

Conservation Advisory Commission
Minutes of the August 15, 2013 Meeting

Present: Curt Pueschel, Cynthia Stephens-Westerman, Linda Green

Excused: Victor Lamoureux, Steve Appel, Michael Restuccia, Cole Moore, Shep Bennett

Minutes of the May 16 meeting had been approved by e-mail. A tour of Willow Point Park was done in lieu of our regular meeting on June 16. With the prospect of not having a quorum and conditions being unfavorable for a park visit, the July 18th meeting was cancelled.

The next regular meeting of the CAC will be on September 19, 2013.

Dick Pastore has officially resigned his post as an alternate member and is relocating to Florida. The CAC will miss his long experience and deep understanding of the issues we deal with. The terms of Victor, Shep, and Cindy will expire at the end of this year, and the Town would like to have reappointments and new appointments done by October. We should make efforts to seek out new members who could add to our expertise.

The visit to Willow Point Park was discussed. The forested part of the park has informal trails and a diverse tree canopy. It is bisected by a deep gully that empties into a storm drain on Commercial Drive. The mid-summer herbaceous flora is largely non-native, but the park should be revisited in spring to assess the abundance of spring ephemerals.

Curt noted that in a recent visit to Jones Park he observed the foliage of two uncommon plant species: *Platanthera orbiculata*, the round-leaf orchid, and *Botrychium matricariifolium*, a tiny grapefern.

A goal was set to visit the following small neighborhood parks by the end of September: Twin Orchards, Stratford, Richards Avenue, Ethel Place, David Avenue, and Barlow. We will need a map for each park and an efficient route plan that will allow us to visit all six parks in only two trips. Keeping in mind the shorter days and that foliage will begin to fall in another month, Curt will try to find mutually convenient times before our next meeting to complete these surveys.

African Road Park should be revisited now that we have a detailed map of the park boundaries. The same is true of Fuller Hollow Park; we were uncertain of the boundaries and we need to make an visit with a detailed map in hand.

The emerald ash borer problem was discussed. The insect has probably arrived in Vestal, but we will not see the effects for a few seasons. Homeowners will have to decide whether they want to keep their ash trees by spraying to control the beetle or have their ash trees removed. The consequences for most of the parks we have toured so far is not expected to be significant.

The possibility was discussed of disseminating information about tree identification as a public service. Homeowners will be concerned about whether the trees on their property are ashes. One idea was to identify the location of individual ash trees on public property as a basis for comparison. These could be labelled and even posted with identifying features.