

CONSERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES
Regular Meeting of February 26, 2019 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 Lurie, Mike Santora, John Dixon, Gail Friedman, John Madzula

Staff: Robert Sibley, Deputy Director of Planning & Land Use, Dawn Fried, Clerk

Ms. Kocet opened the meeting at 7:00 pm.

Public: Lawrence Zankel, 104 Walnut Tree Hill Road

APPROVAL OF MINUTES for January 22, 2019

Ms. Friedman moved to approve the minutes from January 22, 2019. Mr. Santora seconded. All in favor. The minutes from January 22, 2019 were approved.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Commission welcomed Mr. Zankel. Mr. Zankel stated he was an avid gardener and had an interest in native plants and the Pollinator Pathway project. Mr. Zankel also stated he had an interest in becoming a Commission member and wanted to sit-in at a CC meeting.

AGENCY REPORTS

Planning and Zoning – Mr. Madzula gave an overview of the P&Z minutes and its applications.

Bike and Trails – Mr. Lurie stated the Bike and Trail Committee (BTC) has an interest in Pole Bridge. Mr. Lurie is organizing a walk of the Pole Bridge property with the BTC this weekend. Al's Trail is also of interest to the BTC but has the following challenges: determining the land owners, what can be done on the properties and the approvals to traverse the Nature Conservancy and the vineyard. Mr. Lurie also mentioned the BTC is discussing a greenway connecting the Sandy Hook and Fairfield Hills trails.

DISCUSSION

Election of Officers - Ms. Kocet moved to elect Mr. Santora as Vice Chairman. Ms. Friedman seconded. All in favor. Ms. Friedman moved to re-elect Ms. Kocet as Chairman. Mr. Lurie seconded. All in favor.

Referral from P&Z - Mr. Sibley gave an overview of P&Z Application 19.01, for the recommendation of open space for a 2-lot subdivision on Bennetts Bridge Road. A map was presented for the Commissioners to review. Mr. Sibley summarized the Subdivision Regulations and pointed out the Commission's purview regarding the evaluation of open space. Mr. Sibley spoke about the history of the Conservation Commission and the benefits of approving smaller parcels over time. Mr. Sibley stated those smaller parcels have created connectivity of open space throughout the town. The Conservation Commission had a discussion on the proposed open space and agreed the open space would be favorable. Mr. Lurie moved to accept the recommendation for the Open Space on Bennetts Bridge Road for 1.49 acres. Mr. Santora seconded. All in favor.

High Meadow – Ms. Kocet spoke to the Commission about purchasing more native plants for the High Meadow. The Commission agreed it would be beneficial to purchase more plants to plant in the spring. Ms. Kocet moved for a requisition request of \$300 for the purchase of native plants for the High Meadow. Ms. Friedman seconded. All in favor.

Newtown Pollinator Pathway – Ms. Kocet stated they are working on brochures and advertising for the event.

Conservation Table – Ms. Kocet spoke about the article in The Bee featuring the Conservation Table and its Inland Wetland theme. Mr. Sibley stated that he has received positive feedback about the IW presentation. The Conservation table also sparked a conversation from the Hubbard Sanctuary and the possibility of partnering with the CC to create a “Rain Barrel” program. Mr. Sibley informed the Commission that the Hubbard Sanctuary will be contacting the CC to discuss.

Invasive Plant Task Force – Ms. Kocet would like to set up a meeting with Dan Rosenthal and Rob Sibley to discuss an Invasive Plant Task Force.

CC Website - Ms. Kocet asked the Commission if anyone would be interested in taking on the website. Mr. Lurie volunteered to help with the website and will work with Keith, the website coordinator.

Open Space Signs – Mr. Sibley informed the Commission of two new signs that were recently posted; the Laurel Trail sign and the Ferris Farm sign. The Laurel Trail sign was replaced after it was damaged in the storm and sits on top of the hill. The Ferris Farm sign was placed at the entrance of the farm and was required by the state due to a grant that was given for a conservation easement that covers the entire farm.

Earth Day – Ms. Kocet stated that the Earth Day booth needs staffing for both shifts. Mr. Sibley gave an overview of the day and the set-up/break-down procedures. The CC needs to register.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Friedman moved to adjourn the CC meeting. Mr. Lurie seconded. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 7:59 pm.

Respectfully Submitted, Dawn Fried, Clerk