

TOWN OF CORNWALL
REGULAR MEETING OF THE
Board of Selectmen
Minutes for meeting held on:
Tuesday, November 5th, 2024
Hybrid – In Person at Cornwall Library
& Remotely Via Zoom

Present

Selectmen

Others

- Gordon Ridgway, First Selectman
- Rocco Botto
- Jennifer Markow

- Jane Hall, Administrative Assistant
- Press

8 Total Attendees

Call to Order	7:30 pm
Approval of Minutes	<p><u>Motion:</u> Jennifer Markow – Made motion to approve the minutes from 10/15/2024 Rocco Botto – Seconded the motion Discussion – none Motion passed unanimously</p>
Communications / Announcements	Jennifer Markow shared the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upcoming vaccine clinic
Additions to the Agenda	none
1.	<p><u>Aid to Asheville</u> Will Berry shared the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful trip – volunteers left Friday morning with truckload of supplies. Worked at a distribution center, delivering to smaller communities, volunteered at fire department, handed out supplies to over 80+ families, fed countless others. <p>First Selectman Gordon Ridgway shared the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sent approximately \$2,000 in aid down, and will send more as it comes in. Will work on doing another collection for a second trip down to Asheville. <p>Photos from the volunteers were shared.</p>
2.	<p><u>Burning Ban</u> First Selectman Gordon Ridgway shared the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to the drought that has led to many brushfires throughout the region and state • Suggestion and discussion with Emergency Management, Fire Marshall, and CVFD Fire Chief to implement an emergency burning ban has been put into place in Cornwall for outdoor fires. <p><i>*Clerk addendum:</i> Declaration of Emergency - Open Burn Ban went into effect October 30, 2024 11:42am signed by Gordon Ridgway, First Selectman. Declaration of Civil Preparedness Emergency went into effect on October 25, 2024 3:03pm signed by Ned Lamont, Governor.</p>
3.	<p><u>Cornwall Bridge Signs</u> First Selectman Gordon Ridgway shared the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wrote to DOT and they are considering looking at adding signage to Cornwall Bridge now that it is paved to make people slow down through there. • Will continue to work with Engineers for traffic project in Cornwall Bridge
4.	<p><u>Town Reports</u> First Selectman Gordon Ridgway shared the following:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nice annual town meeting Friday night, 4 items were unanimously approved Town Report for last year is available online & throughout town, features reports from boards, commissions, organizations in town – Thank you to Barbara Herbst for putting the report together.
5.	<p><u>Tax Refund Requests</u></p> <p><u>Motion:</u> Gordon Ridgway - Made motion to grant tax refund request for \$112.31 for overpayment of motor vehicle taxes Rocco Botto - Seconded the motion Discussion – none Motion passed unanimously</p>
6.	<p><u>Open Space – Grant Request</u></p> <p>Barton Jones, Cornwall Conservation Trust, shared the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CCT looking to acquire 2 properties: 40 acres on Route 128 and 90 acres on Route 4 – Owner looking to sell to CCT for conservation (Request for support letter attached) <p>Discussion ensued on conservation, affordable housing, Cornwalls plan of Conservation & Development, property details</p>
7.	<p><u>Public Comment</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 public comments received
	<p><u>Adjournment:</u> 7:58 pm</p> <p>Respectfully Submitted: Jane Hall, Administrative Assistant</p>

**CORNWALL CONSERVATION TRUST, INC.
P.O. BOX 74
WEST CORNWALL, CONNECTICUT 06796**

Via Email

October 30, 2024

Re: Request for Letter of Support for the Preservation of 90 Acres of Ridgeline Forest along Route 4 and 42 acres of Ridgeline Forest along Route 128 in Cornwall through Open Space Grants from the Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Cornwall Conservation Trust, Inc. (CCT) is applying to the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) for two Open Space Grants to help us buy two forested parcels totaling approximately 132 acres. CCT has contracted with Pond Mountain Trust to purchase approximately 90 acres of ridgeline forest (Furnace Brook Forest) along Route 4 in Cornwall and directly across from Furnace Brook and Wyantenock State Forest. CCT has also contracted with CHF Cornwall LLC to purchase approximately 42 acres of ridgeline forest (Cobble Forest) along Route 128 in Cornwall and abutting CCT's Day Preserve and Cobble Conservation Easement.

Applications are weighed by a point system in which municipal and community backing rank high. Accordingly, we are asking you to help our efforts by writing a letter to DEEP supporting CCT by stating that you think these projects are worthy of state funding.

To give you some background on the proposal, I have prepared a few facts and observations on the two forests, using the DEEP grant award criteria and the land trust's own criteria for land acquisition as our starting points. We invite you to use this information however you like in preparing your own letter. Your letter can discuss both properties, or you can write two separate letters.

The letter(s) need not be long. If possible, it should be on your organization's letterhead. It should be **returned to me**, not to DEEP, but should be addressed as follows:

Department of Energy and Environmental Protection
Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Grant Program
Constituent Affairs/Land Management Division
79 Elm Street, 6th Floor
Hartford, CT 06106-5127

The grant deadline is December 2, 2024 but we would like to have your letters in hand by not later than November 20, 2024. Please call me at (347) 967-6200 or email me at jones.barton@gmail.com if you have questions or need more information.

Thank you very much for your support. These are lovely and valuable pieces of ridgeline forest that will be a privilege to help preserve.

Sincerely,

Barton Jones, President

Facts about the Furnace Brook Forest and the Cobble Forest

Identification in Town Plan

The 2020 Town of Cornwall Plan of Conservation and Development recognizes that “our Town’s unique rural character and unspoiled scenic beauty is the foundation for our continued prosperity.” It prioritizes conservation of open space including forests, scenic ridgelines, wildlife corridors, wetlands, and water quality, as well as the importance of outdoor recreation opportunities. All these goals are furthered by protecting the Furnace Brook Forest and Cobble Forest. Both properties are identified as having wetland soils, and Furnace Brook Forest is identified as having surficial aquifer potential. Both properties are identified as forested, with significant core forest, consisting of Central Appalachian Pine-Oak Rock Woodland and Dray Oak Pine Forest.

Proximity to other protected land

The Furnace Brook Forest is directly across Route 4 from Furnace Brook and Wyantenock State Forest.

The Cobble Forest abuts CCT’s Day Preserve and Cobble Conservation Easement.

Passive Recreational Value

Preserving these properties will add and enhance opportunities for outdoor recreation.

The Furnace Brook Forest will have a hiking trail that will offer a scenic view of the Coltsfoot Mountains and Wyantenock State Forest.

The Cobble Forest will have a hiking trail up to the Cobble and Day preserve offering scenic views over Cornwall to Mohawk Mountain.

The entire road frontage of both properties is on the route of the Housatonic Heritage Area’s Hou-Bike Housatonic Covered Bridge Bike Trail

Scenic and Aesthetic Value

Both the Furnace Brook Forest and the Cobble Forest are visible from state and local roads and other scenic viewsheds. As discussed above, there will be spectacular views from overlooks on both properties when CCT opens the hiking trails to the public.

Water Course Preservation

The east slope of the Furnace Brook Forest drains into Furnace Brook and then into the Housatonic River.

The north slope of the Cobble Forest drains into Heffers Brook that connects to Mill Brook and the Housatonic River.

Wildlife and Plants

Both properties contain excellent habitat that supports the typical array of wildlife and plants found in Connecticut’s northwest corner.

At Furnace Brook Forest, the state’s Natural Diversity Database documents the Endangered Tricolored Bat, the Special Concern fish Slimy Sculpin, an Endangered plant and a Special Concern plant on or very near the property. The NDDDB database documents the Endangered Tricolored Bat at or very near the Cobble Forest as well.

The Cornwall Conservation Commission's Kingsmark report on Cornwall's Aquatic Resources emphasizes the importance of intact, forested, riparian habitat alongside streams such as Furnace Brook and Heffers Brook. It states that both brooks support an assemblage of fish species "commonly associated with coldwater streams of good quality and riparian habitat."

Furnace Brook Forest



Cobble Forest outlined in purple

