

**CONSERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES**  
**Regular Meeting of June 27, 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, Tom Philbrick, Cindy Joyce, Chris Smith, Mark Boland, Karlyn Sturmer

**Absent:** Jim Ryan

**Staff:** Dawn Fried, Clerk

Ms. Kocet opened the meeting at 7:04 pm.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES for June 12, 2017**

Under "Correspondence" change "Newtown municipal pollinator habitat site" to "High Meadow at Fairfield Hills". Change "adjournment" to "adjournment". Mr. Philbrick moved to approve the amended minutes from June 12, 2017. Ms. Sturmer seconded. All in favor. The minutes from June 12, 2017 were approved.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

The Commission reviewed the final invoice submitted by Jeremy Clark, Clark Forestry Services, for the close-out of the Stonebridge project. The invoice detailed the monitoring of site visits, seed mixture, contract revisions and harvest area markings from January 2017 to May 2017.

Mr. Boland, Mr. Ryan and Ms. Joyce met with Jeremy Clark for a site walk at Stone Bridge last Sunday. During the site walk Mr. Clark recommended projects that would benefit the Stone Bridge site such as installing temporary fencing to protect certain areas, taking a census of the plants and keeping the gravel on the landing area. Mr. Clark was pleased with the progress of the new growth and noted the new shoots. Mr. Boland will recap the visit to the Stone Bridge site and will send out to the Commission.

Mr. Philbrick moved to approve the Clark Forestry Services invoice for \$3,476. Mr. Smith seconded. All in favor.

**DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS**

**P&Z Application 17.04 Turkey Ridge 11-lot Subdivision**

The Commission discussed different dates and times to schedule a site walk of the property. They will split up and go at separate times. The first group will meet Wednesday at 7:00 pm and the second group will meet on Saturday.

**Site Visit to 6 Meadow Brook Road**

Mr. Ryan and Ms. Kocet will revisit the property.

## **COMMISSION PRIORITIES**

### **Web Page**

The website is underway. The Commission is hoping to see material on the website within the next two weeks.

### **High Meadow Update**

- The wildflower meadow was seeded on June 15, 2017 and the oat grass is coming up.
- The next mowing will be done in the fall.
- Plugs will be purchased. The approved amount is \$700. Volunteers will be planting the plugs by hands. Estimated time of planting is August.

The Commission spoke about the vegetation study at High Meadow. The Commission was unsure at this time if Mr. Ryan had reached out to Bryan Connolly to discuss the study. Mr. Philbrick will call Mr. Ryan to follow up. Mr. Connolly would like to start the project in August.

Ms. Sturmer made a motion that Mr. Philbrick coordinates the vegetation study with Bryan Connolly. Mr. Philbrick seconded. All in favor.

### **Stonebridge Project**

Ms. Sturmer would like the Stonebridge Project added back on to the agenda under "Commission Priorities". The Commission agreed it will be an ongoing process and the educational component still needs to be addressed. It was also suggested that the abutters could possibly assist with monitoring the property and could send the Commission monthly emails. Mr. Boland will reach out to James Beaty at 12 Nighthawk Lane for his feedback.

### **Native Plant Policy**

Ms. Sturmer and Ms. Kocet presented the Native Plant Policy at the Board of Selectmen meeting on June 20, 2017. The following questions were asked at the meeting:

- Does the policy include fruit trees?
- What does the policy involve?
- What is a "native plant"?
- Which trees are on the policy.
- Why can't some plants adapt?
- What would be the consequences if not followed?

Ms. Sturmer stated they need to gather more information, become more educated and form a committee.

First Selectman, Pat Llodra, requested an invasive plant ban list before the native plant policy is considered. Ms. Sturmer created a draft invasive plant list for the town to adopt as determined by the Ct. Invasive Plants Council. Ms. Sturmer would like to involve the Parks and Rec Dept.

Ms. Kocet will research whether other towns have implemented a similar invasive plant ban.

The Commission discussed the wording of the document. Mr. Philbrick stated that he did not prefer the language "adopt a ban". Ms. Sturmer asked Mr. Philbrick to write up the document.

The Commission discussed the different plant species. Ms. Sturmer would like the list completed by the next meeting and will correspond through emails.

## **Drones**

The Commission is concerned with the use of drones on town open space and on High Meadow.

The Commission would like to implement a ban on drones due to the following reasons:

- detrimental to the birds
- distraction to walkers and bike riders
- bothersome to nesting birds and insects

The Commission's goals are to bring back wildlife in the town's meadows and open spaces and they feel the drones will have a significant negative impact on wildlife.

The Commission will review the guidelines for the town open space. The Commission will also research whether any studies have been done on the impact drones have had on the interactions with wildlife.

They will continue the conversation regarding drones at the next CC meeting.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Philbrick moved to adjourn the CC meeting. Ms. Joyce seconded. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 8:27 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Dawn Fried, Clerk