

CONSERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES

Regular Meeting

November 14, 2023 at 7:00 pm

Meeting Room 1, Municipal Center, 3 Primrose Street, Newtown, CT

These minutes are subject to approval by the Conservation Commission

Present: Holly Kocet, Michael Ablondi, Will Drew, John Dixon, Mark Lurie

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

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Dixon moved to approve the minutes of October 24, 2023. Mr. Drew seconded.

All in favor. The minutes from October 24, 2023 were approved.

DEPUTY DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Open Space Inspection Reports

Mr. Maguire passed out two open space property inspection forms. His plan is to rework the forms, pick out the pertinent information and simplify into one inspection form. Mr. Maguire's goal is to have a usable form for staff and commission to use when visiting/inspecting open space properties it identify things such as access, marking, encroachments and unique features. This will help to identify properties of interest and or in need of attention.

DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS

Discussion of Conservation Easement on Pepperidge Road

Mr. Maguire gave a recap of the last CC meeting regarding the Pepperidge Road conservation easement. At the last CC meeting Mr. Maguire was asked to consult with the Town Attorney to clarify the CC's authority regarding the easement restrictions. Mr. Maguire stated he spoke to the Town Attorney and was told the CC has full discretion on whether or not to enforce.

Mr. Maguire stated:

- The commission shall first decide if they will take any action on the current activity that has occurred and if any remedial action is needed such as planting.
- Secondly, the commission shall decide if the remaining vegetation behind the house can be cleared. If so, will any planting be required.
- Lastly, what does the commission want the future maintenance to be within this easement. Let revert back to natural, maintained lawn or monitoring of planting if required

The Commission 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.

The Commission agreed enforcement action wasn't necessary on the clearing of the brush. The brush consisted of dead trees, underbrush and invasives that had taken over the area.

Mr. Ablondi moved to:

- Not allow the placement of a fence in the conservation easement. A fence will be allowed on the owner's private property.
- Restore the cleared area and remaining brush area back to its original meadow when the easement was established.
- Recommend, but did not require, a natural screen buffer of native plants.

Mr. Lurie seconded. All in favor.

Invasives at High Meadow

Ms. Kocet spoke about the continued efforts of clearing the invasives on High Meadow.

Website Update

Mr. Lurie will work on a QR code leading back to the Conservation website.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Dixon moved to adjourn the CC meeting. Mr. Drew seconded. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 7:42 pm.

Respectfully submitted, Dawn Fried