

CONSERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES

Regular Meeting

July 26, 2022 at 7:00 pm

Meeting Room 3, Municipal Center, 3 Primrose Street, Newtown, CT

These minutes are subject to approval by the Conservation Commission

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

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

Ms. Kocet opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Fung moved to approve the minutes of April 12, 2022. Mr. Ablondi seconded. All in favor. The minutes from April 12, 2022 were approved.

DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS

High Meadow Study Report

Ms. Kocet would like to meet with Mr. Sibley regarding the finalization of the High Meadow study letter to the Board of Selectman.

Ms. Kocet stated that Parks and Rec will mow the 5-acre test site this fall and will mow the remaining 6 acres in the fall of 2023.

Earth Day Recap

Ms. Kocet appreciated the Commissioners helping out on Earth Day. They all agreed it was a success. Mr. Boland's trail mix was a big hit. One suggestion for next year was better signage at the table.

Educating the Public on Invasives

The Commission had a discussion on various ways to inform the public on how to remove invasives. Mr. Sibley suggested placing QR Codes in accessible areas around town. Linking to a QR Code is a great way for the public to access the Conservation website. The Commission agreed it's easy and cost effective. Mr. Fung offered to copy the QR Codes on vinyl stickers. The stickers will adhere to the kiosk windows located on the open space parcels. The QR Codes will also help the public identify the invasives. The Commission suggested identifying 5 or 6 of the most common invasives like bittersweet, multiflora rose and autumn olive.

The Commission would like the invasives on High Meadow removed at least once a year. Ideally, the Commission would like to hire a landscaper or ask a volunteer group like the Scouts. Mr. Sibley stated years ago different sections of the Town had maintenance plans in place for invasives removal.

Miscellaneous

Mr. Sibley spoke about the Department of Fish and Wildlife's (DFW) grant that was awarded to Al's Trail. Mr. Sibley explained that Al's Trail is the longest trail system in town. The grant will help make improvements along the trail. The Bike and Trail's Committee also received a grant.

They created a Committee and are looking for input from other Commissions regarding goals and improvements. The Conservation Commission was very interested in learning more. Mr. Sibley will forward any information he receives including the next time the group meets.

Status of Open Space

Mr. Sibley reviewed the status of two open space properties.

- Riverside/Timber Trail – Is currently in front of the property owner.
- Keeler Property on Glen Road – Fell through

Mr. Sibley stated there are more open space parcels coming to the Commission in the near future.

The Commission discussed the encroachment of private citizens on Town open space. Mr. Sibley explained the GPS monitoring system will be able to delineate the property lines. Mr. Sibley also pointed out that CT's tree coverage is dense and cutting trees on private property is allowed.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Respectfully submitted, Dawn Fried