

CONSERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES

Regular Meeting

June 22, 2021 at 7:00 pm

Newtown Community Center, the Meeting Room
8 Simpson Street, Newtown, CT 06470

These minutes are subject to approval by the Conservation Commission

Present: Holly Kocet, Michael Ablondi, John Dixon, Mark Boland, John Fung

Staff: Rob Sibley, Deputy Director of Land Use, Dawn Fried, Clerk

Public: Mr. and Mrs. Dievert

Ms. Kocet opened the meeting at 7:02 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Dixon moved to approve the minutes of May 25, 2021. Mr. Ablondi seconded. All in favor. The minutes from May 25, 2021 were approved.

DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS

Open Space – 12 Turkey Roost Road

The Dievert's, 12 Turkey Roost Road, spoke to the Commission regarding the clearcutting of trees on the open space parcel adjacent to their property. The clear cutting was the result of a developer planning for parking spaces for a conservation easement. The parking spaces never came to fruition and at this time the area is a cleared parcel of land. The Dievert's explained that they no longer have a privacy buffer and wanted to discuss planting trees and vegetation, and building a fence in the open space area.

The Commission had a discussion on various buffer options. Hemlocks and white pines were suggested as border trees.

A trail on the open space was recently approved by the Conservation Commission. Mr. Sibley suggested coordinating the approved trail with the Dievert's project to benefit all. Mr. Sibley stated this would be an opportunity to plant native trees and bushes, create an accessway to the trail from the road, and serve as a buffer for the Dievert's. Mr. Dievert stated that "benefitting others sounded great".

The Commission discussed 2 parking spaces with a split rail fence and a pollinating area with bushes.

Mr. Sibley stated funds are available.

Mr. Sibley asked the Dievert's to:

- Choose trees and plants
- Plot on a map
- Coordinate with neighbor
- Send to Rob for review
- Attend next Conservation Commission for approval

Native Plant Policy Regulations

Mr. Sibley explained the different procedures between adopting a town ordinance and changing a zoning regulation. A town ordinance for a municipal project is brought before the Board of Selectmen and a change to the zoning regulations is brought before the Planning and Zoning Commission. Mr. Sibley drafted up a definition for "Native Plant" to be added to "Article I – General, Section 2 - Interpretations and Definitions" of the Newtown Zoning Regulations. Mr. Sibley asked the Conservation Commission to review the definition and to craft new text for the native plant policy. The text amendments would only apply to new developments. The Commission had a discussion on the wording of the text amendments to be presented to the P&Z Commission.

MISCELLANEOUS

The Commission discussed a letter written by 9-year old Clare Danner, submitted to the Land Use Agency, regarding storm drain grates that were blocked by leaves and twigs. Ms. Danner offered to help clean the grates. Mr. Sibley stated it came from an environmental point of view and he will contact Ms. Danner's mother.

The Commission discussed the policy of not using motorized tools on open space parcels. The Commission agreed in some cases chain saws are needed. They discussed a "release of liability" document that homeowners would have to sign.

Mr. Sibley stated that Eagle Scouts will be proposing their projects in the near future. One project is to build a bridge over Meeker Brook behind the animal control facility. The other project will be updating the town open space kiosks with QR codes and informational templates that can be used uniformly throughout the town and will be linked to the Conservation website.

Mr. Sibley informed the Commission on the Hook & Ladder rescue training classes that will be held on Pole Bridge Preserve on July 7 and July 8. The classes will be focused on low angle rope training.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Dixon moved to adjourn the CC meeting. Mr. Ablondi seconded. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 7:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted, Dawn Fried