

CONSERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES

Regular Meeting

January 10, 2023 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, Mark Lurie

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

Also in Attendance: Charles Zukowski, 4 Cornfield Ridge Road

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

DEPUTY DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Sibley gave a brief overview of 2022. Throughout the year the Commission looked at several open space offerings and donations. Mr. Sibley noted two open space parcels that will be "going in front of" the P&Z Commission and the Board of Selectmen (BOS) within the next month or so. Mr. Sibley invited the Commissioners to attend the BOS meeting in support of the parcels and to answer any questions the BOS has regarding the acquisitions.

Mr. Sibley has requested an increase in funding for the care and custody of open space properties. Mr. Sibley would like the Commission to become more involved with town open space by taking site walks and reporting on existing properties. Mr. Sibley would like to offer his assistance and answer any questions the Commission has on the properties. Mr. Sibley stated in 2023 his staff responsibilities will be focused on town open space. Ms. Kocet agreed the Commission needs to visit the open space parcels more often.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Boland moved to approve the minutes of November 8, 2022. Mr. Ablondi seconded. All in favor. The minutes from November 8, 2022 were approved. Mr. Boland and Mr. Ablondi abstained.

DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS

Review of 2022

- The CC Table on Earth Day was a success. Positive day. Great presentation on invasives.
- Worked on improving Fairfield Hills Campus by removing invasives.
- Acquired open space parcels.
- Native Plant Policy was approved. Other towns have applauded and inquired.

Goals of 2023

- Earth Day is on Saturday, April 22nd
- Potential timber harvest
- Potential habitat improvement project. (Similar to the rabbit at Stonebridge). Possible conflicts would be neighbors' responses and maintenance of invasives.

Educating the Public on Invasives - The conversation will be continued at a later date.

The Use of Goats for Invasive Removal - Mr. Boland stated he has been in contact with UConn regarding the use of goats for invasive removal. Mr. Boland would like UConn to assist in developing a plan. Mr. Boland stated there might be a small stipend for an intern. He is waiting to hear back.

Ms. Kocet stated the Legislative Council was considering repealing the "Reusable Checkout Bag Initiative". Ms. Kocet doesn't agree with this and doesn't understand why it's being repealed.

CC Calendar for 2023 – The Commission approved the CC Schedule of Meetings for 2023. Mr. Lurie so moved. Mr. Ablondi seconded. All in favor.

Slate of Officers – Mr. Boland moved to nominate Ms. Kocet as Chairperson of the Conservation Commission. Mr. Lurie seconded. All in favor.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Lurie moved to adjourn the CC meeting. Mr. Ablondi seconded. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 7:26 pm.

Respectfully submitted, Dawn Fried