass shortage.

BLWCA (Bolton Lakes Watershed Conservation Alliance):

R. Parlee reported that the Alliance recently changed the by-laws to allow Inland Wetlands members and members at large, including family members of residents in the watershed, to be part of the Alliance. He noted that the alliance also includes Conservation Commission members and members from the North Central Conservation District (NCCD). R. Parlee noted that he recently attended the NCCD tree-trimming and planting workshop which provided instructions on how to properly trim and plant trees. He also conveyed the importance of not creating volcano mulch around the base of trees.

SRWP (Salmon River Watershed Partnership):

M. Rivers will attend the meeting later this month. R. Parlee stated that he spoke with Pat Young recently and learned that she and her students have replaced their onset conductivity meter with a new tool. He asked M. Rivers to find out more about the new tool including how it works, whether training is available, calibration, and future collaboration to discuss the use of the tool and why they switched from the onset conductivity meter.

CACIWC (Connecticut Association of Conversation and Inlands Wetlands Commissions):

R. Parlee reported that the Commission has been following legislation. He noted that one of the most important issues pertains to gifts of open space and explained that when land is going to be developed, a certain amount of open space has to be set aside. The Homebuyers' Association is spearheading the bill in an effort to eliminate the requirement, and CACIWC is working to oppose the bill. The Commission is also opposing a bill to extend Sunday hunting that could jeopardize the safety of people utilizing the many trails in Connecticut.

7.0 Correspondence:

R. Parlee shared Ron Beaudoin's article regarding erosion issues at the quarry as well as regular maintenance that is needed for the quarry. He added that the quarry is in a dangerous location near the state highway entrance and is in an environmentally unsound area. R. Parlee invited Ron to attend tonight's meeting but did not receive a reply.

R. Parlee stated that he had e-mailed the Town Assessor regarding a parcel near the entrance to Bolton Notch Park that Gwen Marrion believed the Town might own; however, the Assessor replied that the Town does not own any property in that immediate area.

A. Bicknell and R. Parlee shared their experiences from the CLCC Conference and highlighted workshops they attended on Native American collaboration, racism in parks and forests, and LiDAR aerial photography. R. Parlee noted that BCC members can view the LiDAR data by using the advanced viewer on the Connecticut Environmental Conditions Online (CTECO) website at <https://maps.cteco.uconn.edu>. R. Parlee also shared information on a workshop on the use of drones that he attended. He stated that 600 people attended the conference and almost 50 workshops were offered.

R. Parlee shared a sign he found online pertaining to fines for graffiti and suggested the BCC ask the State to post the signs near graffiti in Bolton Notch State Park. He stated that the CTDEEP sign states that this type of graffiti vandalism is a felony and shared his disappointment that graffiti is being glorified on the Everything Bolton FB page.

8.0 Adjournment

R. Parlee adjourned the meeting at 9:23 p.m.

Next Meeting is scheduled for Monday, May 5, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. by Zoom and/or at Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted by Kacie Cannon,

Kacie Cannon

Please see minutes of subsequent meetings for corrections to these minutes and any corrections hereto.

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