

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

**April 14, 2021  
Meeting Transcription**

Peter:

Okay. All right. Okay, here we go. One second. Okay. First of all, there's a meeting is being recorded and before we get going, I would like to add to the agenda, the approval recommended completion of the disposition for [Ives 00:00:27] street. I overlooked it when I was putting the agenda together with Jennifer.

Jennifer:

I forgot to include it also.

Peter:

Excuse me, Jen.

Jennifer:

I said, I forgot to put it on there for you.

Peter:

Okay. That's okay. So I need help from the board here to make-

Mark:

So approved to make a modification to the agenda.

Harvey:

I second.

Peter:

Okay. Thank you. And Jen, where should we put that in our agenda? Do you want to put that after approval minutes or?

Jennifer:

Why don't we do it after Lisa's presentation?

Peter:

Okay. That's fine. Okay. Thanks for being so cooperative everyone.

Mark:

No problem.

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Peter:

Yeah. Okay. Jen has our safety moment up here and it's very important because distracted driving and I have to admit sometimes I will text and drive and it's horrible. So take this serious, read it and act on it. So study that everyone. Next approval minutes of the March 10th meeting [crosstalk 00:01:48] all in favor.

John:

Aye.

Harvey:

Aye.

John:

Aye.

Jennifer:

Aye.

Peter:

Opposed. So [inaudible 00:01:59]. Is that Jennifer? I mean, did Jamie just get in.

John:

Yes.

Jamie:

Yeah. I was having trouble I'm in.

Peter:

That's okay. No, Jamie, I wanted... We just added to the agenda. I don't know if you caught the beginning. We're going to be... The approval for recommending the completeness of disposition of Ives street in Hamden. I was wondering if you had a chance to read through that?

Jamie:

The disposition of Ives street. I have not read it fully. No. And that's unusual for me. I generally read everything when I first get it. We've been dealing with a crisis with a family member.

Peter:

I understand that. I just wanted you to be aware because where's my ace in the home. Mr. Harvey.

Harvey:

Hello.

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Peter:

Yeah. Did you study it a little bit yourself?

Harvey:

Yes, I did.

Peter:

All right. So we'll move forward. When we get to there, we'll talk about it. I was just looking for a little help because this is my first one to really clarify and approve. And that's what I want the board to help me with. Okay?

Jamie:

Yeah. And maybe when I looked at a while ago, I don't think so, but okay.

Peter:

Okay. Thanks Jamie. I was kind of looking for an attorney.

Jamie:

I just play one on TV.

Peter:

Okay. So that's what I was cheating from. All right. So we've approved the minutes now. Whitney Water Center. Lisa, I don't want to destroy her last name, Jennifer [DeFransesco, 00:03:37] is that how you say it?

Lisa:

I'll take that DeFransesco.

Peter:

Hi. DeFransesco.

Harvey:

[crosstalk 00:03:43] a lot easier before.

Lisa:

It was a lot easier. And there's a reason I go by Mrs. D when I teach. So we'll just leave it that.

Peter:

I should know better, Lisa, welcome. And I believe you're going to give us an update.

Lisa:

I am.

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Peter:

All yours.

Lisa:

All right. Well, you certainly picked quite the time period for an update with the Water Center. I believe the last time that I spoke with the Land Use Committee personally was about 18 years ago. I know you've had other updates since, but I'm glad to be back to give you an update and I'm going to start my screen share here.

Peter:

Great.

Lisa:

All right. So everyone should see that we got Whitney Water Center front and center.

Peter:

Yeah.

Greg:

Got it.

Lisa:

So I'm just going to start with an overview because I know this may be some new information to some of you. So the Whitney Water Center is located in Hamden and we offer free hands-on water science programs typically kindergarten through eighth grade to any school, organization or need within our district. Public and private schools. Those are our big user groups, primarily public schools. We also work with homeschoolers, girl scout troops, boy scout troops. Libraries are big users, especially now during the pandemic, we do all sorts of summer programs, community organizations, anyone that's looking for some science enrichment. We usually have something to offer for them. Typically, what we've done for the last 29 years. I'm going to start with that because this was an anomaly of a year, as everybody knows. We have outreach, onsite classes and loan boxes. For the last 12 to 13 years. The primary method that we've taught with is outreach. That's where I take our water science classes and I go into the teacher's classroom.

Lisa:

We do also have programs where teachers take field trips here. We used to have two educators back in 2008, 2009. We narrowed down to just one. So I do whatever the teachers want, either in their classroom or here, but just with finances and logistics. It's always so much easier for me to go into their classroom. We do have some specialty things that we offer here, a microscope program. That's really not feasible to bring into the classroom. So that's our number one user here at the Water Center. And then we have our water science loan boxes. Those are self-contained teaching kits. Teachers borrow. They have all the equipment that the teachers need. A teaching guides, materials, pretty much everything, but pencils and water. And I deliver them to the school, pick them up when they're done,

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and they're free of charge. We also have a program called Project Water. The start of this was the brainchild of Tom [inaudible 00:06:39]. He wanted us to be able to have a program, a bus where we could bring adults, students out into the field and give them science out in the field.

Lisa:

He wanted a mobile classroom. What ended up developing out of that was our middle school field science program. So this is typically done with sixth and seventh graders. It fits best in their curriculum. It's a field study along the middle river in Hamden. I spend three class periods in their class beforehand, going over things that they need to know. Water quality, why it's important, how it can change. Watersheds, that's the primary focus of this program. We talk about how, what happens on the land can affect the water. So while we're studying the Mill river, we go to four different locations and they're testing for nitrates, pH, temperature and dissolved oxygen. And frequently the kids are disappointed because the water quality is high and they don't get see high levels of nitrates and all these dramatic results. But they end up leaving with an understanding of, "This is good. It's our environment. The water is healthy. The land's healthy." Much, much better result than bright pink exciting nitrate results.

Lisa:

So this was the 30th year of the Whitney Water Center. And boy, what a year it was over the last 30 years, we've reached 350,000 students between our outreach, onsite, loan boxes and Project Water. 13,000 of those students participated in Project Water, which is just absolutely incredible to me. And over 44,000 students have used our water science loan boxes. So let's take a look at the data from 2018, 2009. This is just the school year. If we had factored summer in this, we have about 11,000 students that we saw over the course of this time period. This is really, really representative of the last 12 or so years of the Water Center. As time goes on the distributions of towns change. I know our entire district isn't represented here, but in the last 30 years, we have been in every district except Ansonia and Seymour. They were new to the mix. And the goal for this year was to get them in. But that goal kind of changed with COVID.

Lisa:

A New Haven is by far the largest user group, they always are. West Haven, East Haven and Hamden are always running neck and neck for second, third and fourth. As teachers retire, as teachers move on to new schools, new towns, I ended up moving along with them. We actually haven't sent out a brochure in the last 10 to 12 years. The program is just self-perpetuating through word of mouth and has been pretty much booked. So we haven't needed to advertise. So then COVID hit.

John:

Can I ask a question?

Lisa:

Please.

John:

Can you go back to that graph, is that really [inaudible 00:09:58] has 960 people?

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Lisa:

Correct. So [inaudible 00:10:02] participates through Project Water, their entire fifth grade participates in it?

Jamie:

I can attest to that. My son did it in fifth grade. He's in HK.

Lisa:

Yes.

Jamie:

And I took him to another place and he's like, "We did this through..." I found out accidentally when he told me when I took him somewhere. We did this, we took samples of water. We blah, blah, blah.

Lisa:

Well done. Awesome. Thank you. I appreciate that. So that is correct.

John:

All right. Thank you.

Lisa:

No problem. So COVID hit and that changed our numbers. In just a minute, I'm going to talk about how we adapted to COVID. But pretty much, same distribution, New Haven, Hamden. Right at the top. I was really, really surprised with some of the teachers who were like, "Let's do this, we're going to do it remote. We're still going to make it work." And then the ones who I thought I could rely on who were just absolutely overwhelmed with everything. So this school year, we reached about 4,300 students through our virtual format, whereas in our last non COVID year, because 2019, 2020, that was just a mess. So that wouldn't have given us some nice clean numbers. To about 8,700 students in the 2018, 2019 school year. So about half the volume of kids. So March 12th COVID hits. And I was in a school in New Haven when they made the announcement of make sure you send home work for two weeks for your kids, because they're going to be home. Little, did we know that was going to be for the next year essentially.

Lisa:

Two weeks later, we decided we needed to do something so we could fill that void. Obviously, kids aren't in school. We're not going into the classrooms. No one knew what Zoom or Google Classroom was then. So we did the best with what we had and we started making videos. So we did our Whitney Water Center Learning From Home. They were three to five minute long videos with equipment that kids would have at home. That would be super easy for them to use. So I took my outreach programs that I would normally have been doing in their classrooms and gave them some science they could do. It was definitely used by teachers in our district. And I know it was used all the way down in Philadelphia. So we got some interesting reach with our digital programs. Over the course of the school year, we ended up putting out 25 episodes of our Whitney Water Center, Learning From Home. They went up on

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Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, all of our social media channels and as well on the education section of our website. And they are still there.

Jamie:

How are you able, I'm sorry. Excuse me. This is Jamie again. How are you able to track or do metrics on people that have actually seen the videos? Do you clicks or do they fill out some kind of form that says, "Yes, I've watched it and here's the rating." How do you know the numbers? Or is it sort of you know that you've touched this many and it may have gone beyond that.

Lisa:

We have a concept of numbers. We don't have a hard number. So let's use YouTube for example, because that was a link that I frequently sent to teachers because it was an easy format for them to click on and show in class. So when you're on the backside of any social media website, Facebook, YouTube, there's all sorts of analytics. If you're into data, there is so much data there. You can get engagement, reach how long people watched the video. What we don't know is was that one person watching the video or did that teacher show that video to 100 of her students. So we have a minimum and a maximum.

Greg:

[crosstalk 00:13:56].

Lisa:

Yes.

Greg:

This Greg from West David. How did they get all the way to Philadelphia?

Lisa:

Social media. People see it, people share it. If Dan shared it on his Facebook page and he has family that's out in Philadelphia that are teachers, they use it, they share it. We didn't promote it down to Philadelphia.

Greg:

I didn't think so.

Lisa:

It found its way there.

Mark:

This Mark Levine.

Lisa:

Yes.

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Mark:

Can you hear me?

Lisa:

I can.

Mark:

How do you do it all by yourself? You don't have any help.

Lisa:

I do not. I learned and I adapted really quickly. I was very lucky that one of my hobbies is photography. So-

Mark:

I mean, how do you do the whole program by yourself? Don't you feel that it's it's underfunded?

Lisa:

The Whitney Water Center as a whole.

Mark:

[inaudible 00:14:54].

Lisa:

I would love to see another educator. I'm at capacity and that's why we haven't sent a brochure out. Because I don't want to say yes to the first five phone calls and then-

Mark:

In New Haven. Are you hitting the inner cities?

Lisa:

Yes.

Mark:

Inner city kids?

Lisa:

Yes.

Mark:

Yes. Okay. I think you need more. I always wondered how you did this by yourself with no help.

Lisa:



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It's not something that I need help with to do more. But if we had more people, I could reach more [crosstalk 00:15:29].

Lisa:

No problem. But as far as doing what I need to do to teach the classes that's just factored into what I need to.

Peter:

Okay.

Mark:

Okay.

Lisa:

Did I answer that adequately enough?

Mark:

Yes. Yes.

Lisa:

But we definitely have demand. If we had another educator, we could easily reach double the amount of students. So we started doing some other educational environmental based programs. I did some Whitney Water Center In The Field videos where we were taking this one was fireflies, did something on dragonflies. As my video skills progressed. We did some winter adaptations, nice video on trees. So these were some really cool things that I normally wouldn't have been able to bring into the classroom. But just a great education component for the kids to be able to see something different. Because this is on social media, we're reaching our adult customers to where we would normally have never reached that demographic. Some of these Whitney Water Center in the field videos and Opie's World, which is another environmental education direction we were going. And this is part of the recreation program. Opie's World, Opie is our possum. And he was a mascot for a lot of the kid based friendly and recreation programs that we did.

Lisa:

Kate Powell started that a while back. And we kind of revitalized Opie to bring environmental education out during the pandemic because everyone had way too much screen time. So anything we could do to encourage students to get away from the screen and out into the environment was really helpful. We know some of our Opie's World content reached Europe. Sweden was posting some things that I had put up about [inaudible 00:17:39], which was just incredible. So for the last year, these are the numbers for our digital reach. Now Whitney Water Center Learning From Home, those original video series reached 22,000 people through our different social media platforms and our website. Whitney Water Center In The Field, very comparable number. And Opie's world. Those media pieces reached 72,000 people. We had a couple of those go viral. I had a one post alone that had a reach of 45,000 people, which just so cool. That stuff making it over to Sweden.

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Brian:

Are those 72,000 individual hits? Or is it, if someone comes back four or five times to watch various different things? Is that a separate count for that?

Lisa:

That is individual unique reach. So it got in front of that many people. It's smart enough to know if you watched it four times. Now, if you did it on a different device, that's going to trick it out. But if you went back-

Brian:

No. But I guess what I'm saying is if you watch five different Opie's world videos or is that number five, or is that number one?

Lisa:

If they were five different videos, that's five different counts.

Brian:

From the same person. Got it.

Jamie:

It might actually be an under count if you think they might be shown in a classroom or among families. Because it would show maybe you're showing your brothers or your three kids or your classroom that's probably actually a low count.

Lisa:

Absolutely. These are minimums by far. Now did it reach with the same intensity that we did when we're in the classroom. I'm not in front of these people [inaudible 00:19:29] being able to give them the details on things. But this is an audience and the demographic that I wouldn't have reached in the classroom. So this is fantastic.

Mark:

It's fantastic.

Lisa:

We are doing remote programs in the classroom. What you see behind me? This is my remote teaching site here at the Water Center. I get put up on the smart boards. We either share Zoom links or Google Classroom. In some cases, the program I teach is fully digital. So it wouldn't look much different than the presentation I'm giving you right now. And in other cases, there's materials that are dropped off like you see at Atwater Library here in non Northford. They get the materials, the kids pick them up and then they join us remotely through Zoom. And then Project Water, the one program I never thought I'd be able to do remotely without kids in the field is probably one of the most successful remote programs that I've done. So in the field, what you see up on the screen, that's all the testing equipment that the

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kids would be using in the field on a field trip. I have a wifi extender and I Zoom through my phone and I do the field trip live with the kids. They're in the classroom, I get the water, I do the test, we interact.

Lisa:

We do their prep classes remotely. So they're actually getting almost a little bit more out of it remotely because I'm able to show them more in a faster period of time.

Jamie:

No ticks.

Lisa:

And no ticks, just me, not them [inaudible 00:21:08].

Jamie:

So, Lisa, how did you learn all this technology or even find that this technology was available? Is there a group that you were... Or were you just, you have kids that teach you or you're just savvy with this stuff?

Lisa:

Trial by fire. I was savvy enough to figure out what I needed and YouTube was a godsend. So, how do I do this? I did have a little background in video and photography, but this whole putting videos together and all that was brand new territory for me. Still learning. All right guys, that's it for me? What questions do you have?

Greg:

I think you're doing an amazing job Lisa. Amazing program.

Peter:

Really Lisa I'm amazed what you just showed us. Great job.

Greg:

I'm going to have to go find some of these videos myself, to look at.

Lisa:

Please. They're on our YouTube, Facebook, our website. I have to say there was a lot of... A lot of good things for me came out of the pandemic with the education program. I know we all fall victim to the, "But we've always done it this way." This took that and shook it by the shoulders. And some of the things that I had to adapt to make a digital class work when it was always just paper and, "Here, look at this, do this," is going to translate into such a better program once the kids are back in the classroom. Just really kicked up the content of what we're doing. So I'm really excited to see the kids in person again.

Greg:

The bus you have, does that go to the schools to pick up kids, to bring them back to the Water Center?

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Lisa:

So I go to pick up the kids for the Project Water field trip. But that's an all day field trip. If they're coming here to the Water Center, they have to arrange transportation through their school district.

Greg:

Okay. Man, I just want to tell you, you could tell Peter didn't grow up in New Haven because he would have pronounced your name correctly.

Peter:

Correct. Correct.

Lisa:

Good point.

Peter:

Yeah. Sorry. I apologize.

Lisa:

It's okay.

Peter:

Lisa, I agree with you. Sad as the pandemic was, there's lots of aspects in life teaching and in general, your program that benefited from it. Because we went outside the box to make things work so. I would have had a perfect 10 here if I just pronounced your name, right? Any more questions for her?

Jamie:

I do have one. So what next? It seems like you've probably surpassed a lot of your objectives. Something's probably had to get set aside as you reconfigured your programming and came up with new media to convey your material. But what's your dream list and what's your, "If I had more X I could do Y?"

Lisa:

Wow. If I had more freedom in the classroom. And this is nothing that's RWA related, I would love to do some more series with the kids. Some more cohesive stuff. A lot of times I'm doing a one hour class and that's all I see the kids for. I really enjoy when I see the kids and we can build on, "All right, we just talked about invasive species. Now let's talk about macroinvertebrates and how that affects it and how this affects it." I like when they can make that connection and say, "Last time we talked about this." But teachers are so tight with their time and everything has to fit in just perfectly. That's a challenge. But as far as moving forward, it's going to be a hybrid for a long time. I'm going to do whatever teachers want. They want me remote, we do it remote, if they want me in the classroom, we'll do it that way. I see schools being back to more normal next year, but I can't see, everybody's saying, "Visitors. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Come on in."

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Lisa:

So I think I'm going to be seeing this background for a good part, at least the first half of next school year.

Peter:

Thanks so much. This is great. Any more questions for Lisa?

Lisa:

Send me an email if you need. John knows where to find me.

John:

All right. Thank you, Lisa.

Lisa:

Thanks for having me. My pleasure.

Peter:

You have a good night, Lisa. Okay. That was awesome. My God, education [crosstalk 00:26:15].

Greg:

I have one question. This might be for Jennifer. I don't know if you know this Petter, but when Lisa was talking to us does she see all our faces?

Jennifer:

I think she does yeah.

Greg:

She does. Okay.

Peter:

I believe she does. Yeah.

John:

With the exception of Peter who's camera's not on.

Peter:

That's right. Mine's on, John, no?.

John:

Yeah. No, not you Peter. I mean Peter in [DeSantis 00:26:39].

Peter:

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Okay. Okay. But you're right because got, I got chewed out for not having the camera one.

John:

Yeah. I can see you.

Peter:

Okay. Hi, my smiley face. Well, that was a good question. But that amazed me. I didn't know what to expect. She was so full of energy. I would make more time for her in the classrooms, but what education again with her. That's just a committee and it never ceases to amaze me. The regional water, John, all you guys said, it's amazing company. I love it.

Greg:

In the past. We had a field trip there.

Peter:

I would imagine we're going to do that in the future. Once we start getting back on track. No?

Greg:

Yeah.

Peter:

I thought we're going to have a field trip somewhere in Hamden, aren't we John? Where did we say, we wanted to go to museum?

John:

Yes. One of the points that we did this summer is that we will go back to... We'll go to the campus or the Eli Whitney Museum and the Whitney Water Center and it's all the same place.

Peter:

Okay. That's great. Okay. So Mark Levine, I think left us? I don't think he's got his hands full. Say a prayer for his wife. She's not feeling well. Well, all right. So why I have varied, the agenda here and I want approval for recommendation and the completeness of the disposition of Ive street in Hamden. So can I have a motion for that or do-

Jamie:

I'll make the motion.

Peter:

Okay.

Greg:

Second.

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Peter:

Second. All in favor.

Mark:

Aye.

Jamie:

Aye. I've read through it.

Peter:

Okay. All right.

Speaker 11:

Well that was fast.

Peter:

She's good. But now, because this is my first time as chair going through this. If I missed something, will Jeffrey Donofrio pick up on this or?

Mark:

Somebody will.

Peter:

He will?

Mark:

I said, somebody will.

Peter:

Somebody. Well, I didn't want that to happen. I couldn't even pronounce somebody's name there. So all right. Okay. So we're all set with that, Jennifer then?

Jennifer:

Yes.

Peter:

We'll put that in the-

Jennifer:

Yes. Thank you everybody.

Peter:

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We'll put that in the minutes and we'll present it tomorrow night.

Jennifer:

Yes. You'll have the resolution to read.

Jamie:

Peter. I don't know if this will help you, but John don't you generally, before these come to us to review. Isn't it run through your... Through RWA's council before it gets presented to the RPB.

John:

You mean a disposition applicant?

Jamie:

Yeah. Yeah.

John:

No, it does not go through Martha.

Jamie:

No. Okay.

John:

No. I mean, essentially we use the same template.

Jamie:

Same model.

John:

Especially when we're talking about the former rental houses. We use the same template to go through the disposition process each time.

Jennifer:

Martha receives a copy of it though. I send them a copy.

Jamie:

I know it looks just like the other ones that we've looked at. And for me, look, I don't know all the ins and outs if the [inaudible 00:30:00] feet and the acreage and all of that, all those specifics. But I didn't see anything that jumped out at me as a holding point, Peter, so.

Peter:

Okay. Well look, I guess if there was a mistake to be made, they're going to blame me. So hopefully not. So we'll be fine.



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Greg:

Peter I'm sure. Jeff read it too and he would've said something.

Peter:

Okay. Sorry.

Brian:

Don't worry Peter. Buses [inaudible 00:30:24]. And you've called me to bus [inaudible 00:30:27].

Peter:

All right. No problem. Okay. So we're going to update on land, regional properties. I believe my favorite John [inaudible 00:30:39] are you going to bring us up to speed there?

John:

Yeah. I'm here going to put it up on the screen for everybody too.

Jennifer:

Can you see that.

John:

Yeah. I just got to move my stuff around so I can see it there. It's not your fault. It's mine. Okay. I got it now. Okay. So the update for March. At the end of March, the surface water supplies are at 96%, last year we're at 98. Long-term average is 91, so we're still way ahead. It's been a very dry April so far. We only had really rain on the first and then a little bit on like Monday night I think it was. Monday morning and then that's been about it. So tomorrow we hope to get a drenching. We'll keep the 96 going higher. March was a little about an inch below the long-term average, 3.4, compared to 4.3. And last year we had four inches. The fiscal year today is [3.59 00:31:47] last year, 40.31. And the long-term average, right between that 38.35. The land we need for the water reuse program, we've talked to three property owners in the last month. [inaudible 00:32:02] Killingworth and Madison about the potential acquisition of their properties. And Hamden for the DePodesta property.

John:

The easement that went to the state for the [inaudible 00:32:13] grant was filed on the land records and finally returned. So then we had to update the title policy and send that to deep. So we are all set there. The Hamden [inaudible 00:32:22] property option, we discussed the matter of Larry and prepared a memo and resolution for the [inaudible 00:32:27] authority. The Hamden Skiff street is condemnation. We got a notice from the state that they were going to be condemning part of their... Basically they're drive... I'm sorry, the sidewalk saying... And we were notified because we have some words in the decent language in the deep where we have still some like interest there, you would say. But we don't own the property anymore. There's no feasible land that's going to be going from us in this matter. However, a similar situation at the [Skip 00:33:03] street house that we hope that the town and state will do for that matter, because we do have to have them rectify that.

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John:

So [inaudible 00:33:11] sent to Martha for review, and they're checking to see if there's anything that we need to do for a follow-up. North Branford beach [Stream Pumps Lane, 00:33:19] we discussed the parcels more with an interested party. These are the three parcels that went through the disposition process. It's something on the order of 11 years ago. Rental houses, Ives street and Skip street. We've just talked about the Ives street disposition with [inaudible 00:33:36]. Have now determined that it's a complete and forwarded to the full RPB for tomorrow's meeting. And we hope to have the public hearing scheduled for June at 29 Johnson road in Woodbridge. We contacted the owners and prospective new buyers about the status of the property. Nothing's been done there. So it's just sitting there getting worse really. The forestry update, nothing new has been done in the month of March, but the three little [inaudible 00:34:09] below that. That we did have a brush fire at [Mopey One 00:34:13] across the Lake from the tool house and was extinguished by the local fire department.

John:

Recovered about an acre or so. We assisted... Alex assisted other RWA staff, the pollinator pathway garden at 90 Sergeant drive. A little bit more of an update there. I know they were just out there yesterday with the machine, scratching it up and putting down new top soil so that they can get the right plants in there for this growing season. And Alex supervised the crew that was conducting tree removal at lake Saltonstall water treatment plant. From the recreation side of things. The state moved opening day to March 4th. So it was quite early. Several of our lakes at that time were still frozen. So no fishing really happened or not much fishing really happened in March anyway, but the docks were installed at the end of the month, or by the end of the month. We completed our photo contest with 72 entries, which is quite a bit more than we've had the last few years. Part of that is explained by the huge number of new permittees that we have in the program due to COVID.

John:

One of the three new hires for our recreation staff resigned even before he started, because he found a full-time job. So Jeff has been active trying to get more people in so that we can have full coverage for our [inaudible 00:35:33] program. Wildlife tracking class that was held by the, Brian for Land Trust had 15 participants [inaudible 00:35:39] very well. We also did a knot tying event at lake Saltonstall, 10 people showed up for that. Alex, the Forester, and Will Henley, those all the in lake water quality monitoring. They ran that program. Then I led a hike for the North Branford recreation department at lake Gaillard and we had 15 participants there. Topics were from water splice stuff to birds, to history of the area. We reviewed his bridge designs for the North Branford land trust across the Gaillard spillway channel. This is where we allowed them to have a trail that comes off of the Harrison preserve onto our property that's South and downstream of lake Gaillard.

John:

We received the DPH permit for the new fishing trails that were proposing at lake Chamberlain, that we'll be able land use plan amendment that you'll see later on in the summertime. And we cleared trails at Chamberlain for several down trees that came down from a wind events over the last few months. And Josh was out at lake Saltonstall and cleared, brushed out part of the red trail. That's the one that takes you up to the Ridge. So for the permittees, for the month of March, we were up to 6,336, which is an increase of about 200 over the same time in February at the end of February, which is typical for this time of the year. As we enter the fishing season, we always see a bump up from anglers buying permits.

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And you can see what the effect of COVID has done on the permit numbers, where we are over 2300 higher than we were at this time last year. And remember that March of 2020 is the first month where we saw the beginning of the COVID surge was only like half a month for March of 2020.

John:

In April and especially in May is where we saw the big tidal rise in the permit numbers. Or special activity permits this is what Linda takes care of. So there's several that have been issued in the last month, including a couple to one of our police officers, Celeste who runs a dog search and rescue operation there. That's what you see. So for several of the bullets and... Can you keep going, Jen. Other items, encroachments and agreements and agricultural fields are discussed fields with six potential farmers. Received the certificate of insurance from Potter and executed his agreement for four hayfields in North Guilford. And then we signed an agreement with the Caves they are a couple from North Branford who have a Christmas tree plantation on Mill road. And what we do is we're going to allow them to plant Christmas trees over on the North street side of the lake Lard property, near the tool house. They will not be having customers come to the lake.

John:

What they intend to do is to grow some stock there, cut them and then bring them over to their Mill road site and sell them where they have their own operation. At Bunker Hill road, I emailed Lolly again because he hadn't responded, but at this time I could tell you that we did sign the license agreement. That just went out this week. Towards route one 48, we documented [inaudible 00:38:58] trail. I was actually coming off of state of Connecticut property was not from the private land. But we mailed the [inaudible 00:39:06] whose name is Sweeney to just let him know if he sees anybody trespassing to contact us. Manual Church road, the church has a trail that's coming off of their property, where the parking lot is. I don't know if you're familiar with that Jamie or Joe that's out in your area. But they have a parking lot that's just south of their church on the other side of the Church Brooke. And there's clearly a well-worn trail. People parking in their parking lot and then walking on our property.

John:

So we talked to the church staff about that. And we're going to look at it in the field, where Alex is going to meet with them. Also, [inaudible 00:39:45] 148, this is all Alex doing boundaries out there in [inaudible 00:39:49]. So he documented an encroachment there with brush and debris on KI14 and another one where it was clear that machinery and animals had gone over the property from the [Coker 00:40:00] property. And so we mailed letters to both those entities at 229 forest road, we executed a license agreement with Farucci so that he can keep a shed vehicles and storage trailer over the line. And he had to remove some other things that we would not allow. Like a trampoline was overlying, the zip line too. All that had to be removed. For [inaudible 00:40:22] road field, we denied two request from [Urbano 00:40:25] that's Andrea whose father was the one who rehabilitated the house to use herbicides on the field. So they're just going to go ahead and just mechanically mow down things that they need to take care of in terms of vegetation control.

John:

And we discussed the possibility to amend licensing agreement. They decided, like I said, at this time they decided to keep it for Christmas trees. Morris road field on Woodbridge. We contacted Hubbard who has a license agreement there and told them he had to remove machinery that was in the field and

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piles of leaves that he dumped or had someone dump for him in the field. That is not allowed. Invasive plants this is what Josh Tracy is doing in the last month submitted plan for the next five years for Ted to review, which has been done. He treated and documented [inaudible 00:41:14] plant populations in Branford, Bethany, North Branford, East Haven totaling 60 acres mapped in 49 [inaudible 00:41:21] treated. And then he assisted with some vegetation management at Lake Hudak, which is one of those sediment detention ponds that are on the side of Lake Whitney. The deer hunt in the month, the DPH issued a permit for all areas covering the next 10 years. So we're happy that that's all complete. The Eli Whitney museum as a follow-up from last month's meeting with you.

John:

We discussed with Bill Brown, the license agreement that they have, and we have that affords everyone access to our dam, the museum, the Whitney Water Center, and [East Rock 00:41:54] park. So we're trying to make that more permanent, more proper in that case. Because a license agreement is not the way that that should be handled. So we're going to work on that as we go forward. For [Roaring Brook 00:42:07] road for Bob here, we met with the town and also a couple of neighbors about drainage coming off the road. And it looks like when the town redid the road, they mounded up like a berm on the side of the road, that deflected water to places where it wasn't going before. So Mark [inaudible 00:42:29] is looking at that was the last that I heard. Woodbridge [Causeway 00:42:34]. Road, we were corresponding with Steve Kahn. Who's actually one of our licensed [inaudible 00:42:38] as well. He has a license agreement for part of his driveway, but as you go on Causeway road, and I don't know if Mark's still here or not.

John:

Causeway road is an improved road when it comes off route 63, and then it's just an unimproved road as you follow it to the East and eventually hits Sperry road. And it's just like a cart path, a trail at that point. So he wanted to clear a path for the residents on Causeway to walk over to Sperry road and keep walking the town roads that are not open to [inaudible 00:43:12] access all the time. So we told him as long as he's in the town right away, he's fine. Cell phone towers. We again spoke with Pinsent potential vendor for cell site, Cheshire. Comcast lease and the Burwell tank site. We received a draft amendment from Comcast and have reviewed it. I can say at this point, both I and Jody and Martha have sent our comments to Comcast for them to review. Because they did change the description of what the site can be used for. And we want to make sure that that does not happen. And or if it does, then we are going to ask for more compensation.

John:

Personnel, we screened and interviewed all the applicants for the natural resources analyst position. And we made an offer and that has been accepted. So we look forward to having her join us next week. Yes, next week. So I'll tell you more about that once she starts and we'll have her attend one of our meetings as well. So you can meet her in person. The Birmingham Boulevard gate. So this is the access that we have to the fountain lake tank site. It's a gate that is not near the tank itself. It's just two basically bollards that are across where the road ends as a improved road. And then it's an unimproved road after that and there's a chain across it, and we have a lock on it. There's two, three or four other locks on it and somebody keeps cutting our lock. So we don't know who's doing this. There's definitely other entities that have rights passed it. And we don't know exactly who installed it. So I and Paul have

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been in contact with [inaudible 00:44:48] officials to try to figure out who has rights to it and try to get them whoever...

John:

Figure out who's cutting the lock and have them stop doing that. That would be a great advantage. And just for your advocacy, because I know several of you remember Otto back in the early 2000s, once Otto retired, I believe he retired in 1999. We actually hired him to do a history of the New Haven water company and the regional water authority. And so he made it a large manuscript. We talked to the New Haven museum. Their library there called the Eli Whitney library. And they have a manuscript that has all New Haven water company archives in it. So we asked them if they want to add this to that manuscript archive, they said, "Yes." And we dropped it off for them. And it is a tremendous resource for us where, when we need to look up something really quick, that has to do with something [inaudible 00:45:48] are 110 years ago, it's usually in there. So it's a great thing,

Jennifer:

John, before you move on, is that available electronically? Just if we want to read it?

John:

Yes.

Jennifer:

Where is it? Or could you share it with us?

John:

Yes, I can email to you. Sure.

Greg:

Regarding the lock that keeps getting cut. Can we put a camera up there.

John:

They have but the time. So far, the gate is in an open area. There's no really sneaky way to put a camera up, but they have tried it for at least a week. And for the week that they have the camera up there, it was not cut. So then they took the camera down. So I don't know if they're deployed it or not. The last thing that I heard, which was two or three weeks ago that Paul was going to talk to someone in city hall for [inaudible 00:46:43]. And I don't know if that ever happened or not. So yes, to answer your question, they did put up a camera, but they didn't catch anybody yet.

Greg:

Thank you,.

Jennifer:

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John. Back to my other question Otto's manuscript. Did that predate the book that was published about the history of the water authority, or is it.... Is it before or after, do they overlap in material or are they complimentary?

John:

Are you talking about Claire Bennett?

Jennifer:

Yeah. Yeah.

John:

They're going to overlap. So what Claire gave you, if you've read that, that really concentrates on the period of say 1975 to 1983 or something like that, where it was really that transitioned from the New Haven water company to the regional water authority, the creation of the regional water authority.

Jennifer:

How the legislative history pieces together.

John:

Right.

Jennifer:

Okay.

John:

That was just much more comprehensive. Otto went through like all of the minutes of the board for the New Haven water company back to 1840, 1850. He also went through the minutes of all the little water companies that the New Haven water company bought through the years. Like the fair Haven water company, the West Haven water company, all those Milford, Branford, all that stuff. He went through that as well. So that it really gives as good as timeline as you're going to find for different milestones and activities, projects that happen through the years. Does that answer your question?

Jennifer:

Yeah. It does. It sounds really interesting. It sounds like you're the living version of that though, but thank you. And all the facts.

John:

Yeah. Otto has been very good to me. Otto has been very good to us. So all the stuff. I said many times this is not a business where you can just hire people in and let them take over. We're talking about dealing with agreements that are decades old. We talk about using water mains that are decades or centuries old. Our dams are 100, we have one dam's over 150 years. History is important for all the things that we do because so many of our assets are very old and it's not something like software where, hey, you just want to be on the front of the wave. You don't care how cobalt works or pascal. You want

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to, in this business, you got to know where all the things are, what the benefits and strengths of your assets are so that you don't make mistakes. So the attachments, there's six articles there for [Urien 00:49:23] pleasure. Let you go through those. And for May, what I was considering is that we'll go back out in the field. I hope. And when I was considering this to convene at the Ricky property in Cheshire.

John:

Which is the property that we collectively with the town of Cheshire and the Cheshire land trust, we're able to protect and get a Oslo grant for it. So the town now owns it and they have the grant. They haven't gotten the money yet. And we will get part of the money as well, once it's received. But be good to go out there and see that at least from their parking lot, we won't walk in or anything like that. But we'll meet up at the site of the former house where there's a parking lot. So you can see what it looks like. And we will invite members of the town staff and the land trust who are involved in the acquisition. How's that sound?

Greg:

That's a good idea John.

Mark:

4:30 or is that 5:30?

John:

I don't remember. Jen, do you remember?

Jennifer:

Yeah, one second. Next meeting. 4:30 May 12th.

Mark:

Okay.

Peter:

Very good. Any other questions for John? Great report as usual, John, they keep you hopping. Jen, a silly question about the gate that keeps getting locked. Is that on 313? Where is that?

John:

No, it's on Birmingham Boulevard. So it's not on 313. How do you get there?

Peter:

Isn't there their old facility over there or no?

John:

You know where what's that? Farrell's on that street? We have a pump station that's on the corner. We don't own the land where the pump station is. We only own the building and what, then the stuff in the

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building. But if you follow Birmingham Boulevard, south... Actually, and we just, and Ted can back me up on this, if I'm wrong. I think we just installed, constructed a bulk fill station there... Is that right, Ted?

Ted:

In that area. Yeah.

John:

It's on that road beyond the pump station. You keep following that. And there's a couple of more commercial properties on your right and left. And then the two bollards there with the chain between it is right in front of you. And that's where it changes from asphalt to just gravel.

Peter:

Okay. Gotcha. Thanks.

Mark:

Hey, John that Causeway road.

John:

Yes.

Mark:

All the years, I've been in Port Bridge, I've never gone on that road. Is that open? Did you say the dirt road or it's not open.

John:

Well, once you get past the improved section, on the unimproved section, you just have to walk it, you cannot drive it. Extremely rough. It's only meant for feet at that point, or horses for horses.

Mark:

Okay. I just wonder I'd never seen it.

Peter:

Let's take a ride. Mark.

Mark:

Okay. Okay.

John:

Make sure you're in a vehicle with high clearance. That's what I would say.

Peter:

No. I'm talking to horseback ride.



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John:

Horses. Find the horse of your choice because that part, I believe. Yeah. That's actually part of Causeway road is part of our horse trails at Chamberlain.

Peter:

Nice. Nice. All right.

Mark:

[inaudible 00:52:46] guys. I have to leave because I'm in the middle of getting stuff from my wife. Okay. I'll talk to you later. Thank you for [crosstalk 00:52:53].

Brian:

John, I was looking at the map where Causeway road is. How does that cross over Sergeant river to get to Sperry? Was that, does it connect through before the crossway to Sperry somehow?

John:

Yeah. It's south of the outlet from the Chamberlain. So you do [inaudible 00:53:12], a little stream, but it's not where the Sergeant river is. The Sergeant river's North of where [inaudible 00:53:17] is.

Brian:

So I'm trying on the map here, but I'm looking at... Looking at the wrong thing.

John:

[crosstalk 00:53:29] The outlet of Chamberlain, which is the Sargent river is right by Sperry park.

Brian:

I see. There's two Causeway road. I'm looking at the wrong thing. Yes, I see it now. Yeah. Okay.

Peter:

All [inaudible 00:53:46]?

Brian:

Yeah.

Peter:

Okay. Anything else for John? Thanks so much, John.

John:

Thank you. Other land items, Ted, had anything to add to the meeting today?

Ted:

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No. I think John did an excellent job and Lisa did an excellent job. Very proud of her. She has done a tremendous job. And you guys already noticed that obviously during the pandemic to keep that program growing and has been able to tremendously increase its impact and outreach. It's been fantastic.

Peter:

I agree with you. Thanks, Ted. All right. So we got upcoming meetings, a special meeting next Monday. That's going to be the joint meeting with the... Going over our budget review. And then our next regular meeting is going to be the May 12th. So we're going to try to go outside. Right, John and Jennifer? We're going to schedule that outside?

John:

Yes.

Peter:

Right. Okay. Anything else? Make a motion to adjourn [inaudible 00:54:47]. All in favor. [crosstalk 00:54:50] Thanks so much, everyone. We'll see you tomorrow.