

CONSERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES

Regular Meeting

April 12, 2022 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, Mark Boland, Michael Ablondi, Mark Lurie, Will Drew

Staff: Rob Sibley, Deputy Director of Land Use, Dawn Fried, Clerk

Ms. Kocet opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Lurie moved to approve the minutes of March 22, 2022. Mr. Ablondi seconded. All in favor. The minutes from March 22, 2022 were approved.

DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS

Blue Trail

Mr. Sibley had spoken with a resident on Leopard Drive regarding a "large mossy rock" blocking a trail head on Town open space. The large rock is making it difficult to enter the trail.

Mr. Sibley reached out to volunteers from CT Forest & Parks. This group has maintained the Blue trails for years. It was decided they would move the trail entrance approximately 1 ½ feet away from the rock.

Status of Open Space

Mr. Sibley reviewed the status of two open space properties.

- Riverside/Timber Trail – Will be transferred as soon as it gets approval from the First Selectman.
- Keeler Property on Glen Road – Will be transferred as soon as the attorney sends a description of the property to probate.

Mr. Sibley stated there are potentially two more open space properties coming to the Commission in the next month or so.

AI's Trail Update

Mr. Sibley attended a meeting hosted by the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) which was well done and well attended. Mr. Sibley stated they presented a PowerPoint presentation on AI's Trail. AI's Trail is the recipient of a state grant. The DFW discussed different ways the grant can be spent. Some suggestions were maintenance, future possibilities, and items that needed improvements. Mr. Sibley will forward the presentation to the Commissioners.

Commission Reports

Fairfield Hills – Mr. Boland spoke about the Fairfield Hills Authority (FFA) proposing pocket parks on campus. Ms. Kocet had reached out the FFA asking them to use native plantings for the pocket parks.

High Meadow Study Letter

Ms. Kocet stated she received a proposal from Bryan Connolly regarding a future High Meadow study. Mr. Connolly gave three estimates. 1. Area "A", after being mowed for \$4,000. 2. Area "B", study of progression for \$4,000 3. Do a comparison of areas "A" & "B" for \$7,000. The Commission had a lengthy discussion on the three options. The project is slated for 2024. The Commission unanimously agreed on option 3, which is for a comparison study. Ultimately the Commission would like to learn from this study and implement the findings at different open

space properties throughout the town. Ms. Kocet will present the project to the Board of Selectman to request funding.

Earth Day

The Commission discussed Earth Day, April 23, 2022. Mr. Sibley will drop off the tables and chairs at the school the night before. Mr. Boland will pick up the tent at the loading dock the night before. The Commission discussed items to bring as well as coverage times. One suggestion was to bring invasive plants for identification purposes. The Commission would also like an Open Space map printed and placed on a board for the table.

Newtown Public Safety Radio Project

Mr. Sibley gave an overview of the safety project. He stated there are many areas in town where emergency communication devices cannot reach Newtown dispatch. The Town has been working on this CIP project for approximately 5 years. Public safety antennas will be installed all over town. These new antennas will enable better communication between emergency personnel and dispatch. Two of these antennas will be placed on Town open space properties, which are Eden Hill/Serene Way and Great Quarter Road. Rob presented the Eden Hill map to the Commission. Mr. Sibley described the project as being a 60-foot telephone poll with an antenna on top and a generator on the ground in case of a power outage.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Lurie moved to adjourn the CC meeting. Mr. Boland seconded. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 7:58 pm.

Respectfully submitted, Dawn Fried