

CONSERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES
Regular Meeting of August 14, 2017 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, Cindy Joyce, Chris Smith, Mark Boland, Jim Ryan, Tom Philbrick

Absent: Karlyn Sturmer

Staff: Dawn Fried, Clerk

Mr. Ryan opened the meeting at 7:02 pm.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES for July 25, 2017

Under "Board of Finance" change "Brian Connelly" to "Bryan Connolly". Mr. Smith moved to approve the amended minutes from July 25, 2017. Ms. Kocet seconded. Mr. Ryan and Mr. Philbrick abstained. All else in favor. The minutes from July 25, 2017 were approved.

CORRESPONDENCE

Mr. Ryan read a letter regarding a Conservation Easement at 160 Taunton Road. The letter informed the Commission that they will be applying for an Inland Wetland permit for maintenance on the pond, which is allowed in the easement. The Commission was concerned with the possible removal of native plants. Mr. Philbrick will stay informed on the subject and will report back to the CC.

DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS

Site Visit to 6 Meadow Brook Road

Mr. Ryan left a message and is waiting to hear back to schedule a site visit.

COMMISSION PRIORITIES

Web Page

Ms. Joyce gave the Commission an update. Keith, the web page designer, is trying to standardize the format for the open space properties. Ms. Joyce sent out an email asking for the Commission's feedback on the layout and text before the next meeting. Mr. Ryan will get back to Ms. Joyce regarding the maps.

Stone Bridge

Mr. Ryan read a letter from Jeremy Clark, Clark Forestry Services, commending the Conservation Commission "for implementing science-based, active forest and habitat management on municipal open space lands...".

Mr. Smith is coordinating a ribbon cutting ceremony for the Stone Bridge project. He has contacted a Boy Scout group, Lisa Wahle of DEEP and Jeremy Clark. Mr. Smith is waiting to hear back from Iroquois to set the date. At this time the two possible dates are Sept 1 and Sept 8. After the date is confirmed Mr. Smith will reach out to the community. The Commission discussed the driveway improvements and the best location for the ceremony. The Commission would like to invite First Selectman Llodra to the property before the ribbon cutting ceremony.

Town Owned Open Space

The Commission reviewed the rating sheets labeled “Criteria for Setting Open Space Protection of Properties” for 78 Mountain View Road and 125 Great Quarter Road. They discussed the site visits and pointed out that both parcels could have potential connectivity to other open space parcels. After a lengthy discussion they agreed there are benefits to both open space parcels.

Ms. Joyce moved to recommend accepting the open space parcel at 125 Great Quarter Road.
Ms. Kocet seconded. All in favor.

Mr. Philbrick moved to recommend accepting the open space parcel at 78 Mountain View Road.
Mr. Smith seconded. All in favor.

High Meadow Update

Ms. Kocet updated the Commission on the High Meadow Study. Carl, from Parks and Rec, will mow on Oct 2nd and the 300 plugs will be planted on Oct 9th or Oct 10th. Ms. Kocet stated that approx. 30 Master Gardeners will volunteer their time to plant the plugs. The Commission stated that they haven’t seen many wildflowers yet. Mr. Philbrick stated “this is a process not an event”.

Mr. Philbrick stated that Bryan Connolly has been laying out the transects and will set up the stakes on Wednesday. Mr. Philbrick suggested making the metal posts more visible with markings or signs to prevent children from running in to them.

Native Plant Policy

Mr. Ryan will create a cover letter for the invasive plant ban to be submitted to the Board of Selectman for review.

Drone Discussion

The Commission is aware that other municipal groups are discussing the usage of drones in the town. They will keep a close eye on the discussions and review their future role. The Commission suggested making signs to ban drones in the High Meadow.

AI’s Trail

The Commission reviewed Rob Sibley’s presentation from the last CC meeting. They would like to continue the conversation of their role in maintaining and overseeing AI’s Trail. A suggestion was for the CC to be the catalyst and bring groups together. The Commission would like to receive more information from Mr. Sibley regarding the property owners and easements. The CC would like to keep this topic under Commission Priorities.

Kiosks

The Commission discussed how to create a standardized format for all of the town kiosks. They are going to take pictures of the kiosks and compare them to each other. They suggested assigning one kiosk per Commissioner. The Commissioners noted that the Stone Bridge kiosk has graffiti. Mr. Ryan will sand it down.

MISCELLANEOUS

Mountain Bike Trails

Mr. Smith stated that the Pole Bridge area seems to be very attractive for mountain biking trails. Mr. Smith would like to invite a mountain biking group to give a presentation of the Pole Bridge area to the CC. He asked the Commission what topics should be covered. Mr. Ryan responded that environmental conditions would be an important topic to discuss. Also, Ms. Kocet was concerned with a vernal pool in the Pole Bridge area. Other topics would be parking and possible environmental damage. Mr. Ryan stated that mountain biking trails would be something worth looking in to.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Smith moved to adjourn the CC meeting. Ms. Kocet seconded. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 8:05 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Dawn Fried, Clerk