

## **CONSERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES**

### **Regular Meeting**

October 24, 2023 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, Michael Ablondi, Mark Boland, Will Drew, John Dixon

Staff: Steve Maguire, Deputy Director of Land Use, Dawn Fried, Clerk

Public: Rick Parenti, 20 Pepperidge Road, Newtown.

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

The Commission changed the order of the agenda to hear "Discussion of Conservation Easement on Pepperidge Road" after the "Approval of the Minutes".

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Mr. Dixon moved to approve the minutes of September 12, 2023. Mr. Boland seconded. All in favor. The minutes from September 12, 2023 were approved.

### **DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS**

#### **Discussion of Conservation Easement on Pepperidge Road**

Mr. Maguire gave an overview of a complaint he received regarding a subdivision conservation easement on Pepperidge Road. The conservation easement was created to serve as a buffer in-between properties. He received a complaint that part of the buffer on 20 Pepperidge Road had been cleared (see attached pictures). Mr. Maguire reviewed the deed, site plans and associated documents. Mr. Maguire explained that although most of the cleared vegetation was not desirable, it still had provided screening between the two properties.

Mr. Maguire invited Mr. Parenti, resident of 20 Pepperidge Road, to attend the CC meeting to discuss the issue. Mr. Parenti was present at the meeting and gave a presentation of the activities on his property. He gave an overview of the history of the property and showed before and after pictures of the cleared vegetation. Mr. Parenti stated he cleared away storm damaged trees, underbrush and invasives. Most of the invasives were vines that had taken over the wooded area.

Mr. Parenti asked whether he can install a fence within the easement to serve as a buffer. Mr. Parenti also asked whether his arborist can continue with the project. The arborist will be cutting dead and moldy trees and will be trimming the larger limbs on Oak trees.

The Commission had a discussion regarding the clearing on the easement and various options to remedy the area.

Mr. Boland was not in favor of a fence or structure being constructed within the easement. The Commission concurred that allowing a fence in an easement could possibly set a precedent for all easements. Mr. Maguire stated the intent of the easement was to serve as a vegetative buffer.

Mr. Maguire will consult with the Town attorney regarding the deed restrictions on the conservation easement. Mr. Maguire stated after he speaks with the Town attorney the CC can then decide which option of enforcement should be taken.

Mr. Drew made a suggestion to hear from both neighbors.

The Commission would like to review the arborist report at the next meeting. The Commission would like to table this discussion until the next CC meeting on November 14, 2023.

## **DEPUTY DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

### Open Space Update

Mr. Maguire stated the transfers of OS #22-02 and OS #22-03 are still waiting on signatures.

### Open Space Usage

Mr. Maguire is still looking into properties and will get back to the Commission at a later date.

### Aspetuck-Hemlock Reservoir Block

Mr. Maguire reviewed a letter he sent to Rob Turnbull from Aquarion Water Company regarding comments and observations recommended by the Conservation Commission. Please see attached letter for the record.

## **DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS**

### Invasive Knotweed Management

Mr. Maguire will reach out to Carl with the Parks and Rec department regarding herbicide application.

6 Commerce Road - Mr. Maguire stated he has received emails from the "Coalition to Preserve Newtown" asking for the Conservation Commission to recommend the preservation of the property across from the Hubbard Sanctuary. Ms. Kocet stated the property is not the CC's purview. The property is not part of a conservation easement, it is not Town open space and at this time does not have an application associated with it.

Mr. Maguire stated the CC can only give their recommendation on an application after a referral is requested by another Commission. Ms. Kocet will send a letter to the P&Z Commission, the EDC and the Board of Selectman asking them whether the CC can be part of the process once a proposal is submitted for 6 Commerce Road.

Knotweed Group – The Knotweed Group has been in touch with CT Invasive Plant Working Group (CIPWG). They want to establish a program to educate the town on how to eliminate invasives. The group would like to know what kind of invasive education the town crews have and what they can do to help them. Mr. Maguire will have a discussion with Mr. Hurley from the Newtown Public Works department. Mr. Maguire stated that knotweed is easy to identify. The goal would be not to mow the knotweed, but to fragment it instead. Since there are only a few mowers in the crew this plan would be achievable.

Website Update - Ms. Kocet stated the conservation website has been updated. The new Commissioners have been added and the invasive plant information has been updated.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Dixon moved to adjourn the CC meeting. Mr. Ablondi seconded. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 8:29 pm.

Respectfully submitted, Dawn Fried























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*Steve Maguire*  
*Deputy Director of Land Use*

## **TOWN OF NEWTOWN**

### **CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

September 20, 2023

To: Rob Turnbull, Forester  
Aquarion Water Company

Re: Aspetuck- Hemlock Reservoir Block Forestry Plan  
Newtown Conservation Commission Comments

Mr. Turnbull,

Thank you for providing the Town of Newtown, Specifically the Conservation Commission the management plan and opportunity for review and comment.

On the regularly scheduled meeting of the Conservation Commission on September 12, 2023 the Commission has reviewed and discussed the plan and has the following comments and observations.

- Request that no clearing be done within or adjacent to the Aspetuck Trail within Newtown.
- Request that invasives be managed not only in designated areas as shown on plans but also areas where selective harvests occur and larger sections of the canopy are removed to prevent their establishment and allow natives to regenerate.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steve Maguire", is written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping loop at the end.

Steve Maguire  
Deputy Director of Land Use