

Harwinton Land Conservation Trust, Inc.
Annual Meeting
Harwinton Public Library
May 4, 2023

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chairman of the Board Steve Craig at 7:05 PM.

Attendees

Officers

Karen Kelleher	President
Rob Lesniewski	Vice-President
Scott Ragaglia	Treasurer
Karen Burnett	Secretary

Board of Directors

Steve Craig (Chair)	Eric Rahn (Vice Chair)	Martin Brayboy
Larry Connors	Celeste Echelin	Mary Magnoli
Howard Rood		

General Membership & Guests

17 people

Introductions

Officers and members of the board were introduced.

Review of 2021 membership and financials

Treasurer Scott Ragaglia said that we had 191 donors in the past year with donations totaling about \$14,300. In addition \$1,010 was donated for land acquisition, \$400 in memoriam and \$200 in employee matches for a grand total of \$15,891. Last year we did two mailings and people were very kind in responding with donations. We are always looking for land to add to what we preserve and he asked that we be contacted if something becomes available.

Review of accomplishments in 2022 and plans for 2023

Karen Kelleher said that we have 6 properties and one easement. Last year at Indian Meadow we added a pollinator garden to the meadow with the help of the Harwinton Garden Club. They provided planning expertise and gardening labor to start the garden. We built a water collecting and retention system for the garden. On November 6th we planted five chestnut trees which you will learn more about in tonight's program. The Wilderness School came and mulched the garden. At Forever Forest we built two more bridges. The trail now has three bridges connecting the main area and small island. Once again the Wilderness School helped. At Bull Pond crushed stone was added to the trail. At Etter Marsh, which has no trails, work was done to clear trash along the road.

Nominations to the board of directors 2023 – 2024

We have two board members who are not returning.

Steve Craig presented the proposed slate for the board of directors:

Martin Brayboy	Steve Craig	Celeste Echelin
Mary Magnoli	Eric Rahn	Howard Rood

The floor was opened for nominations. There were none.

This slate was approved.

Questions from membership

There were no questions.

Program: Restoration of the American Chestnut

Our speaker for the evening was Jack Swatt. He is a long time member of the American Chestnut Foundation and is currently president of the Connecticut chapter of the foundation. He is also active with DEEP in Connecticut, Audubon and the New Hampshire equivalent of DEEP among other things. Jack spoke about chestnut tree history, current status and looking toward the future. The American Chestnut Foundation was formed 40 years ago. Chestnut trees were very important to the economy and to wildlife. They were tall, straight and rot resistant. Good for building things and the nuts were nutritious for people, pigs and wildlife. Up to one quarter of all forest trees were chestnuts until the chestnut blight arrived on our shores. It was first spotted in New York City in 1904. Right now most states east of the Mississippi have the blight. There are some western states that still have chestnuts. The blight kills the stem of the tree but not the roots so the trees are functionally extinct. After the main trunk dies the roots send up shoots but they become blighted before they can mature. Asian chestnuts are blight resistant but they are a shrubbier tree. In the 1930's hybrids were created to try to create a blight resistant American chestnut. Research continues into back crossing hybrid chestnuts, developing a virus to kill the blight fungus and genetic modification. Trees are being selectively experimentally planted to track their progress but it will be 10 to 15 years before they expect to successfully reintroduce American chestnuts.

Door prizes

Larry Connors is a woodworker who created several things to be used as raffle items. Some were made from a cherry tree that fell on one of our properties. Others were made from chestnut. There were a candle holder, two cutting boards and two bud vases. These were given to lucky winners.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:20 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Burnett, Secretary