

CONSERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES

Regular Meeting

October 25, 2022 at 5:30 pm

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

These minutes are subject to approval by the Conservation Commission

Present: Holly Kocet, Will Drew, John Dixon, Mark Lurie, Mark Boland

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

Ms. Kocet opened the meeting at 7:05 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Dixon moved to approve the minutes of September 27, 2022. Mr. Lurie seconded. All in favor. The minutes from September 27, 2022 were approved.

OTHER COMMISSION REPORTS

Mr. Sibley informed the Commission that "Streetplans" is giving a presentation on Monday, November 7th at 5:30 pm in the Council Chambers regarding the Housatonic Trail Extension.

DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS

High Meadow Study Report

Ms. Kocet stated the High Meadow study "is a go". The Board of Selectman has approved the study but has not determined which Town account will be used.

Educating the Public on Invasives

Ms. Kocet stated she visited the library to better understand how to create QR codes.

Ms. Kocet stated it was easy. Mr. Fung is spearheading the project but was not in attendance at the meeting. Ms. Kocet stated the Commission will wait for an update from Mr. Fung.

FACEBOOK

Ms. Kocet ask the Commissioners if anyone was interested in setting up a Facebook account. Mr. Lurie volunteered. The Commission agreed it would be a great platform to communicate with the public. Facebook could give updates of the Commission, post events, and give a link to the Conservation website.

Forestry Presentation

Mr. Sibley spoke about a presentation he recently attended given by CT DEEP Divisions of Forestry and Wildlife. The presentation was located on the lower Paugussett State Forest. The guided walk, which was well attended, took place in an area that will be used for an upcoming selection harvest. Mr. Sibley explained the harvest will be similar to the Stone Bridge forestry project done by the Conservation Commission in 2015. The purpose of the harvest will be to expand habitat for New England Cottontail, create un-even aged forest conditions, cut down diseased trees and take care of eroding areas. Mr. Sibley stated CT DEEP was impressed with the Conservation Commission's Stone Bridge project and would like the CC to do another forestry project in Newtown.

Mr. Boland showed recent pictures of Stonebridge. The brush is dense and there are healthy populations of birds and wildlife. The Commission agreed the area is very nice and the Stonebridge forestry project was successful.

Pootatuck Watershed Association (PWA)

Mr. Sibley is on the PWA board as the Town representative. The PWA asked Mr. Sibley to reach out to the Conservation Commission. The PWA would like to work together with other commissions and non-profits to focus on better protecting the watershed and aquifer. The PWA is actively looking for members and is publically releasing its watershed plan in March/April of next year. The PWA would like a strong membership to help create educational programs to protect the Pootatuck watershed, implement smart development, and utilize volunteer groups. Mr. Sibley stated the PWA has a website for more information. Ms. Kocet stated she has spoken to Randy, the Chair of PWA. They have spoken about how different organizations can work together.

The Use of Goats for Invasive Removal

Mr. Boland passed out an article regarding the use of goats for invasive removal. The Commission had a lengthy discussion on the benefits of using goats and different plans on how to house them and afford them. Mr. Boland would like the Commission to research information and come up with different ideas. One suggestion was to ask the Catherine Violet Hubbard Sanctuary if they would house rescue goats and work together with the Town when the goats are needed. The funding for the goats can possibly come from grants or town funds. The goats can potentially save the town money.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. Lurie moved to begin the Executive Session at 7:37 pm to discuss the possible donation and acquisition of land. Mr. Sibley was invited. Mr. Drew seconded. All in favor.

Executive Session ended at 7:49 pm.

Ms. Kocet moved to accept the Open Space properties: OS #22-01, OS #22-02 and OS #22-03. Mr. Dixon seconded. All in favor.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Boland moved to adjourn the CC meeting. Mr. Drew seconded. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 7:52 pm.

Respectfully submitted, Dawn Fried