

CONSERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES
Regular Meeting of May 22, 2018 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, Karlyn Sturmer, Mark Boland, Gail Friedman, Mark Lurie

Staff: Dawn Fried, Clerk

Also Present: Amy Mangold, Director of Newtown Parks and Rec, Ned Simpson, 42 Watkins Drive, Regency Complex

Ms. Kocet opened the meeting at 7:01 pm.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mr. Simpson recently moved to Newtown, he stated that he “marveled at Newtown’s natural resources and trails.” He thanked the Conservation Commission for clearing Oak View Trail which connects to the Regency complex. Mr. Simpson and two others have also been maintaining the trail by cutting small trees and clearing brush. Mr. Simpson was confused as to where the trail ended. The CC will ask Mr. Sibley where the trail ends and where the conservation easements are located. Mr. Simpson stated that more trees had fallen from the storm and Ms. Sturmer stated that she and Ms. Kocet will continue to clear the trail.

Ms. Mangold thanked the Commission for attending the Trail’s meeting on April 24, 2018. Ms. Mangold would like to keep the synergy going from the meeting and asked the Commission for their suggestions. Ms. Mangold also stated that forming a trails committee would be beneficial. The Commission agreed that an ad-hoc committee or sub-committee was a good idea. The Commission and Ms. Mangold had a discussion on which group should have purview over the trail systems in town. Ms. Sturmer stated that she doesn’t feel it’s within the CC’s scope of work. The trails discussed were, Rails for Trails, AI’s Trail and Trails on Rails. Ms. Kocet thanked Ms. Mangold for coming and is looking forward to working together. In regards to the management of the trail system in Newtown, the Commission will “mull it over”.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES for May 8, 2018

Change date of meeting from “April 24, 2018” to “May 8, 2018”. Under “Kiosks” change “Half Way River kiosk – Mr. Boland” to “Half Way River kiosk – Mr. Boland and Ms. Friedman”. Delete “Deep Brook kiosk – Ms. Friedman”. Mr. Boland moved to approve the amended minutes from May 8, 2018. Ms. Friedman seconded. The minutes from May 8, 2018 were approved. All in favor.

DISCUSSION

High Meadow Vegetation Study – Mr. Philbrick dropped off the plant specimens to Ms. Kocet and Ms. Joyce. They made copies of the specimens and transferred them onto a thumb drive. Ms. Joyce will upload to the Conservation website. The specimens will be preserved in a herbarium at Western CT State University.

Ms. Sturmer and Ms. Kocet discussed the growth on the High Meadow. They commented on the denseness of the orchard grass. They will continue planting different native plants, one being Yarrow. Ms. Fried will inquire on setting up an account with Planters Choice to purchase more native plants. Ms. Sturmer also mentioned the gate was down and should be fixed.

Stonebridge – Ms. Sturmer stated that the second entrance to Stonebridge is open and she will reach out to Mr. Sibley to have it closed.

Pole Bridge Preserve – Ms. Kocet received an update from Mr. Sibley which she shared with the Commission. Mr. Sibley stated that Pole Bridge has surveyors marking the property lines, the parking lot has been installed and the access way has been improved with storm water fixes that will help with erosion. Mr. Sibley also stated that Public Works and Parks and Rec did the work on the property. The Commission discussed meeting at the property and were looking forward to seeing the improvements.

Kiosks – The Commission is still working on the kiosks. Ms. Kocet will ask Mr. Sibley to print out maps for each of the kiosks. The Stonebridge kiosk will be done at a later date.

High Meadow kiosk – Ms. Sturmer and Ms. Kocet

Pole Bridge kiosk – Ms. Joyce

Half Way River kiosk – Mr. Boland and Ms. Friedman

Al's Trail – The Commission agreed that Al's Trail should be managed by an independent group and overseen by Parks and Rec. The Commission stated that Al's Trail is a recreational resource and the only responsibility of the Conservation Commission should be the trail segments located on the Town's open space. Ms. Sturmer moved that the Conservation Commission wants to support the work of a new trail committee under Parks and Rec and the CC would like to have a liaison on the committee. Mr. Lurie seconded. All in favor.

Permanent Conservation Table - Ms. Kocet suggested doing a “plastic ban” table to coincide with the “plastic bag ban” that is being proposed in town. Ms. Sturmer suggested doing an “invasive plant” theme to coincide with the invasive plants that are starting to grow. The Commission will discuss further at the next meeting.

Cherry Grove Trail - The Commission discussed the previous meeting regarding the trail maintenance. Ms. Sturmer would have liked to visit the property before making a decision on the proposed clearing and Ms. Kocet would have liked notification ahead of time. The Commission would like to walk the property and will meet Saturday at 4:00 pm at the school house area. The Commission is unsure of the Conservation Easement.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Boland moved to adjourn the CC meeting. Ms. Sturmer seconded. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 8:28 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Dawn Fried, Clerk