

CONSERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES
Regular Meeting of December 12, 2016 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, Tom Philbrick, Cindy Joyce, Mark Boland (arrived at 7:10, departed at 7:35), Karlyn Sturmer

Absent: Chris Smith

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 November 14, 2016

Mr. Ryan motioned to approve the minutes from November 14, 2016. Mr. Philbrick so moved. Ms. Joyce seconded. Mr. Ryan, Mr. Philbrick and Ms. Joyce were in favor. Ms. Sturmer abstained. The minutes from November 14, 2016 were approved.

CORRESPONDENCE

Mr. Ryan presented resumes from three potential candidates for one available seat on the Conservation Committee. The commission had a lengthy discussion and selected Holly Kocet. The Commission agreed all three candidates were highly qualified and will reach out to the other two candidates to encourage their involvement in the CC's ongoing projects.

Ms. Sturmer requested a motion to appoint Holly Kocet to the Conservation Commission. Mr. Boland so moved. Ms. Joyce seconded. All in favor.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR October 25, 2016

Mr. Boland motioned to approve the minutes from October 25, 2016. Ms. Sturmer so moved. Ms. Joyce seconded. Mr. Boland, Ms. Sturmer and Ms. Joyce were in favor. Mr. Ryan and Mr. Philbrick abstained. The minutes from October 25, 2016 were approved.

ACTION ITEMS

Stone Bridge Contractor Selection

The Commission called Jeremy Clark via cell phone to discuss the bid selection. After Mr. Clark and the Commission had a lengthy discussion they decided J&J Log and Lumber Corporation was the preferred contractor for the Stone Bridge project. Mr. Clark stated he had worked with J&J in the past and J&J was professional, efficient and will utilize a harvester and a forwarder. The Commission's only concern was the timing of the project. If J&J cannot start the project this winter they will contact Don Moon Logging.

Mr. Ryan made a motion to select J&J Log and Lumber Corporation to complete work as stated on the Clark Forestry Services Bid Response Form for Standing Timber dated November 18, 2016. One condition to this vote is that J&J must commence this winter. If J&J cannot meet the condition Don Moon Logging will be selected as the contractor. Mr. Philbrick so moved. Ms. Sturmer seconded. All in favor.

Set Calendar for Commission Meetings for 2017

After a brief discussion the Commission agreed to keep the meeting days for 2017 the same as it had been for 2016. Mr. Ryan made a motion for the 2017 Conservation Committee meetings to be on the second Monday and fourth Tuesday of every month beginning at 7:00 pm. Mr. Philbrick so moved. Ms. Joyce seconded. All in favor.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

High Meadow Study Group

Mr. Ryan stated that he has to construct a letter to the Selectman's office regarding recommendations from the High Meadow Study Group. Ms. Sturmer stated that the group will finalize their recommendations and will meet with the CC in January. Mr. Ryan was looking for a factual analysis. Ms. Sturmer stated that the study group has met with representatives from the National Audubon Society, DEEP and other experts for input on the meadow. Mr. Philbrick had concerns that the High Meadow Study Group was not following "best scientific practices" and should have baseline data with quantitative and qualitative assessments. Ms. Sturmer suggested Mr. Philbrick write a letter stating his recommendations. Ms. Sturmer invited Mr. Philbrick to walk the High Meadow area. The High Meadow Study Group will be invited to the Jan 9th CC meeting to give an update.

Web Page

Ms. Joyce presented a draft outline of the web page. She would like to add information regarding the Stone Bridge project as soon as possible. The project is starting this winter and Ms. Joyce would like to inform the public of the details and benefits. Ms. Sturmer suggested a simple outline to focus on: What are we doing? Why are we doing it? Benefits of project? Ms. Sturmer will work on the web page with Ms. Joyce. The Commission will email Ms. Joyce with comments.

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

Parks and Rec – Ms. Sturmer and Mr. Ryan would like to meet with the Parks and Rec Commission in January.

Sandy Hook Permanent Memorial Commission – Mr. Ryan stated the SHPMC is moving along with SAC field.

Planning and Zoning – Ms. Sturmer received a phone call from Jim Swift, P&Z Commissioner, voicing his concerns regarding the open space in the Platts Hill Road Subdivision. Mr. Swift questioned the process of how the CC recommends open space to P&Z. Mr. Sibley and the Commission had a lengthy discussion on the reasons they voted for "fee in lieu of" with one of the reasons being no connectivity to other parcels of open space. The Commission also discussed the responsibilities of the CC which are stated in the Subdivision Regulations regarding open space. "Fee in lieu of percentage fee" is a state statute and cannot be modified. The Conservation Commission agreed they should meet with the P&Z Commission to further review the open space recommendation process.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Philbrick motioned to adjourn the CC meeting. Ms. Joyce seconded. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Dawn Fried, Clerk