

**CONSERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES**  
**Special Meeting of February 11, 2020 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, John Dixon, Gail Friedman, Mark Boland, Mark Lurie  
**Staff:** Rob Sibley, Deputy Director of Land Use, Christine O'Neill, substitute clerk

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

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Mr. Lurie made a motion to approve the minutes of October 22, 2019. Ms. Friedman seconded. All were in favor and the minutes from October 22, 2019 were approved.

Mr. Lurie made a motion to approve the minutes of November 12, 2019. Ms. Friedman seconded. All were in favor and the minutes from November 12, 2019 were approved.

Mr. Lurie made a motion to approve the minutes of December 10, 2019. Ms. Friedman seconded. All were in favor and the minutes from December 10, 2019 were approved.

**AGENCY REPORTS**

Board of Finance: Mr. Boland reported that the BOF is reviewing the upcoming budget for the Town. As always, there is money set aside for Open Space acquisition. He reminded the Commission that the BOF typically bonds up to \$400,000 which is set aside for matching funds for acquisitions. Mr. Lurie wondered if there was still a deficit for Cherry Grove. Mr. Sibley said the Board of Selectmen had contributed \$100,000 two years ago. Mr. Boland agreed.

Fairfield Hills Authority: Mr. Boland had nothing to report.

Inland Wetlands: Ms. Friedman stated that IW met earlier today and canceled their regular meeting for tomorrow.

Planning and Zoning: Mr. Dixon said that P&Z has been largely concerned with the 19 Main Street application and development in Hawleyville.

Board of Selectmen: Ms. Kocet reported that the BOS are holding a public information session on options for Fairfield Hills campus before their next meeting.

Bike and Trails: Mark Lurie shared that the BTC received a non-monetary National Park Service grant which will involve two forest rangers from Boston giving technical advice on trail management. There will be a hike tomorrow at noon starting at Alberts Hill towards Walnut Tree to assess AI's Trail issues from the tornados. The Commission had a few clarifying questions for Mr. Lurie and Mr. Sibley. The BTC will also hold an open house event on March 8th at the Community Center; the Commission had received an invitation to the event through the Chair, Ms. Kocet. Mr. Lurie further shared that the BTC is looking to build a greenway between Fairfield Hills campus and Sandy Hook Center.

## EXECUTIVE SESSION

Ms. Kocet moved to enter Executive Session to discuss possible land acquisition, and invited Rob Sibley and Christine O'Neill. Ms. Friedman seconded. All were in favor and Executive Session began at 7:12 pm. Executive Session ended at 7:24 pm.

## DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS

### *Director's Report*

Mr. Sibley shared that the Paproskis will come to the Selectmen with the final appraisal of their property, which will establish what the Town is actually paying for the property. The Town was originally going to pay their portion of \$450,000 through NRCS, but they pulled out and are now working through the Connecticut Farmland Trust for less acreage and less money. After the Selectmen approve the new appraisal, it will go to the Legislative Council for final approval. Mr. Lurie asked what land the payment will specifically get them. Mr. Sibley said it would be 30 acres of the corn maze and pumpkin field. He clarified that the Paproskis were only selling the development rights, meaning nothing could be built on it, but they would continue to farm the land.

### *Stone Bridge Preserve*

Mr. Sibley informed the Commission that Stone Bridge Road has been freshly graded. Public Works used the road for a training exercise on operating grading equipment. Further work on the access road will be done in summer after the area dries out. A New England Cottontail professional assessed the land and said that although there were no actual sightings of rabbits on the property, there were habitat indicators such as browse.

### *High Meadow Wildflower Meadow*

Ms. Kocet had nothing to report.

### *Native Plant Policy*

Ms. Kocet stated that this item was on hold.

### *Conservation Table*

Ms. Kocet stated that this item was on hold.

### *Invasive Task Force*

Ms. Kocet stated that this item was on hold.

### *Website & Kiosks*

Ms. Kocet had nothing to report on the website, but she would like to work on formalizing the look of the kiosks this spring.

### *Meeting Dates for 2020*

The proposed meeting dates for the Conservation Commission in 2020 are as follows:

	2 <sup>nd</sup> Tuesday	4 <sup>th</sup> Tuesday
January	14	28
February	11	25
March	10	24

April	14	28
May	12	26
June	9	23
July	14	28
August	11	25
September	8	22
October	13	27
November	10	
December	8	
January 2021	12	26

Mr. Lurie moved to approve the meeting dates for 2020. Mr. Boland seconded. All were in favor and the meeting dates for 2020 were approved.

*Action Plan for 2020*

Ms. Kocet said that she would speak with Commission Clerk Dawn Fried about the Action Plan. Mr. Dixon asked what this involved. Mr. Sibley said that Ms. Fried was looking to create a schedule of topics for discussion that the Commission could use as prompts at their meetings.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Boland moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Lurie seconded. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 7:34 pm.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Christine O'Neill, substitute clerk*