

**Connecticut River Valley Council of Elected Officials
Minutes
November 15, 2006**

- I. Chairman Phil Miller called the meeting to order at noon in the new Haddam Fire House after the group enjoyed sandwiches, chips, cookies and beverages provided by selectman Tony Bondi. Chairman Miller called for round table introductions.

II. Guest

Chairman Miller explained his interest in avoiding lawn pesticides. A group of mothers that use the park adjacent to the Essex Town Hall became concerned about the herbicides being used next to the paths. They approached Phil and the Board of Selectman. Their concern, together with the Storm Water Phase II initiative and the mat of algae in South Cove convinced the Board of Selectmen to approach the Park and Recreation Commission. Since then women have approached the schools. Bruce Glowac, who cares for the Region IV property has a history of environmentally conscientious landscape techniques. Through the region, the towns of Essex, Chester and Deep River are cooperating by shredding leaves and sharing the compost.

Chairman Miller introduced Dr. Jerry Silbert, Executive Director of The Watershed Partnership, Inc. Dr. Silbert is a retired pathologist who secured a grant to study the problems produced by lawn pesticides. Children and pregnant women are at the greatest risk from pesticides. There is a silent pandemic of autism, attention deficit, and lower IQs. Decreased sperm counts and generational effects can occur in males.

Initially, feeding lawns with organic products can cost about 30% more than Using chemicals. As the soil improves, costs decrease.

Dr. Silbert noted that the public is beginning to become aware. Public education and a change of attitude take time. At least we can start protecting future generations. All schools should use landscapers with environmental training and attitude.

Tony Bondi mentioned that the new soccer field in Haddam is being cared for organically. It just isn't mentioned.

Guilford Green is managed organically. It is not advertised as such.

Jon Brayshaw announced that the Town of Middlefield has just acquired 45 acres of open space. It passed the required environmental testing but he asked for further tests. It is polluted. He explained that all subdivisions in Connecticut that were built on former farmland have polluted soil. Pesticides are measured in parts per billion.

Tony Bondi mentioned that towns restrict what home owners can do and then spread salt on the road. He has discussed this with DOT and been told that public safety is the first consideration.

Dr. Silbert mentioned that there is a whole list of harmful chemicals that are not Restricted by the EPA. The state reserves the right to make further restrictions. A town does not have that right.

Brad Parker mentioned that East Haddam bans the use of chemical fertilizers in watersheds.

III. Minutes

Tony Bondi moved that the minutes of the October 25 meeting be approved as circulated. The motion was seconded by Brad Parker and unanimously approved.

IV. Business

A. Legislative Report

Chairman Miller went over the list of state senators and representatives for the towns represented by the Council. There are no changes in representation to the state legislature.

On the national level, Chairman Miller noted that Representative Simmons was at that moment conceding the election. He asked that letters be sent both to Rob and to Betty Wagner for the help they gave to the towns and for their cooperation with the Council. The motion to that effect was seconded by Brad Parker and unanimously approved.

V. Old Business

There was no old business.

VI. New Business

A. Chairman Miller announced that the Valley Shore Emergency Management Team will meet at 7PM Wednesday evening in Lyme.

B. Tony Bondi mentioned that he has contacted Troop F and asked for better cooperation during the March of Dimes motorcycle cavalcade. Towns need help. This year there was an accident in Haddam. The motorcyclists would not yield to allow either the fire truck or the ambulance to cross their path. He asked that a joint letter be sent. Phil Miller will write the letter with the cooperation of Tony Bondi.

C. Next meeting

Chairman Miller suggested that the Council cancel the December 27 meeting and resume operations in January. It was agreed by consensus.

D. Members were urged to attend the Connecticut Rural Summit, sponsored by the Connecticut rural Development council and COST at the Crowne Plaza in Cromwell on November 30th.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Wini Olson, Staff