

Representative Policy Board
Land Use Committee
 South Central Connecticut Regional Water District
 February 14, 2024

Minutes

The regular meeting of the Land Use Committee (“Committee”) of the Representative Policy Board (“RPB”) of the South Central Connecticut Regional Water District (“RWA”) took place on Wednesday, February 14, 2024 at the Lake Whitney Water Treatment Plant, 900 Whitney Avenue, Hamden, Connecticut. Chair Betkoski presided.

Committee Members Present: P. Betkoski, C. Havrda, G. Malloy, J. Oslander and J. Mowat Young

Committee Members Absent: P. DeSantis, B. Eitzer, M. Horbal, and M. Levine

Representative Policy Board: R. Harvey and N. Campbell

RWA: C. LaMarr

Management: S. Lakshminarayanan, J. Hill, and J. Triana

Chair Betkoski called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. He reviewed the Safety Moment distributed to members.

On motion made by Mr. Malloy, and seconded by Mr. Oslander, the Committee voted to approve the minutes of its January 10, 2024 regular meeting.

Mr. Hill, the RWA’s General Manager and Head of Operations, led a walkthrough of the Lake Whitney Water Treatment Plant. Committee members viewed various areas and held a discussion regarding the water purification process.

Update on *The Land We Need for the Water We Use Program* – Mr. Triana, the RWA’s Real Estate Manager, reported:

Reservoir Levels (Percent Full)

	Current Year	Previous Year	Historical Average	Drought Status
January 31	98%	90%	77%	None

Rainfall (inches)

	Current Year	Previous Year	Historical Average
January 2024	5.95	4.89	3.60
Fiscal YTD (6/1/23 – 1/31/24)	43.82	28.75	30.80

Land We Need for the Water We Use Program (Dispositions/Acquisitions)

- Branford – Acquired 3.51 acres off o Cherry Hill Rd. as part of P&Z open space requirement from developer.
- Cheshire – Corresponded with property owner of 50+/- acres.
- Cheshire – Corresponded with property owner of 20+/- acres.
- Cheshire – Corresponded with property owner of 16+/- acres.
- North Haven – Corresponded with property owner of 15+/- acres.
- Bethany – Corresponded with property owner of 60+/- acres.

- Hamden – Corresponded with property owner of 10+/- acres.
- Cheshire – Town of Cheshire/former Ricci property – Contacted DEEP and town staff about the status of the OSWA grant.
- North Branford, Beech St. and Poms La. properties (NB 4) – Corresponded with land trust staff with questions they had about the property and survey.
- Seymour, Squantuck Rd. (SE 5) – Attempted to get town’s plans for the property in order to prepare the disposition application.

Rental houses:

- Hamden, 233 Skiff St. (HA 9A) – Murtha filed with the superior court to accept the town’s figure.
- Woodbridge, 1029 Johnson Rd. – Owners stated they were talking to another party about selling the property.

Forestry Update

- Killingworth - East Hammonasset Leaf Screen Thinning, (KI 4) – 75% complete.
- Hamden - Overstory removal and Tornado Salvage, (HA 36) – The harvest was halted in early June, and the logger pulled his equipment off the property on June 13th. It is uncertain at this point whether the buyer will continue with the salvage operation even if a market is found - 15% complete.
- Killingworth - N. Chestnut Hill Patch Cuts, (KI 6) – 100% complete. Equipment removed, but some firewood logs still at the landing.
- Guilford - Menunketuc High-Grade Rehabilitation Cut and Conifer Release (GU12/12A) – **Safety meeting held.**
 - Received letter from USFS saying we received the LSR grant.
 - Conducted LSR grant planning and administrative duties related to steamweeder, intern hiring, implementation activities, and staffing.
 - Held a meeting with maple tapers, Bromage and Juniver, to finalize the transfer of the portion of the Juniver’s sugar bush north of Rose’s Brook to Bromage. Approximately 350 taps changed hands.

Recreation

- New Year’s Day walk at Rt. 42 in Bethany had 35 people.
- Programs at the Eli Whitney Museum had at least 18 people.
- Submitted annual report to DPH.
- Renewal of trails permit for Pine Hill submitted to DPH.

	January		December	
	2024	2023	2023	2022
Permit Holders	4,743	4,847	4,742	4,851

Special Activity Permits

- Branford Land Trust (Tom Cleveland) - Tracking class - Lake Saltonstall woods - 1/27/24 (Rain Date: 1/28/2024) & 2/10/2024 (Rain Date: 2/11/2024).
- Women of Forestry and Arboriculture (Nicole Smith) – tree and shrub id walk an quarterly meeting of the group – Lake Gaillard - 5/4/24 (Rain Date: 5/5/24) or 5/18/24 (Rain Date: 5/19/24).

- CT Agricultural Experiment Station (Dr. Jeff Ward, et al) - General forestry and wildlife research, tick/Lyme Disease studies - Lake Gaillard, North Madison, Prospect, Seymour, Branford, Bethany (1/24/2024-1/24/2025).
- CT Dept. of Energy & Envir. Protection Wildlife Biologist (Dr. Devaughn Fraser) - acoustic monitoring of bats to determine species occupancy of hibernacula and species presence/bat activity in Fall, Spring, and Summer to help inform tree management activities, Lake Gaillard (1/29/2024-1/29/2025)
- New Haven Bird Club (Patrick T. Leahy) – Maintain and monitor bluebird nesting boxes on 7 sites – Downes Road, Bethany, adjacent to Lake Bethany property and field below Lake Dawson dam, Woodbridge, farm field on Sperry Road and Lake Chamberlain below the dam, Lake Watrous and other properties – (1/31/2024-12/31/2024).

Other items

- Encroachments/agreements –
 - Agricultural agreements – Responded to inquiry about hosting goats on our property.
 - West Haven, Shingle Hill tanks (WH 7) – Sent additional comments on the latest draft agreement to Yale’s consultant.
 - North Branford, 215 Forest Rd. (NB 17) – Executed license agreement with new owners.
 - Woodbridge, Baldwin Rd. (WO 15) – Executed license agreement with new owners.
 - Branford, 20 Autumn Ridge Rd. (BR 10A) – Executed license agreement with owner who were encroaching on new parcel we acquired.
 - Hamden, Lake Whitney access (HA 4) – Sent comments on the license agreement back to UI for their review.
- Invasive plants – Treated or documented invasive plant populations in North Branford, Branford, Woodbridge, and Bethany.

Invasive Species Documented/ Mapped (ac)	75 acres
Invasive Species Treated (ac/MH)	1.1 acres

- Woodbridge, Fox Den Way (WO 15) – Met town staff at the site and found privately-owned drain for the pond was clogged. Unclogged and town staff was going to talk to owner about maintaining the system.
- Deer hunt - Deer hunt surveys were returned. Annual report was sent to DPH. Based on the responses from the surveys , the total effort spent during the hunt was 300 days scouting, 1100 days spent hunting.
- Seymour, Haddad Rd. – Corresponded with Seymour staff about continued ponding issues at Haddad Rd.
- New Haven, Yale Golf Course – Met with golf course staff to discuss drainage changes occurring during their renovations.
- East Haven, Rock Rd. SNET easement (EH 2)– Corresponded again with Frontier about their abandoned equipment at Rock Rd.
- Boundaries – Checked and remarked boundaries in Madison, North Branford, Branford, Orange and Woodbridge.
- Watermain easement encroachments – Discussed composing a letter for such situations with Murtha’s assistance.

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Chair Betkoski reminded members of the special joint meeting with the Consumer Affairs Committee on Wednesday, February 28, 2024 at 5 pm to receive a Commercial Business update from management.

The next regular meeting is on Wednesday, March 13, 2024 at 5:30 p.m.

At 6:30 p.m., on motion made by Mr. Malloy, and seconded by Mr. Oslander, the Committee voted to adjourn the meeting.

Peter Betkoski, Chairman