

**CONSERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES**  
**Regular Meeting of July 10, 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, Holly Kocet, Tom Philbrick, Cindy Joyce, Chris Smith, Mark Boland, Karlyn Sturmer

**Staff:** Georgia Contois, Clerk

Mr. Ryan opened the meeting at 7:05 pm.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES for June 27, 2017**

Mr. Philbrick moved to approve the amended minutes from June 27, 2017. Mr. Boland seconded. All in favor.

**ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS**

**Review of other Commissions**

Mr. Boland reviewed documents from the Fairfield Hill Authority, Fairfield Hills Subcommittee, and fairfieldhills.org, in relation to OS parcels and special events on the campus. Ms. Sturmer expressed concern over the CC's role in undeveloped OS on the campus. She thought that wording in the handout from Mr. Boland was loose and may be removing some of the responsibility from the CC. She asked Commissioners to get involved in the Fairfield Hills process, and suggested writing a letter to Pat Llodra expressing their concerns. Mr. Ryan will draft a letter.

The Sandy Hook Permanent Memorial is still moving forward with the site at SAC field and is including the 6+ acre OS parcel as a 'visual extension' for the design RFP's.

Mr. Philbrick explained that Inland Wetlands is still reviewing the Hilarios project. Ms. Kocet asked if the CC would have any reason to become involved with the project. Mr. Philbrick said not unless there was wildlife corridor or a watercourse tying to an OS parcel.

The remaining commission meetings were either cancelled or no report was prepared.

Ms. Sturmer wanted to re-organize the agendas and Mr. Ryan said he will discuss with the clerk. Ms. Sturmer also asked for advanced notice if the regular clerk will not be at the meeting so that documents can be prepared by the substitute.

**DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS**

**PZ OS Parcel Review Application 17.04 Turkey Ridge**

Commissioners reviewed the maps for the application showing a 15+ acre parcel of OS which is located between Toddy Hill Road and Turkey Roost Road. Ms. Sturmer explained that a large area of the parcel is ridden with stiltgrass which is on the CT invasive species list. She was also trying to understand the location of the property in connection to other OS parcels. Members also discussed access and parking. After deliberation, the CC is recommending to acquire the OS parcel with the conditions of cleaning the site of debris, invasive mitigation, increased parking and rebuilding rock walls to clearly separate the OS parcel and keep the character of the lot as it exists.

**Site Visit- 6 Meadowbrook Road**

Mr. Ryan will schedule an appointment with the property owner at 6 Meadowbrook Road to do a site walk regarding the access way to an OS parcel.

## **COMMISSION PRIORITIES**

### **Web Page**

Ms. Joyce gave an update on the progress for the website. She asked for assistance with narratives for multiple pages. Members will have a chance to access the page and make adjustments before it goes public. She presented a narrative titled "Why is Open Space Important" and asked Commissioners for their revisions.

### **Stonebridge Project**

Ms. Sturmer mentioned the educational opportunities that had originally been discussed when the project started. She thought members needed to get involved and plan some events to get the public involved. Mr. Ryan suggested inviting Jeremy Clark to do a walk with the public. Members also discussed school field trips.

### **High Meadow Management Plan**

Ms. Kocet said that it is time to start planning for planting plugs. October was the recommended planting time and Ms. Sturmer mentioned that this was a project for more seasoned gardeners. Ms. Kocet has been setting aside plants like aster and coreopsis for the project.

### **Drone Discussion**

Mr. Ryan mentioned signage against drone usage near the meadows. Ms. Kocet said that there is proof of drones interfering with nesting. There was also an email read from Christal Preszler explaining that drone usage on the entire campus could be discouraged.

### **Native Plant Policy**

Ms. Sturmer presented a draft memo called "Town of Newtown Ban on Invasive Plants as Proposed by the Conservation Commission on 7/10/17". Mr. Philbrick wanted clarification of the purpose of the document. Ms. Sturmer explained that the First Selectman had requested the letter explaining the ban, which will help facilitate discussion on Native Plants. This memo is intended for Town Departments and not for the public. After discussion and slight change in wording, Mr. Smith made a motion to accept the wording as follows:

"The Town of Newtown endorses the ban of all plants on the Connecticut Invasive Plant List. The List includes Invasive and Potentially Invasive Plants as determined by the Connecticut Invasive Plants Council in accordance with Connecticut General Statutes §22-a-381a through §22a-319d. All town departments are directed to consult the List before considering any plantings on Town-owned land."

Ms. Joyce seconded and the memo was unanimously approved.

### **Kiosk**

Members discussed asking Mr. Sibley for a list of all kiosks. They would like to have a unified look and make sure all kiosks have necessary information for the specific OS parcel.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Smith moved to adjourn the CC meeting. Mr. Philbrick seconded. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 9:10 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Georgia Contois, Clerk