

CITY OF TORRINGTON

PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT – 153 S. MAIN ST, TORRINGTON CT
LAND USE DEPARTMENT – 140 MAIN STREET, TORRINGTON CT

To: Neighbors of Charlene Susan Besse Park
From: Rista Malanca, Certified Zoning and Inland/Wetlands Officer & Brett Simmons, Superintendent of Parks and Recreation
RE: Forest Management Plan for Charlene Susan Besse Park
Date: March 17, 2017

Dear Neighbors of Charlene Susan Besse Park,

The City of Torrington is working on a Forest Management Plan for Charlene Susan Besse Park and would like to invite you to an informational meeting on April 4, 2017 at 6:00 PM at Coe Memorial Park Civic Center.

Charlene Susan Besse Park was donated to the City in 1947 for recreational purposes. This park is approximately 110 acres, most of which is wooded. The lower portion, also known as Major Besse Park is actively used and features a playground, baseball field, pavilion, parking, and in the winter months is a popular destination for sledding and ice skating. The upper portion of the park, commonly referred to as Charlene Susan Besse Park, features an extensive trail network for hiking. Over the years the condition of the access road to the upper portion of the park has received significant damage due to drainage which the City has been unable to repair due to limited funding. For many years, parking has been limited to the base of the access road off Riverside Ave. Due to limited access to the park, the trail network has seen a huge decline in users and many trails are now overgrown and unpassable. In addition, some the hemlock show early stages of Woolly Adelgid which has the potential to be devastating to this forest if ignored.

In order to breathe life back into this portion of the Park the City of Torrington hired Andrew Bosse, a certified forester to create a long term Forest Management Plan, which was funded through DEEP America the Beautiful Grants the City received in 2015 and 2016. The Forest Management Plan, will do just that ... provide a long term plan on how to manage this forest, including identifying the forest health, identifying existing and future forest types, creating and/or protecting wildlife habitat, preventing the growth of invasive plants and complement the recreational plan by redeveloping hiking trails and improved access to the Park. Currently, the draft Forest Management Plan recommends in some areas of the Park that a timber harvest be done to create a healthier forest. By completing a timber harvest, the City will also generate a source of income, with the funds being earmarked specifically for improvements (yet to be determined) within the Park, in order to provide additional recreational opportunities within the Park.

Phase one of this project was to create a draft Forest Management Plan, which Mr. Bosse has completed using his professional knowledge along with information gathered in the field.

Phase two of this project is for the City to adopt and begin implementation of the Plan. Before the Plan is adopted, we want to ensure that it is consistent with other City plans or goals. We have met with several City Commissions & Boards to review this plan and to gather feedback to incorporate into the plan. Our next step is to meet with the public, in particular with those residents that live in close

proximity to Charlene Susan Besse Park to explain the Forest Management Plan and to allow time for feedback, comments, and questions.

Below is a link to the Draft Forest Management Plan. Mr. Bosse has done his best to make the Forest Management Plan understandable to a lay person; however, there is some technical language that may require some additional explanation. I have included a link to the USDA Northeastern Forest Regeneration Handbook as a reference for you. Mr. Bosse will also be able to explain any technical portions of this plan and why certain techniques were chosen over others.

Links below are available on the Torrington Parks and Recreation Department Website – located at www.torringtonct.org – Link to Parks and Recreation – Parks Department.

Link – Charlene Susan Besse Park Forest Management Plan – DRAFT:

http://www.torringtonct.org/Public_Documents/TorringtonCT_Parks/Charlene%20Susan%20Besse%20Park/Besse%20Park%20Forest%20Management%20Plan%20-%20updated%203-16-17.pdf

Link – USDA Northeastern Forest Regeneration Handbook:

http://www.torringtonct.org/Public_Documents/TorringtonCT_Parks/Charlene%20Susan%20Besse%20Park/USDA%20Northeastern%20Forest%20Regeneration%20Handbook.pdf

We hope you can join us at our meeting on April 4th. Please feel free to contact either Rista Malanca at 860-489-2221 or Rista_Malanca@torringtonct.org or Brett Simmons at 860-489-2385 or Brett_Simmons@torringtonct.org if you have any comments or questions.

Sincerely,

Rista Malanca, Certified Zoning and Inland/Wetlands Officer
Brett Simmons, Superintendent of Parks and Recreation