

CONSERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES
Regular Meeting of March 13, 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: Jim Ryan, Cindy Joyce, Karlyn Sturmer, Holly Kocet, Mark Boland, Tom Philbrick, Chris Smith

Also Present: Scott and Sharon Poarch, 9 Forest View Drive, James Beaty, 12 Nighthawk Lane, Frank Rohrbacher, 8 Nighthawk Lane, Chris Yeaton, 6 Nighthawk Lane, Terry Samuelson, 5 Forest View Drive

Staff: Robert Sibley, Deputy Director of Planning & Land Use, Dawn Fried, Clerk

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES for February 28, 2017

Mr. Philbrick moved to approve the minutes from February 28, 2017. Ms. Joyce seconded. All in favor. Mr. Smith abstained. The minutes from February 28, 2017 were approved.

CORRESPONDENCE

Follow-up to Eagle Scout Project - Mr. Ryan called Mr. Robert Lombardo regarding his Eagle Scout project but did not reach him. Mr. Ryan will reach out again and invite Mr. Lombardo to the next CC meeting on March 28, 2017

Follow-up to 6 Meadow Brook Road - Mr. Ryan and Ms. Kocet walked Ms. Genua's property located at 6 Meadow Brook Road. In order to better assess the property Mr. Ryan requested Ms. Genua to have the property surveyed and staked out. The CC agreed to continue the discussion after the land is surveyed.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The abutters and neighbors of the Stone Bridge property, Scott and Sharon Poarch, James Beaty, Frank Rohrbacher, Chris Yeaton and Terry Samuelson discussed their strong opposition to the Stone Bridge Forest Management Plan. Mr. Beaty stated that the change of the landscape will change the value of the homes. The group was concerned that children would not be able to play in the forest, the trees left standing were being damaged by the forester, the views from their homes would be affected, there would be loss of forest access, and the project is disruptive to their properties. The group also questioned the accuracy of the markings and felt the project was going beyond the contracted areas.

The Commission discussed the benefits of the forestry management plan. Ms. Sturmer stated that the forest is not healthy and does not have an understory. She explained that thinning the forest will open up the canopy and allow for a young forest to grow. Ms. Sturmer would like to work within the contract but also minimize the impact to the neighbors. The Commission assured the group that their concerns "have not fallen on deaf ears" and that they appreciated their feedback. The Commission needs to act quickly while the weather conditions are still optimal. The Commission discussed not cutting the 30% area which would leave a larger buffer and they also considered adjusting the cutting in the southwest corner. The CC will speak with Jeremy Clark. They will assess the situation, take the neighbors' concerns into consideration and make a determination.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Web Page – Ms. Joyce distributed an estimate from SandorMax, a website design company. The Commission thought the estimate was too high. Ms. Joyce will call SandorMax and discuss other options. Mr. Sibley stated that the Town Hall's IT Dept. was making changes in the GIS system and perhaps the CC could benefit from that. Also, Mr. Ryan mentioned that his co-worker might be able to help out with the website.

High Meadow – Mr. Ryan met with First Selectman, Pat Llodra last Friday. They reviewed the High Meadow Management Plan. They discussed Sites A and B as well as the funding for the plan. Mr. Ryan was hopeful that First Selectman Llodra will endorse the proposal. The High Meadow Management Plan will be on the agenda for the Board of Selectmen's meeting on March 20, 2017. After BOS has endorsed the plan it must be presented to Parks and Rec, Fairfield Hills Authority and Dept. of Public Works.

Earth Day April 22, 2107 – The Commission discussed their presentation at Earth Day. Mr. Smith went over the needs for setting up; tables, tent, maps, brochures, boards, etc... He hopes to be all set by March 28th. That will leave enough time to make changes and obtain materials.

MISC

Mr. Boland has offered to keep track of the budget for the Commission. That would entail spending, grants, and funds.

Adjournment

Ms. Sturmer moved to adjourn the CC meeting. Mr. Philbrick seconded. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Dawn Fried, Clerk