

**Representative Policy Board
Land Use Committee
South Central Connecticut Regional Water District**

**February 10, 2021
Meeting Transcription**

Peter:

Yeah. So welcome everyone. We ready to... Oh, first of all, Jennifer, here we go. This meeting's being recorded and I'm reading our safety moment, which kind of scared me. And then we're talking about Mark Levine's with the COVID, but I guess it's that month where we all want to take care of your heart and any conditions you have and be safe. So look at that thoroughly, please. Any questions on the safety moment? How about approval minutes?

Brian:

I'll move to approve.

Peter:

All in favor? Approved. All right. Okay. Here's a big, this is... John you're there?

Peter:

I guess we're going to follow up on the historical areas. The land use plan. I think what you're doing here is if we have any questions for John, correct John?

John:

Yeah. So what we're doing today, then we're going to do sort of a follow-up on what we did last week. Sorry, last month where we did a little sort of review of the land use plan, which was revised and adopted approved by the RPB in January of 2016. So in January of 2021, excuse me, that was the five-year anniversary. And we made a commitment that we would review it and a bigger, more holistic fashion every 10 years. So that marked the halfway point. And as a follow-up to that, I said, well, for today's special topic is that we'll dive a little deeper into one of the categories. Remember if you remember last month, there are five major categories of how we classify our land. One of them is a preservation in omit in the middle of the preservation category is historical location. So when I was going to do today is go over some of the historical locations. Talk a little bit about them. If you have any questions, you can just chime in just to raise your hand or interrupt and I'll be happy to answer. So can I share a screen, Jen?

Jennifer:

Yeah, it should be all yours.

John:

Okay. Can you see that? All right.

John:

Starting out, we go in the same order as the systems that are in the land use plan itself. And we're going to start in North Branford in North Branford. There's a handful of historical sites. One of them is the Roses Brook, as it comes off of like the Guilford Town line, there's a series of small mills there. This is not one of them, but there's also a quarry or a suspected quarry at the North end of the Island. That's within Lake Gaillard. I've never seen that myself. I've only been to the Island once or twice in my 27 years. But what you're looking at here is a dam that went to a small mill I guess you could say at Tennessee. So in Genesee, there are many, there was a whole community that was in this property.

John:

This is West of route 79 and Madison and most of them were houses that were, are now foundation holes from a group of people who are traveling to New York state. And just the legend is they broke down here and they settled here. So what's left are all the house foundations in a community and not just one or two, but several, and also this mill, this small dam that used to power some kind of mill as well. Also in the North Branford area or in the North Branford system is what we call the Ice House. Now this is at Gaillard on the East side of the reservoir, just pretty, fairly close to the Lake road as it travels around. The way that you're looking at this through you're looking North towards the, this is the Southern side of the ice house and this ice house as its name implies, was used for the storage of Lake ice or pond ice.

John:

As you probably know, before electricity and electrical refrigeration, what was commonly done is that ponds and lakes in the Northern half of the country were mined more or less for ice. They would carve out the ice in blocks stored in buildings like this, where it would be insulated with hay and other material, other natural material, and it would sustain them that we then use it into ice boxes within the house to keep things perishables as cool and as refrigerated as possible at the time. So this is the last piece that remains out there. This is actually on what used to be the John Harrison track. And I don't know if I could do this quickly. Let's see, I do have a picture. Do you see a picture of an old house?

Bob:

Just the ice house.

John:

You only see the ice house now. Hold on one second. I'm going to stop this chair. And then I'm going to re-share a different...

John:

You see an old house now?

Joe:

Yes.

John:

Black and white photograph? All right. This is the John Harrison house. And this is the ice house is actually on the backside of this house. It was one of the outbuildings of the John Harrison property. And as you can tell, the house itself is all gone, but remains, there isn't really even a foundation there anymore. It's just the ice house now. Okay. So I'm back where I was. Next slide. All right. So getting out of the North Branford area, we now go to the Saltonstall area, and Saltonstall itself was named after Gurdon Saltonstall, who was one of the first, or maybe the first governor of the state of Connecticut. And there was a mansion on the property, on the Branford side of what is now Furnace Pond.

John:

And this is the mansion as seen in, well, I could say that the photograph was taken before 1909 as was this one. The house burned down in 1909 and there is no real foundation there. It was covered over by New Haven water company, people sometime thereafter I've walked in the air. There was no evidence of the foundation, but we still note it as a historical area on the land use plan, just in case any archaeological efforts were ever going to be done there. So to also, or itself, what you're looking at here is just to the East of Furnace Pond. And actually, if you go over that rise, you'll be going towards the Amtrak railroad bed, the railroad lines and where we put all the material, the water Chester material that we took out a furnace pond. So that's not where this is, but it's pretty close.

John:

Other locations in the Saltonstall area are the search tower. Now Ted could probably talk more intelligently about this than I can, but when Saltonstall was first used as a water supply, water was pulled out through the pump station that you see on the right and in the system, as it was in the early 1900s, is that we had many open air basins, basically open tanks in the New Haven system where so-and-so water and Whitney water will be pushed to. And because of the physics of it all, I don't understand it all. Maybe Ted could explain more than I could, is that from the Saltonstall station, it would push water towards the fair Haven basin. And in doing that, it created a surge in the system so that they needed the search tower to absorb the energy so that it didn't overflow the Fair haven basin and cause other among the system.

John:

So that's what this, the search tower is still there. And I'll show you a picture of that in a second, but you can see there's two gentlemen on top of it. I don't have the date on the photograph. I think it's at least prior to 1940. So this would have been in operation at that time because the current water, the current treatment plan was not built until about 1969 and 1970.

Ted:

John, you had that explanation perfect. On the search tank.

John:

All right. And here's a... [crosstalk 00:09:24]

Greg:

John?

John:

Yes?

Greg:

Excuse me. I just got on, I was having computer problems.

John:

Hey, Greg.

Greg:

But what is this, where is this?

John:

This is at Saltonstall. It was surge towers at Saltonstall. So what you see here is a postcard of the pump station and in the background over the Hill is the search tower. So the pump station is essentially where the treatment plant is today.

John:

Maybe like where the tanks are. If you're familiar with the layout of the Saltonstall treatment plant, we are basically where this photograph or this postcard it depicts is basically on the line where Amtrak is today on '95. And here's two modern current photographs. I didn't take these actually, Amy Velasquez took these last summer when she went up to have a look at the search tank and we did in fact, put a new roof on it, not too long ago, I'd say within the last 10 years to try to give it some manner of preservation. I should say also at first at the Saltonstall area is Furnace Pond itself. The original iron works were down by the dam, but there's nothing really left of it. We just note it in the land use plan. There's no polygon for that.

John:

Okay. So now we've moved on to the Whitney system and what you see here is the Ive Street House. Fairly soon you will see a disposition application for this. The Ive Street House is one of the few assets that we have that are on any state or national historic register. This was built in the around 1800 and among let's see, well, okay. And I think all the other Whitney stuff I have photos of. So up on the rear part of the North sleeping giant property, no second John Westfield property. So this is North of river road in East of Whitney Avenue in Hamden. The mill river cuts through that property, but if you travel up to the East to get towards Butterworth's property, and there's a large ridge there. On this large ridge is a copper mine that has existed before colonial times.

John:

It was in existence before 1776. I can say that. And we have it noted as a historical site on our land use plan. And we have, as you see in the photograph, I've had multiple problems with people, trespassing and going into it. So I took this photograph in June of 2013. And if you remember that time, that month is when the cicadas, the 17 years cicadas were coming out. I was on the property looking for cicadas, because that is also where our Cicada preserve is, same location. And I knew that people were going to

be tramping around out there looking for the bugs. And I had been to the mine once or twice before this, and I wanted to see what it looked like today. And then when I got up there, you could see that it was well dug out.

John:

The line that you see coming out of it is a hose that the trespassers had used to siphon water out of the cave. I'm sorry, not the cave but the mine, because when you enter the mine, it goes down and you're up to your waist or chest, depending on how much it's rained in water. And then you slowly move out of that until you get to a dry part. What we did in 2013 was that we had our crews go up there with a bulldozer. We've done this before 2013 as well. We had our crews go up there with a bulldozer and it's really steep, I should say, and they covered the hole. So after they covered the hole, now the next time that I go up there is in 2016, and you could see that they had re-dug it out. So we had them go up again in 2017 to put more material over it.

John:

And it has remained covered ever since. We did come into knowledge of YouTube video of guys trespassing and entering this mine. They did quite a polished video of it. If you go on YouTube after the meeting and type in the search engine for tall men, mine Hamden, Connecticut, you will find the video for this, it's about half an hour long or something like that. And you could see them walk through the entirety of the mine, completely trespassing on our property. At the end of the video, they do state that it is all covered, that you can't get into any more, but I wouldn't be surprised if before that time that I retired, that some enterprising young people go up there with shovels and picks and find their way back into it. But at the present time, I can say with a certainty that it is close and it is inaccessible.

Jamie:

Do we own the rights to the copper mine, to the minerals?

John:

Yes. I mean, we own all the mineral rights, all of our property, as far as I'm aware. Also in the Whitney area is Raceway with a sluice valve that used to control water from the mill river down through Raceway. And it would power factories that were along. I don't know if it's it's Live street. I don't know if it's called Live street, as it makes the turn it's route 22. And this is what it looked like in 2015. So behind it, the widest area that you see that is actually the mill river, but because of how settlement sediment patterns have developed over the last century, this is now for the most part high and dry until the river floods. We were notified by members of the Hampton historical society that the sluice had fallen over the winter time.

John:

So I went out there and you could see my photograph from November and it has fallen out of its cradle. And it's now lodged up against the tree. So it's still there. I do not think it was a vandalism that the guy from the historical society thought that it may have been. I couldn't prove that this is, this is right next to the road. So a car could easily crash into this thing as well. I didn't see any evidence that that had happened or that a tree or anything else had hit it. I just think that there's some concrete there that was holding it together. And in addition to a rock, you could see this one used to be this rock here that has

now fallen into it. So maybe that rock got plucked maybe intentionally or just by nature fell in there and then the whole chabang back against the tree. I don't know, but that's how it rests today.

Jamie:

Is that required to stay there, or is that something that could be donated to like the Eli Whitney museum or we don't have a museum of sorts, but do we keep artifacts anywhere?

John:

We do not. I mean, we have historical things kind of like laying around, but we don't have any displays, anything like that. We could donate it to somebody and then it will take it out of its historical situation there, which I don't think is worth it because the whole point of that being there is that it is the entrance of that race way. And you can go up there and drive on Spruce Bank Road when you have time, if you're in Northern Hampton and you could see it it's right next to the road, as well as the ditch that goes follows through Spruce Bank Road, crosses Ive Street, parallel to the river, and then goes parallel to 42 as it follows South. And then you go underneath the route 40 Mount Carmel connector. All that is designated as a historical area in our land use plan.

John:

Also in the Whitney area are two assets that are historical in nature that we do not own, but there are on our property. One is the Eli Whitney barn, which was built in the early 1800s. And then it also is the workers dormitory. The Eli Whitney barn, we conveyed over to the Eli Whitney museum. So they own the barn itself, but they have a ground lease with us. We own the land underneath it. The same is true for the workers dormitory. That was transferred to the Connecticut trust for historic preservation, which now calls itself the Preservation Connecticut, but they have a ground on the property underneath the house and all their also historical things at Whitney itself. The dam is noted, although not with a polygon, but noted in the text of the land use plan as a historical area.

John:

And as Jamie and Brian, Mike were saying at the meeting that was held last night, that the dam dates back to the 1850s up against the dam. There used to be a couple of millstones that came from the area. And to talk about Jamie's question that you just asked is that the a couple of years ago, I think it was the museum asked for these millstones, which you gave to them. So somehow they came out to the property where the dam is and they extracted them. I do not know where they are though. I presume that they're somewhere around their museum their building, but I don't know exactly where.

Jamie:

For future land use meeting. What if we do a tour maybe just a for fun on the side that we should probably do an Eli Whitney trip and see what of our stuff is there, point.

John:

Yeah, we could do that. I could talk to Bill. That'd be a good one. Good suggestion. On our property are probably hundreds of different foundations from mostly houses, but also barns other outbuildings and a couple of schools. This is, it's a terrible picture, because it's the only one I could find, but this is what's

called the School House Foundation Sediment Detention Pond. So this is in Whitneyville, just North of the Whitneyville Congregational Church. And sometime a long time ago, or either DOD or the town of Hamden and, or the New Haven water company converted the foundation into a water sediment detention pond, which it does today. It captures a lot of the material that, sand and so forth that comes off of Whitney Avenue, which is route 10 at that point in Hampton. So this gets filled up regularly and periodically we go in and we dredge it out.

John:

And you'll hear me talk more about that when we get to prospect, but I don't know why a couple of the foundations are in noted as historic, but most are not. Now we're shifting over to the West Riverside and this for, Mark would definitely recognize this and probably Brian, is that this is the kiln at Dillon Road on 69. So if you're traveling North on 69, this is just to your left Dillon Road is just to the right of this photograph. And then our Lake Glen is above it on Dillon road. And Dawson is behind the photographer here. We could see that there's an excavator on top of the kilt and what happened in 19, this is one of the other sites that is on a historical register in, I think it was 1994.

John:

So I was not working for Tim at the time, but he knew that there were rocks that were falling off of this thing. And actually, I should note that the town of Hamden owns about 25% of this. So when I should step back for some more historical perspective.

Bob:

Hamden?

John:

Woodbridge, sorry. Wood town, Woodbridge. So before Glen was built and before Dillon Road was built, there was a road that went up the Glen, called Glen Road. In order to build the Glen reservoir Lake Glen, we had to have an agreement with the town of Woodbridge to create build Dillon road, which we did. So the right of way for Dillon road is wider than the asphalt. Most of you guys understand that and that's the town property. So the width that we gave the town of, actually almost said Hamden again, town of Woodbridge actually compass about 25% of the kiln.

John:

And by 1994, back to my story. By 1994 rocks were falling off the Woodbridge side, the Northern side, and cascading towards the road. In fact, at least one of them made it into the road by then. So Tim had a really robust, thick chain link fence, just one stretch installed really on town property to catch anything that would fall. And it's a good thing that he did because in, I think it was December, if I remember 1997, the Woodbridge part of the kiln collapsed in entirety. So the kiln actually had two hearths. What you're looking at is just the Southern hearth that is ours. The Northern hearth is already gone in this photograph. That's what collapsed in December of 1997. And Tim's fence caught most of the debris. It's amazing that it would stand it, but it did. And after that, we had to have a discussion about what are we going to do about this?

John:

Because we still had few stone on the top of this network can't delivering out on supported. And people kept going up to this, taking photographs, walking in the hearth. I mean, it was just a nightmare. If Joe was around at the time, he would have passed out and had a heart attack. So what we said we would do is that we would put a fence around it to stop people from walking on it. And we would go up and do a controlled demolition of the most dangerous rocks, which is what we did. And that's what you see in this photograph. So I know that there is a better photograph of it from the early 1900s, like from right almost where I'm standing in this photograph that shows it all new, not new, but intact. The gaps that you see these lines, those were actually timbers that were in the matrix of the rocks that were held on with huge iron tie rods that held the whole structure together.

John:

The tie rods are mostly gone here and all the wood is gone. And what I'm going to show you in the next photograph is the only thing that I can get from Don Menzies. She's actually trapped in Scotland with one of his daughters and his grandkids. Now he can't get back because they're on lockdown. So he actually talked to somebody at the Woodbridge library, and they sent me this photograph, which you could see the kiln in place. And you could see where the timbers were. You could see that the Northern hearth is there at the time.

John:

Dillon Road is here. So we know that this is after 1912, because I believe that's, I think it was 1912 when Dillon Road was created. And you can see that there's telephone poles there, the telephone poles that you see here, there was an AT&T right away that went up behind the kill that was in place from about 1900 until 1937. I think it was. So we can say that this photograph was somewhere in between 19, say 1910 until 1930 something. And it shows what it looked like when it was in much better shape.

Joe:

John, quick question. This was used to make charcoal or what was the purpose of this kiln?

John:

Yeah, a good question, Joe. Sorry, this was a cement kiln. So the company that built it was trying to make cement out of it, but I mean, Don Menzies whose one of the heads of the Emily Woodbridge Historical Association, and he's also one of our former employees is a retiree. He will tell you that from the research that he's done on this is that it was basically a fraud from the beginning. They knew that their material was very much substandard and was never going to really make cement, even though they tried it anyway. So the people who constructed the kiln and created the company basically ran away with all the stockholder money and left town. And we actually have some, I believe either Don or the Amny Wood branch historic study has copies of the stock certificates. I know I have zero copies of it in the office, but it was basically a sham. It was a failed company at best, a sham at worst.

Joe:

Okay. Thank you.

John:

Cement kiln. [crosstalk 00:26:23] I'm sorry.

Greg:

Yeah. We had shams back then too.

John:

Oh yes, you bet.

John:

Okay. So we're moving over to Mopey now and in the Mopey area, they're the two historical sites deal with native Americans. One is South of route 34 and there's no there, but when we sold the 80 or so acres to Sursum Corda, which is now owned by Yale New Haven, we did some historical analysis of the area, had a consultant go in and do some test bits. They found some cultural material and on the property that we retained, not on the property that we sold and that area where the cultural materials found is noted as a historical in our land use plan. The other historical site at Mopey is an actual cemetery. So this is one of the few places we know on our property, where humans have been buried. And we know that this is a burial plot of a family of Indians or native Americans that are by as you can guess, if you know Orange Street, there's a street called Indian Hill road, and this is right by it.

John:

So this family lived in this part of Orange. And at that time it was West Haven. I'm sorry, West Haven was part of Orange at that time. And this is, let's see, is this an... I'd have to go back in the map to see, I think this is in West Haven, but it was Orange at the time and it is a small plot. It's actually noted in a book and describes where the cemetery plot was. There are no stones. There are stones as you could see in the photograph, but there's no headstones, there's no footsteps. It's just a small rectangular area with various stones made the stones were placed there where graves were. I don't know. We can see that there have been people who went out there and had a party, or there were beer cans and string went from tree to tree in this area.

John:

So there has been some activity, but there's been no digging. When I take took this photograph when I've been out there, there's no evidence of that. And we try to, we don't want to draw attention to this because if we do, then that creates people going out there on their own, similar to the guys who went into our copper mine in Hamden. The rest of the family as the family still live there. But by the time that we get into modern history, those members of that family are buried in evergreen cemetery, in New Haven. But I believe that the last known person there to be buried was in the early 1800s from what I recall. Moving out to prospect, and this goes back to what I was talking about with the schoolhouse foundation. We have hundreds of different foundations on our property.

John:

For some reason in prospect, two of them were noted as historical sites in our land use plan. One of them is right across the street from me now on route 68. There's a series of foundations of a barn and house. And that's noted as historical. There's also a button factory that's over by Bob's house, closer to

the intersection of Chatfield Road and route 68. And then there's this, which is a large, it is a substantial foundation that went to a barn and several houses. And then it sort of cascades down the hill into a ravine that goes in for the stream that goes into the prospect reservoir. So it's pretty cool to see it's very steep. I'll say also, and you can see how they were trying to tap different Springs that came out of the slope at different points of the ground.

John:

In the Bay area we did not know anything for historical. We just made a mention that there were many foundations out there, but we didn't think anything rose to the level where we thought we should note it in particular. And then the last thing I have for you here is in the North Chester welfare right area, there was an old house that was very close to the road, and I should have looked up the date. I don't remember the exact date. It was in the early '80s. So I believe it was when the past, when the regional water authority had acquired the New Haven water company and a guy named Ai Maselli wanted to buy the house from us. Well, we were okay with that conveying the house to him. And we did similar to what we did to the connector trust for historic preservation, with that worker's dormitory and the Eli Whitney museum for the bar that we gave him a ground lease.

John:

And what he did is that he, the house was very much a state of disrepair. He lifted the house from close to the road. It would have been just to the right of this photograph. This is actually a Google street view of the house. I couldn't get anything better and he moved it back to its present location. So that's what you see with the chimney in the back. And then we allowed him to add the garage, which is what you can see better in the photograph. And then we have a ground lease with the current owner of the house whose last name is Linger. He has a ground lease of one acre of the property, and there're all sorts of restrictions on it. You can't do anything that would harm the public water supply. This is very close to the, it's on the grounds, basically the property of the North Chester Wellfield. With that said, I would just say that when we went through the revision in 2015, 2016, we didn't change anything that hadn't been in there before about history.

John:

And again, I don't know why some things were put in there in 1983 and other things were not in like the classic examples I mentioned are the various house foundations, but I think there are probably other things that the next time we come around, we should consider. And just to give you an idea of some of these is like one in particular, we know that there, and there's more research on this, that there used to be a family of freed slaves that lived up on the top of the Totoket Ridge in North Branford, very close to the Guilford line.

John:

And we allowed a historian from the Totoket historical study in North Branford to go up there with a metal detector. We had an idea, he had an idea of where the house was, but there's no foundation there. I mean, this was a former slaves house, and they gave him, I believe it was the former slave property. So you can imagine that it was the most hardscrabble land that this person had. It wasn't very fertile. It's on top of the Hills, shallow soils. So there wasn't really anything to dig down into to make a foundation, but up there, we allowed this fellow from Totoket historical society to do some metal

detecting. We didn't allow him to do any excavation, but he went up there with another fellow and used the metal detector and marked where Ferris material was found.

John:

And then non-ferrous metals. And then he took photographs of where these flags were. So one flag from one side, one flag from another side. So you can get an idea where the house was. It was pretty interesting. And I would also say that as an anecdotal thing, when we went up there and I looked at the location with them, there is an apple tree in the middle of nowhere up there. And then we started to speculate, like, does this kind of date from there? I mean, we were talking 200 plus years ago, but it was very odd to see an apple tree on top of Basalt Ridge. But maybe when we get back to the next revision land use plan, we should think about other locations that may have other historical significance that we should note in it.

John:

And I will say it as I did with the Indian or the native American cemetery at the Mopey area, there is some trepidation with that. Because then I want you to put a dot on the map like with the mine in Hamden, people start snooping around because there's people who want to dig and get information on that stuff. We definitely have people across our property now going with metal detectors and we intercept them from time to time and tell them to get out. But there's plenty more than I'm sure we never intercept. With that, I will take any questions you have. That was pretty long-winded.

Greg:

Hey, John. That house in Cheshire, that was moved back. They have a land lease. Well, how much did we get for that? Do you know?

John:

We don't... No, I'm sorry. We got very minimal. What is it? Well, it was either watermarks \$200 per month. And then he pays all the pilot on the house while he pays his own pilot for the house itself. He has his own separate card, but then we charge him. We re-bill him for the pilot attributed to the one acre that he rents from us or leases from us.

Greg:

All right. Thank you.

John:

Yeah. Any other questions?

Peter:

John?

John:

Yes, Peter.

Peter:

Yay. Great job. I mean, you're a wealth of knowledge here. I agree with Jamie, maybe one of these trips we can make to the... was it Whitney she picked up on?

John:

The Eli Whitney Museum?

Peter:

Right, Jamie. I don't know if she can hear me, but anyways, yeah, maybe we could do one of our meetings down there, but I'm excited to see all these spots now. It's amazing. Great job as usual. Great presentation. Any other questions for John?

Greg:

I just don't want to do a road trip to the copper mine, go into the copper mine.

Peter:

I'm a little leery now. I mean, that was pretty brave John, to go down in there. Aren't they?

John:

Yeah, I mean to-

Bob:

Brave or stupid?

John:

Go to YouTube.

Greg:

A little bit of both.

John:

After this, everyone can go to YouTube and look up Tallman mine, T-A-L-L-M-A-N mine, Hamden, CT. And you will find that as the first result in your search engine, and then you can walk the mine with them. They walked the entirety of the mine, so you can see the entire thing.

Peter:

Oh, that's fine. We can do it from my living room.

John:

Yeah. And I'll say this as an aside, because as the land manager for all this, I know how many people are out there trespassing and doing things that they shouldn't be doing that. In the video, you will see that

towards the end, they follow one vein or one shaft that is in the mine. And they talk about how all... geez, the miners must've really stripped this because we didn't find any minerals in here. They really stripped it of all the, or that they could get. Well, they are in there probably around 2015 or 2016 or something like that. They aren't considering that teenagers and mind enthusiasts like them for 100 years or 150 years have been in that thing and chipped away at whatever they could find with lamps and candles and everything else. So they aren't the only trespassers in there. I'm sure that anybody else who wanted minerals that has been in there has taken anything that was of value before these guys went in there. So they only talk about the miners, like the miners left in 1837. Well, that is not the case.

Peter:

No, I'm sure. I'm sure John, and you do a great job managing all the property. It's pretty [crosstalk 00:38:05] Yeah. Any other questions for John? I guess you're still up there John, updates.

John:

Okie dokie. So Jen is going to put on the date on the screen and you can follow along with me at home, as they say.

Jennifer:

Everybody see that?

John:

Thanks, Jen. In January, at the end of the month, we are 85% for our surface water capacity. Long-term average is 77. So we are very in good shape going into 2021. Last year we were a little bit higher at 88%. January was a dry month for us. So we had a lot of days before we got to the end of the month or started having a little bit of snow. But if you remember, there was one dry day after another there. And so we only had 1.2, three inches of rain, compared to the previous year. It was almost two inches and the historical average is four. So as you can see outside your window, we've been doing much better in February with the one snow storm after another. And once it all melts, that's going to count.

John:

So we should be going back up again. Once it gets a little bit warmer and rain hits it as well. Then we need for the water we use program, nothing to add in the last month. DePodesta and Hendrickson Properties. Then we have the Oslo grants from, we received the check for the DePodesta property and cash that and deposited it. And we posted the required signs for the Oslo grant. Whenever we get these grants or whenever anybody gets these grants, they're required to put up some sign, notifying the public that these acres were protected with State money. So we've taken care of that. The Olin property in Hamden, this is a off of Putnam and Treadwell correspond with the Hammond land conservation trust on this matter and received a letter from Save The Sound and other organizations for requesting a meeting to talk about it.

John:

So I know Ted's talk to the author of the letter and we're trying to set up a meeting with them. Rental houses, we're down to the last two in Hamden. Ive street and Skift street. They have the town attorneys

agreed that the condemnation will be the way to go. This is the part of the sidewalk and the bridge that went over our property and was not part of any taking, not part of any condemnation, but has all their assets on them now. And their attorneys said it could take months. So we are looking to bifurcate the two dispositions disposition applications. And I will say that I will be starting on that later this month, where we were starting on the ice street disposition application, you should be seeing that very, before, or definitely by the spring, I'll say that. Forestry only updates are what you see in bold.

John:

So two timber sales have come to completion, one on beach street in North Branford and another, Bethany on the East Lake road there. And then the silver mine road/slash wall harvest and Seymour was awarded the contract was awarded and is likely to start later this winter. We gave out, Alex gave out two new maple tapping permits. He met with Jeff Ward from the agricultural experiment stations discussed a new study involving white Oak saplings in Bethany. He went, I was doing boundary with Josh and noted several encroachments on parcels. And some of those letters you'll see them later in the summary tonight, he removed, he and Josh removed several Cedar trees from the Sperry road field for the licensee, the young woman who lives at the, when we sold the house, that's very road to four. And we saving the trees for future boundary posts.

John:

Our recreation, we discussed the mountain bike possibilities with people at Madison and for the Genesee area, we held a bird walk at Lake Bethany that was on January 1st, had five attendees for that. It was good. Very cold that day, highlight was about 200 redneck ducks in the Northern part of the Lake. We reviewed the possible fishing trails at Lake Chamberlain. This is going to be a land use plan amendment that you'll see shortly. Our environmental consultant was out there and did the preliminary assessment. So we are now trying to get our permits in line. And once all that's done, then you will see it as an application. Did someone say something?

Brian:

Fishing trials or just the fishing trails?

John:

Say that again, Brian, I missed part of that.

Brian:

Well, I'm just curious, because they don't really stock Chamberlain in terms of fish, right? It's not really-

John:

It's not stocked.

Brian:

And you're not planning on stocking it. This is just still just leaving it the way it is.

John:

Correct. Yes. So what these are, and I maybe I shouldn't, it's not going to be a public hearing though, so because it's a non-substantial amendment, but to just quickly answer your question, these are to basically formalized several trails that anglers are using now anyway. So we're going to make them formal so that people will use them and not go and not start to make their own trails elsewhere again. Because a lot of, as you know Brian walking around Chamberlain, a lot of the Lake road is not near the water itself. So there aren't very many places for anglers to probably pass today.

Brian:

You cut off the road and you cut through them.

John:

Yes. Where was I? So we check part of the Quinnipiac trail with CFTA in prospect where it was recently relocated for some drainage improvements. I talked to the trail manager out there in early January. He's going to take care of that. We submitted our annual report to the department of public health. We posted notice of openings for recreation staff for the upcoming field season and started receiving and reviewing those applications. I believe Jeff had his first interview this morning to discuss possible relocation the matter BCIT trail on RWJ property, South of pool road as to try to get them off of the road itself. So they're not in front of the Halloran house and off of where there's a wet spot.

John:

So I believe that they're well, I know that they're looking at that, but they're also looking to try to avoid our property as well. So they're still looking at potential routes. So at the end of January, our permit T holder number, permit holder number was 6,129 compared to 3,762 at this time last year, all pre COVID. So you could see the impact of a global pandemic on our numbers. And you can also see that from the time period of the end of 2020 and December to the end of January, we increased about a hundred permits, a special PR activity permits, which Linda more takes care of. We had three that were issued in the month of January. You can see them there nothing to really go into much detail about other items encroachments and agreements and cultural fields are discussed two fields with more potential farmers.

John:

We sent a draft agreements for the potters who are in Guilford to take over three fields that Bazuto now use in Guilford. I've talked to him, but he hasn't signed them yet and sent them back to me, still waiting for that. But he says he's willing to do it and just waiting for the actual documents. Then we are approved from Andrea Rubano, she's the one who owns this very road house.

John:

And here's the field she's gonna use it for Christmas trees. We approved a request for her to apply lime and fertilizer for the field. After she got a soil report back from Brian's colleagues at the AG experiment station. North Branford Saul's field we executed the license agreement for a couple to use that field for Christmas trees as well. So they're going to be using that starting this spring. Well, she's going to start mowing it this spring, but she wasn't able to find trees, because they're all sold out from all the nurseries all across the country really. It's amazing. North Branford at two 29 forest road, this is an encroachment, a pretty big one. And we had the surveyor go out there, find one pan and set another.

We met with the butter and then I sent him a draft agreement for him to review, which he said, he's received these just again, hasn't returned it signed yet.

John:

At Bunker Hill road. This is some of the next three that Josh and Alex had found. Booker Hill road in Killingworth. We sent a letter about a building on the easement and there was a boat in the pond and we offered them a license screaming for use of portion of a field that vote the property line cuts through. I've talked to the landowner already. He called me last week and I sent him a draft license agreement. That was yesterday. Bethany Hoadley Road, the people there have extended ditch over the property line. So we just told them to stop doing that. And in Madison, at Suffolk drive, this is on the backside of your old property, Joe. You sent a letter about a fence that was over the line that was originally found in 2003. And they said they were going to move at the time, but we never followed up on it and it's still there. So we are still following up with those folks.

Joe:

Good.

John:

Go ahead. Joe, did you have a question?

Joe:

No.

John:

Okay. This is on the far South Western side of the property that you, your family deeded to us. Invasive plants, just been busy in the last month. The documented treated and Mason populations of Killingworth, North Branford, Hamden, Bethany Woodbridge is included using a contractor to mow about half an acre by one of the sediments and ponds at Lake Whitney. This is actually the other side of the detention permit. It's right next to the schoolhouse one, which is so on the picture. That's what we call Lake Hudack. We talked to Chris Ozek from Yale's UI program about using them as contractors, possibly for invasive management. And he's worked, he and will Henley have worked on a grant for removing aquatic invasive species. And I know that I just got an email this afternoon from Will saying that everything has been submitted.

John:

And what we're basically looking for in that is for them to cover our outside contractor fees for the water Chestnut at furnace pond. So in the last month, Josh has documented and mapped about 30 acres and he's treated in one way or another about 26 acres for the deer hunt, which Jeff Yale's been covering since Trevor's departure. We sent out our, we received the file, Hunter surveys, Jeff compiled all the information is sent the annual report up to DPH. And then he sent a renewal for the 2021 permit to DPH. Hopefully we'll get that back soon. Just some other stuff at one 96 Beach Avenue we talked, this is just to show you some of the other things we deal with real estate. We talked to Martha staff to initiate

a title report for an era that has a bunch of cottages, seasonal housing or seasonal colleges that has a, they have a seasonal water connection.

John:

And we would like to make that a permanent connection so that it is a at depth mind right now. It's what the distribution people will call it surface supply and it's in bad shape. So we want to make it a better connection there. And we're looking into that. Okay. So also down in that area, Branford parish farm road, we were contacted by the Branford town engineering department about a possibility of an easement along Parris farm road for a sewer sanitary sewer extension. They were saying that they didn't think that the right of way for the town right away was large enough for the sanitary sewer. They may need some of our property, and we told them what they would need to do if they're going to go ahead of that. And we would basically cooperate with a friendly condemnation if it came to that they were going to talk to that WPCA people and get back to us. I have not heard anything since then.

John:

Also, North Branford recreation department, we talked to members of their staff and we will lead a walk for them in March sometime. And then you see there's five different articles for your reading knowledge and enjoyment for the January update. And that's I have.

Peter:

Are you sure?

John:

That is enough. My mouth is dry. I have nothing to drink. I haven't [inaudible 00:51:05] yet. That was next on the drink.

Peter:

John, I was going to say you need a glass of water by now. Yeah. Thanks so much. Great report. John, on that sanitary sewer I mean, what did they just want to, how's that work? Do they just gotta get a right away to go through our property?

John:

Right. So more details on this is that what I was told by the assistant engineer, and then later the town engineer is that there are some failing septic systems down the road and those would be on our watershed. So it would definitely be within our best interest to have them hooked into the sanitary sewer. So when they put in the sanitary sewer, it's going to be very deep. So they need a wide easement to install that. And what they're saying is that the easement will be wider than the current road is now to go through our property, but they would be slicing off like a little edge parallel to the road. And right now there is just a trees there in an old fence line, stone wall and such so that it wouldn't be anything that we is terribly important, but it's definitely more important for us to get rid of failing septic systems, to protect our [crosstalk 00:52:23]

Brian:

Totally agreed.

Peter:

I agree with you. I agree with both of you Brian. Yes. The septic systems failing is worse.

Mike:

I agree with that. Well, how wide is this easement going to be? And is there a map in your office that shows the size of this easement?

John:

No, not yet, Mike, so that's all to be determined. I mean, first thing was that the town engineers were going to talk to the WPCA people and determine whether or not they even need an easement. They may be able to get it all within the public right away, and then we would not be involved. So all that's to be determined. Yes.

Mike:

Do you know how wide the easement is now?

John:

Well, they don't have an easement. They would be going where the main-

Bob:

Right away.

John:

Is in the town right away underneath. [crosstalk 00:53:13] So an easement would be just widening the road or where the public right away is. It would be just a strip of, I think they were guessing they only a couple of feet onto our property. It's not like it's cutting through our property.

Peter:

They just really need that to work with, that's all.

John:

Basically. Yeah.

Peter:

That's right. The pipe is going to probably be offered [crosstalk 00:53:37]

John:

Right. It would be in the road, under the road.

Peter:

Correct.

Jamie:

When towns are [inaudible 00:53:42] even if it's a small piece, do they pay us? Is there an annual fee? How is that calculated?

John:

Well, what part are you asking about? Are you talking about something like this?

Jamie:

Yeah. I'm not, but something like this. Yes. Something like this. I'm sure it would be a small amount, but even on a bigger one there's during condemnation, is it just market value for that?

John:

Yeah. So in the instances of condemnation, which is a body and entity who has the power of eminent domain, they exercise their condemnation, which is the process. And to do that, they have to send us notice and then they send us an appraisal of what they think the rights are. That number is the only thing that we can really argue about. We can't argue that you should go this way. You should go that way. But once that entity has the right of condemnation, they can take it. And then if we, if they said it's only worth \$5 or \$10, we can go say, no, it's worth a thousand and that can be brought to court or that can be argued about, but the location or the actual title part that they take, there is no discussion about that. That would go regardless, in most of these things.

John:

And we've had a few since I've been in this position, and I know we've had many, probably hundreds over the years is that the compensation turns out to be something like \$500 or \$1000. A thousand or less is when it turns out to be these easements are small pieces of fee simple property, because it's just basically really right along the road, there wasn't a whole lot of value to it. And so we agree to it. They send us a check, it gets filed on the land records, and then they own whatever rights they need to go ahead. So there's no annual fee that goes along with these.

Mike:

Usually in the easements with towns that I have worked on in the past, the fees charged by in this case, the water company would be enough to cover our legal costs or whatever it is that we are charged by our attorneys. Because we try to work with every town as they try to work with us.

John:

In case you don't know, Mike is a surveyor, so he knows he's forgotten more about this stuff than I'll ever know. So let's just be clear about that.

Peter:

Thanks Mike. Anything else for John? Poor guy needs to eat.

Joe:

John, one last question. I noticed that on the list of articles to be read, there was one on the Derby judge basically clearing us, I think, to move forward. Is that the case or is there still things that we have to go through?

John:

I'm going to defer this to Ted because he I'm sure knows a lot more about than I do.

Peter:

I was going to say, we're done with Mr. John here. Thank you so much. I was going to say other land items and I was going to approach Ted. So we might just start with you Ted with that question.

Ted:

Yeah, the judge dismissed the suit that the plaintiffs had, I guess it's the city of Derby. We were tied into that because we were the applicants for the BSA. This was an appeal of the P and Z decision. So that is done, but the plaintiff can still file a petition to appeal that decision. And that is, we don't know if it's likely to happen, but it could happen. And then the judge would have to make a decision on whether the, he would... That first the judge would grant that petition or not to go to the appeal. Our attorneys believe that the case was strong enough that the judge would likely not do that, but who knows?

Greg:

What's the time limit on that, Ted?

Ted:

So usually they have 20 days to file that, but they asked for an extension. We said, no, we're not going to grant the extension, but they could take it further down the road and likely get an extension from the courts.

Peter:

They're just looking to buy time. Is that what they're doing, Ted?

Ted:

Or try to figure out how they're going to appeal to the appeal again, I don't know.

Peter:

It's not going to happen.

Ted:

It's just costing us money.

Peter:

Yeah. I see that. Thanks. Any other land items, Ted that you want to cover?

Ted:

No, I think John covered it pretty well. I just want to let you know that, I remember Trevor left back in October, we have approval for that position now. It's gone through John and then he's working with our employee resources to fill that position. So we're back on the man for that. Hopefully we get it soon.

Peter:

Yeah. Hope these guys. Thanks so much Ted.

Greg:

Hey, Pete. Where's Mark tonight?

Peter:

They were just telling me Mark had COVID, Greg. He's very sick. He's home. I believe right, Jennifer?

Jennifer:

Yeah, he's home now.

Peter:

He's home but I wasn't aware that. Usually, he calls me once a month to break them off a little, but he has it. So I'll have to reach out to him.

Greg:

Was he in the hospital?

Peter:

I believe so. Yeah. Keep them in your prayers. Ill give him a show. Anything else? Next meeting is going to be March 10th, 5:30. Another great meeting, John. Thanks again. It was great. Lot of knowledge here. That's absorbed. I have to do my homework, which is Google here.

John:

Don't worry. Jennifer recorded the whole thing you said at that at the beginning. So you play it back as many times as you want tonight.

Jennifer:

I got it all.

Peter:

Well, that's the best part about this, so, all right. How about a motion to adjourn?

Greg:

So move.

Representative Policy Board
Land Use Committee
February

Peter:

Second right. All in favor. All right. Thanks so much everyone.