

CONSERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES
Regular Meeting of January 23, 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, Cindy Joyce, Tom Philbrick, Karlyn Sturmer

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

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES for January 16, 2018

Ms. Joyce moved to approve the minutes from January 16, 2018. Mr. Philbrick seconded. All in favor. The minutes from January 16, 2018 were approved.

CORRESPONDENCE

Ms. Kocet reviewed a letter regarding the Hunter Ridge project. The Commission discussed that the Hunter Ridge project is not in their purview. Ms. Kocet will send a response stating that the letter has been acknowledged.

Ms. Kocet reviewed a letter regarding the State Project No. 96-192 on Edmond Road and Route 6. Mr. Sibley stated that the information is available in the Land Use Agency. Mr. Philbrick offered to review the letter and attachments.

AGENCY REPORTS

Ms. Kocet offered to review the Board of Selectman meetings going forward.

HIGH MEADOW

Ms. Sturmer would like to purchase orange-flowered milk weed for the meadow.

The Commission discussed no mowing in 2018. The next mowing will be scheduled either late winter or early spring of 2019.

Mr. Philbrick spoke to Bryan Connolly last week regarding the vegetation study. Mr. Philbrick requested clarification on the Excel spreadsheet. Mr. Connolly will submit the following: an updated report, a thumb drive with pictures of 38-40 species and a map with a rough outline. Mr. Philbrick will report back to the Commission when he receives Mr. Connolly's information.

Ms. Joyce would like to add the High Meadow information to the web site.

NATIVE PLANT POLICY

Ms. Kocet and Mr. Philbrick will work on the Native Plant Policy. Ms. Joyce would like a list of the native plants. The Commission discussed adding plant profiles with pictures to the website.

STONEBRIDGE

The Commission discussed monitoring the Stonebridge property and scheduling a walk in the spring.

ESTABLISH PRIORITIES

Open Space Map – Kevin from the IT department is working on an updated Open Space map. The map should be completed by the next CC meeting.

Pole Bridge and Pond Brook Preserves – The Commission discussed in what capacity these properties will be managed. Ms. Sturmer would like to walk the properties.

INFORMATION/OUTREACH

Website – The Commission thanked Ms. Joyce for her work on the Conservation website. The website has gone live. Ms. Joyce sent a press release to The Bee regarding the updates to the website. Ms. Sturmer spoke to Kevin, from the IT Dept., regarding the GIS system and the hand-held GPS high accuracy computer. Kevin explained to Ms. Sturmer that the process is very time consuming and would likely take forty hours to map out one mile. The Commission spoke about asking volunteers like the Boy Scouts to help map out trails. Ms. Sturmer also spoke about an app called “Map My Run” that would give the approx. distance and time taken on the trail. Ms. Sturmer would like to test the app for accuracy.

Kiosks – The Commission discussed how to manage the kiosks. Ms. Joyce will talk to Keith, the website coordinator, regarding uploading trail maps to put in the kiosks. The Commission discussed a kiosk on the Oakview open space property. Ms. Sturmer and Ms. Kocet would like to walk the property.

MISCELLANEOUS

Oakview Open Space Property and Trail Bridge – The Commission discussed building a bridge over the Pootatuck River that will connect the trail from the Oakview open space property, which begins at Newtown High School, to the Deep Brook open space property, which connects to the High Meadow. The trail would be beneficial to the residents at the Regency housing complex as well as the students at Newtown High School. The Commission would like to add this potential project to the next CC agenda under Action Items. Mr. Sibley explained that the Pootatuck Watershed Association (PWA) is currently working on a bank stabilization project and that this would be a great time to coordinate efforts. Mr. Sibley suggested that the Commission reach out to Joe Hovious.

AL’S TRAIL

The Commission will discuss further at next meeting.

OPEN SEAT ON CONSERVATION COMMISSION

The Commission has an open seat on the Commission. The Commission hopes to have a potential candidate attend the next CC meeting.

EARTH DAY BOOTH

The Commission discussed the booth on Earth Day. They will ask Mark Boland if he is available. If not, the booth might not be staffed but will have hand-outs on the table. The Commission will discuss further at the next CC meeting.

NEWTOWN FRACKING WASTE BAN

The Commission discussed Newtown's Fracking Waste Ban. Ms. Sturmer moved to support a "no fracking waste" ordinance in Newtown. Mr. Philbrick seconded. All in favor. Ms. Kocet will send out a letter to Kathy Quinn, presently the chair of the town's Sustainable Energy Commission, stating the Conservation Commission's support.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

8:30 pm - Mr. Philbrick moved to commence the Executive Session. Ms. Joyce seconded. All in favor.

9:20 pm – Ms. Sturmer moved to close the Executive Session. Ms. Joyce seconded. All in favor.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Philbrick moved to adjourn the CC meeting. Ms. Joyce seconded. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 9:22 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Dawn Fried, Clerk