

## CONSERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES

### Regular Meeting

April 13, 2021 at 7:00 pm

#### Zoom Information

<https://zoom.us/j/99978031433>

Meeting ID: 999 7803 1433

Call-in: 1-929-205-6099

**These minutes are subject to approval by the Conservation Commission**

Present: Holly Kocet, Mark Lurie, Michael Ablondi, John Dixon

Staff: Dawn Fried, Clerk

Ms. Kocet opened the meeting at 7:04 p.m.

#### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Dixon moved to approve the minutes of March 23, 2021. Mr. Ablondi seconded. All in favor. The minutes from March 23, 2021 were approved.

#### DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS

**Native Plant Policy** – Ms. Kocet reiterated the purpose of the native plant policy, which is to strongly encourage municipal workers, landscape architects and developers to use native plants when creating landscapes. Ms. Kocet listed different towns and counties who have already passed or are in the process of passing native plant ordinances and policies, one being Monroe. Each town supports and values native plants and these policies will be helpful in creating Newtown's plant policy. Ms. Kocet noted that Newtown's Plan for Conservation and Development also supports the town's position for the value of native plants.

Mr. Dixon questioned whether there were any negatives or a downside. Ms. Kocet stated town properties are overrun with exotic species from other countries. These species have no benefit to the wildlife or environment.

Mr. Ablondi questioned how the ordinance would be enforced. Ms. Kocet stated that Mr. Sibley has access to the developers' site plans and is currently monitoring the plantings. Ms. Kocet noted that once the plant policy has been approved as an ordinance, it can be enforced.

The Commission noted they can make recommendations to homeowners to use native plants but the Commission does not have the authority to enforce.

Mr. Lurie moved "to work towards a native plant policy ordinance that would require municipal workers, landscape architects and commercial developers to use 70% native plants in their landscapes". Mr. Ablondi seconded. All in favor.

**High Meadow Vegetation Survey** – Ms. Kocet reviewed the recent quote from Bryan Connolly for the vegetation re-survey of the High Meadow test site. The quote is for \$2,000 and will be completed in September 2021 or earlier. The Commission was looking forward to comparing the two studies and learning about Mr. Connolly's new findings.

Mr. Dixon moved "to accept the quote of \$2,000 for the Vegetation re-survey of High Meadow". Mr. Ablondi seconded. All in favor.

**In-Person Meetings** – The Commission had a discussion regarding in-person meetings rather than meetings via Zoom. The Commission agreed it would be nice to meet in person again and they will plan to meet in either June or July at the Municipal center. One consideration was to meet in the Council Chambers, if available, for more space. Ms. Kocet will reach out to the other Commissioners for their opinions. A decision will be made at a later date.

#### ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Dixon moved to adjourn the CC meeting. Mr. Ablondi seconded. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 7:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted, Dawn Fried