

2021 President's Report

During this calendar year, the Southwinds Association, Inc. board has:

1. Added signage to the trailhead that leads to Birch Mill Pond, floating dock and picnic area at a cost of \$314.29. The sign was developed and installed by One Look Sign Company, Centerbrook. During review of Mares Hill Road/Birch Mill Trail and South Winds entrance signs, it was observed that the three signs were beginning to show deterioration. A quote was received to replace all three signs, including a fourth sign to be added to the Mares Hill Road/Birch Mill Trail entrance at a total cost of \$2,201. Presently the Southwinds entrance has two signs; whereas Mares Hill Road/Birch Mill Trail has one;
2. Approved the use of electric motors on Birch Mill Pond;
3. Been monitoring the monthly meetings of the Inlands, Wetlands and Watercourses Commission. The IWWC, over several months of meetings and deliberation since November, 2020, retained counsel and filed a claim in Superior Court against Terry Lynn McDonald, et. al. homeowner of 32 Birch Mill Trail. The claim alleges violation of state law and local ordinances for building structures on her property, the wetlands and dredging Birch Mill Pond in front of her property without a permit. The structures built also encroached onto open space owned by Southwinds Association, Inc.
4. With the approval of Southwinds Association, Inc. homeowners, retained legal counsel (Mr. Greg Carnese) to respond to the June 30, 2021 written correspondence received from Mr. Peter J. Royer, representing Terry Lynn McDonald. Correspondence indicated that: "If we do not hear from you or Southwinds counsel by the close of business on July 9, 2021, we will proceed with litigation." The lawsuit to be filed in Superior Court, using adverse possession statutes of Connecticut law to claim open space adjacent to her property. The litigation threatened to be filed, named the board and each individual homeowner of Southwinds Association, Inc. as defendants. In a land survey completed in November 2020, which the board obtained, following the June 30, 2021 correspondence, learned that the property approximated $\frac{1}{4}$ acreage of open space.
5. Identified concerns, with the assistance of the Pond and Open Space chairpersons, about sediment build up in each of the two feeder streams flowing into Birch Mill Pond. The board shared the concerns with Mr. Ryan Welch, Director of Public Works. Mr. Welch cleared culverts on Mares Hill Road, Birch Mill Trail and South Winds Drive. Clearing of all culverts will now occur every other year that hopefully will mitigate sediment build up;
6. Retained the services of Mr. Ed Gardiner, arborist, to remove two large trees felled by strong winds this past summer, along Birch Mill Trail that presented safety concerns for Southwinds Association, Inc. homeowners, their families and guests; and

7. Met with representatives of the Essex, Land Trust to make recommendations to the board and Mr. Peter Bonanno, Chairman of the Open Space Committee, on how best to maintain, conserve and protect Southwinds Association, Inc. open space.