



Wilton Land Conservation Trust

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George H. Ongley
Joseph B. Philbrick
Thomas M. Sinchak
James P. Snedeker
Thomas J. Walker
William A. Ziegler

Anthony P. Grassi
Trustee Emeritus

Wilton Land Conservation Trust Annual Meeting February 14, 2008 8:00 p.m. Old Town Hall

DRAFT minutes – to be approved by the membership at 2009 annual meeting

Bruce Beebe, President, called the meeting to order at 8:10 p.m. and welcomed new Trustees: Tom Walker, Joe Philbrick, Jim Snedeker, and thanked Don Marquardt. Bruce noted that 76 member proxy votes had been submitted.

Nancy Faesy reviewed the minutes of the 2007 Annual Meeting. They were approved.

Bill Zeigler read the slate of Trustees for election for terms expiring in 2012: Tom Burgess, Jay M. Dulberg, Nicholas F. Lee, George H. Ongley and Joseph Philbrick. Upon motion made and seconded, the proposed slate was unanimously approved.

Bruce Beebe gave the Treasurer's Report for Dawn Bennett Ladenheim. Total Revenue for the calendar year 2007 was \$83,084 including \$68,072 for Contributions and \$2,010 in Memoriam Contributions for Larry Goodwin and Virginia Bepler. Total Expenses were \$18,154. Total Assets, including book value of land, were \$910,931. There were no liabilities. The Treasurer's Report included a listing of amounts spent on Stewardship Projects 2001-2007.

Bill Ziegler gave the Membership Committee Report. Campaign year 2006-2007 was another good membership year. Members, not including 12 matching gift donors, added up to 461, nine more than in the preceding year. Gifts totaled \$75,387, an average gift per member of \$163. There were only 56 new members, 35 fewer than the preceding year. Bill reported on the current 2007-2008 campaign: as of two weeks ago, we had received contributions totaling \$49,880 from 333 members, 23 of whom were new. 500 members remains the goal and Bill urged members to encourage friends and neighbors to join.

Nancy Faesy reported that Bob Russell, Pat Sesto and she continue to keep in touch with owners of large parcels of land on the Town's Open Space Plan. She mentioned hoping to preserve a significant piece which is in an estate situation as well as keeping track of a 15 acre parcel off Honey Hill Road which is for sale with restrictions.

Bruce mentioned the recent clearing done on the late Suzanne Walter's 3 acre property as well as working with the Town on a Land Trust easement to limit future Town use of the 4.5 acre parcel on Whipple Road behind the Montessori School. He also mentioned the donation of two lots on Vista Road by Wilton Building Group – Tomas. This parcel is adjacent to Town owned land as well as WLCT land.

Bruce mentioned that a Finance/Investment Committee has been formed to work with Dawn. Tom Walker and Frank Mabley are on this Committee.

Theresa Mucci reported on Schenck's Island saying that the WLCT continues in an active restoration mode. The objective is to reduce invasives in order to encourage regeneration of native species. WLCT is committed to restoring the 7+ acre central area and plans to seed a meadow this fall. The historic path system has been reclaimed and Theresa continues to work with the Town to keep paths mowed. Visitors have increased, including many with dogs, school running teams, picnickers, birders and art classes.

Vine removal from trees along the river has continued and local arborists were generous with their pro bono time. Control work was carried on last summer to reduce Micro Stegium (Japanese Stilt grass), plus selective mowing to control black locust saplings. The Town continues to use space adjacent to the parking area as a staging area for the installation of the street lights.

"Windows" were identified to create openings in the trees to give views into the center of Schenck's Island from River Road. Trout Unlimited replanted native shrubs along the river bank. Wood chips are now being spread along the RR tracks in a berm to encourage native tree growth.

David Lynch reported that 129 deer have been taken this past season on WLCT and Town lands. This does not include the Weir Preserve (17) or private lands. There was no evidence of any problems. David mentioned that next season hunters would like to extend hunting hours with bow only in the early mornings.

George Ongley reported on memorial citations for Dan Cappel and Dick Wheeler. He described their extraordinary contributions to the Town. In recognition of Dan for his work with students and for setting up inventories of properties in Wilton, WLCT re-named its annual \$1000 scholarship the "E. Dan Cappel Senior Scholarship Award". Last June the award was made to Brendan Boepple. George works with the High School Ecology Club, and candidates are recommended by WHS science faculty.

George cited Dick Wheeler's contributions as a longtime member of SWERPA, the Wilton Conservation Commission and the WLCT. He photographed WLCT properties and worked to remove invasives from Schenck's Island by securing grants. Dick will be memorialized by naming the Land Trust's three acres at the southern end of Schenck's Island the "Richard C Wheeler Nature Preserve of Schenck's Island." A sign was shown. There will be a formal dedication this Spring.

Bruce reported on upcoming activities and events. There will likely be another Deloitte Impact Day to continue invasives removal, stone wall work, etc. on Schenck's Island on June 6 and Joe Philbrick reported that there will be a work party of scouts and volunteers at Schenck's, also this spring. Nancy mentioned a new film by the Connecticut Fund for the Environment on Global Warming in CT. A program could be set up to show this film at the Wilton Library and have a CFE staff person answer questions. Theresa mentioned a potential land trust workshop in the fall to be hosted by WLCT.

Bruce mentioned that Joe Philbrick has taken over the website from Jeff Golterman and has made some changes. His testing is 80% complete. There is a fresh look to the website and he plans to include maps of WLCT lands.

Dick Husta, an active member of Ambler Farm, recommended the WLCT enter a float in the Wilton Memorial Day Parade. A discussion followed.

Bruce Beebe introduced James Lomuscio, the guest speaker, a journalist who teaches at WestConn and lives in Weston, near the Belknap, Gregg and Honey Hill Preserves. He is the

author of "Village of the Dammed," the story of the rise and fall of a nearby Connecticut town, Valley Forge, condemned by "eminent domain" in the 1930's and destroyed for reservoir development. Sixty years later, 100 adjacent acres called Trout Brook Valley, which the water company was selling for a golf course community, were saved from development by a grass-roots community effort.

Jim Lomuscio explained how the book evolved and told about the people involved with the story. He compared the efforts of residents and environmentalists in the 30's to the 90's and discussed the issue of "eminent domain." If Valley Forge hadn't been destroyed in the 30's, Trout Brook Valley and the Kelda water company lands in Easton and Weston wouldn't have been saved and protected in the 90's.

Bruce neglected to call for election of WLCT officers at meeting's end. This will be done to open the next trustee meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Faesy
Secretary
February 20, 2008