



DRAFT MINUTES
Brookfield Conservation Commission
Brookfield Town Hall Room 129
Wednesday, January 6, 2016
7:00 PM

- 1. CALL TO ORDER:** Chair Dew called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM with the following in attendance:
Present: Chair A. Dew; Vice Chair J. Bronn; Commissioner J. Blick; Commissioner M. Carmody; Commissioner M. Dew
Absent: Secretary/Treasurer S. Landis; Vice Chair R. Blessey; Commissioner M. Murphy
Also Present: Ex-Officio Member: Selectman Sue Slater; Recording Secretary Emily Cole Prescott
- 2. MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING: 12/02/15 – M. Dew made a motion to approve the minutes of the last meeting [December 2, 2015]. M. Carmody seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.**
- 3. GUESTS AND PUBLIC COMMENT:**
 - a. Ex-Officio Member from the Board of Selectmen, Sue Slater – A. Dew welcomed Selectman Sue Slater. A. Dew explained some of the work the Conservation Commission does in the Town. A. Dew stated that the Commission oversees over 1,300 acres in the Town, and manages four rental houses on Town-owned properties.

A. Dew stated that a resident who rents the Eriksen farm on site – J. Sivo – rides horses on the property and stores hay in the barn. In return, he has done fencing and mowing at the property for the Commission. A. Dew stated that the Eriksen family had wanted most of the property to remain a bird sanctuary. The Kiwanis Giving Garden is located on this property as well.

A. Dew stated that she with First Selectman Steve Dunn attended the meeting in Hartford, CT to speak with the State Historic Preservation Office regarding the Gurski Homestead property. A. Dew stated that by March, SHPO has asked that the drainage going to the house be repaired. She briefly explained the drainage issues and flooding on site. A. Dew stated that the basement must continue to be monitored for flooding, and the electrical panel is be moved from the basement to the first floor of the living space. A. Dew stated that SHPO will also like to have a de-humidifier installed. A. Dew noted that SHPO has requested that the Commission begin work on a long-range plan to restore the structures. A. Dew stated that the barn and the front farmhouse are on the CT Register of Historic Buildings.

A. Dew explained that there are easements on this property, as the Gurski Homestead had previously been issued a grant in lieu of an easement, around 2008. The two easement end dates are between 2019 and 2021. A. Dew stated that the former Gurski Homestead Commission had

also been issued a STEAP grant for work at the property. In 2012, the Town had taken over the management of the Gurski Homestead from the former Gurski Homestead Committee, and since, the property has been overseen by the Conservation Commission.

A. Dew stated that there are small grants with no encumbrances offered through the State and Federal governments for the purpose of doing studies for the Town to use to determine what residents would desire on these properties.

A. Dew stated that this is not the venue for the Conservation Commission to oversee as well as take care of the rental homes. M. Dew stated that the Commission oversees the four homes at no cost to the Town.

A. Dew stated that the fourth house is the Nature Center, located across from the Gurski Homestead. A. Dew stated that most of the properties are either rented to Town employees or lower income families. A. Dew stated that the Commission is also charged statutorily with maintaining land inventories.

4. CORRESPONDENCE:

5. TREASURER’S REPORT: A. Dew mentioned that the Conservation Commission has approximately \$6,000 remaining until the end of the fiscal year.

6. CURRENT PROJECT REPORTS:

a. The Nature Center – S. Landis – A. Dew stated that she had received an email from S. Landis noting that everything is well.

b. Happy Landings – J. Bronn – J. Bronn reported that everything is fine. A. Dew reported that earlier in the year the Commission had been informed of a large crop of knapweed which had been overtaking the property; the Commission has now implemented a three-year plan to reduce the knapweed. To keep the fields as fields, the property would need to be mowed. To keep the property for birds, the property would need to be brush-hogged once a year. A. Dew stated that a Wildlife Biologist from DEEP and a representative of the Audubon Society had been to the site, and both agreed that the knapweed needs to be removed. A. Dew noted that the project has started this year with spraying. This requires approximately \$5,000 per year, and the possible long-term plan could be to break up areas as wildlife and other areas as fields.

c. Burr Farm – M. Carmody – M. Carmody stated that the fence looks great. She has seen people riding horses there, and people flying planes. The field is hayed by J. Sivo. M. Dew stated that J. Sivo has installed the split rail fence at Eriksen, and had installed the split rail fence at Burr Farm. M. Carmody stated that the Town had paid for the rails, but J. Sivo had done the work for free. M. Carmody mentioned the possibility of displaying a farm machine on site, and she mentioned that she will bring this topic up at the next meeting, after she has further looked into the matter of storage.

d. Williams/Gurski Open Space – J. Bronn, M. Dew – M. Dew stated that there are a few down trees, but no hanging trees on the trails, otherwise everything looks to be in good shape. The Parks and Recreation Department does some of the trails, and the Commission has someone who mows the fields on the properties. The Parks and Recreation Department maintains the walking trails. The tenants mow their sections by their homes. M. Dew stated that he had put

in some posts for the road leading to the Lions Club Garden, with a sign to close the garden when needed. It has not yet been closed due to the good weather, and the Commission agreed that when snow is expected the road should be closed with the rope and sign. A. Dew stated that Lyn Lyon has signed the agreement on behalf of the Lions Club for the community garden.

e. 18 Junction Road – S. Landis, M. Dew – A. Dew noted that S. Landis may give her report at the next meeting.

f. Gurski Homestead – R. Blessey, A. Dew – A. Dew stated that there was a meeting this morning at the SHPO (*discussed earlier in the meeting, during Guests and Public Comment*), and First Selectman Steve Dunn and A. Dew had been to the meeting. Steve Harding also stopped into the meeting. A. Dew stated that the farmhouse has been re-roofed, gutters installed, rake boards installed, and an apple orchard installed on the property with Girl Scouts. These projects have been completed within the last few years, by or overseen by, the Conservation Commission.

g. Eriksen Farm Open Space – M. Carmody, M. Dew – M. Carmody stated that J. Sivo is storing some farm equipment under the open shed, which looks natural.

h. Old Bridge Sanctuary – J. Bronn – No new report on this property. J. Bronn visited recently, and there was no one else on site. In the Spring, families come and fish at the property.

i. Deer Management – M. Dew – A. Dew noted that there is also a deer management program, which had started almost ten years ago. M. Dew noted that there are several properties throughout the Town designated for bow hunting in stands to help thin the deer population.

7. OLD BUSINESS:

a. List of Potential Projects for Community Organizations and volunteers – J. Blick noted that the invasives need to be done in Williams Park. A. Dew stated that there is a woman interested in doing an internship with the Land Use Office, or possibly with the Commission. A. Dew stated that another option for a potential internship project is the sediment basin that is draining with the Still River Greenway and has been filling with invasives and sediments from the parking lot. A. Dew stated that she has spoken with NCD [Northwest Conservation District] about possibly getting a grant for best practices, and working with the NCD and the DEEP on this project. A. Dew stated that she is also speaking with someone of Housatonic Valley Association tomorrow, and there will be some information available from a flood plain management expert. HVA is a water quality group working on issues with the Still River.

b. Trail Guide/Map: Draft & Publication of Document – J. Bronn stated that he has met again with Don Farrel, who was the designer of Southbury's *Get Out and Get Healthy* project. J. Bronn presented a proposal to the Commission, which has been broken into three phases. J. Bronn stated that in phase one the front cover with a few pages would be done, and the Commission would be able to preview the proposed design. Phase two would be the entire design and layout. A print-ready PDF document would then be created. J. Bronn stated that the overall fee is \$3,000, which excludes printing costs. The Commission would have a list of work to do to get the information ready for the guide. The designer recommends photos of people throughout the guide, to show people hiking, running or cross-country skiing. The Commission also has the option to go out and take photos of the properties. Although the Commission has the option with the proposal to pay a \$500 fee for the designer to take photos, the Commission agreed to take the photos themselves. The other item which would need to be done is to sort

through the maps. J. Bronn stated that the Commission would want to look for inconsistencies within the maps. Landmarks should be indicated on the maps. A. Dew stated that the Commission may be able to use the maps created, but just add more information. The designer's suggestion is to simply include a list, rather than the actual maps, of the other properties throughout the Town which are smaller.

M. Dew stated that the price is excellent for the work. M. Dew stated that the photos will need to be compiled. M. Dew stated that there are inconsistencies in the work that has been done on the trail guide to this point. A. Dew stated that unfortunately the work done by the Commission's Summer Intern had not been finalized before she went back to school. M. Dew stated that someone should be out with My Tracks for more information about the properties. Some of the trails have also since changed.

J. Bronn noted that the Commission would also be responsible for copy writing. Once the first design phase is done, the Commission would get sentence counts for each of the properties. M. Dew mentioned that perhaps this would be a project with a target date for September. M. Dew noted that woodlands, fields, trails, streams, and parking areas as well as major landmarks should be indicated on any trail maps. A. Dew noted that wetlands areas should be included. E. Cole Prescott offered to help edit some of the work that had been done previously. A. Dew suggested that the Commissioners review some of the maps, research some of the properties, and return to the next meeting ready to discuss the information.

8. NEW BUSINESS:

a. Nomination & Election of Officers for 2016 Calendar Year – **M. Dew nominated A. Dew for Chair. J. Blick seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously. M. Dew made a motion to keep the officers as is [Alice Dew as Chair; Jeffrey Bronn as Vice Chair; Stephanie Landis as Secretary/Treasurer] until further notice. J. Bronn seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.**

b. Update: 2015 Tree City Re-certification Application – E. Cole Prescott briefly reviewed the application submittal. E. Cole Prescott stated that she will bring the growth award application information to the next Conservation Commission meeting.

c. 16-17 FY Budget Proposal Submission – The Commission discussed the proposed budget. E. Cole Prescott will check if the Arbor Day Tree membership had been done last year. A. Dew shared her vision for the Commission, and her hope that the Town may consider incorporating some of the tasks currently overseen by the Conservation Commission into the Land Use Office.

M. Dew made a motion to donate \$200 to HVA. J. Bronn seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

9. ADJOURNMENT: A. Dew made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:31 PM. J. Bronn seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

Please contact Stephanie Landis: 203-775-4545 if you cannot attend the Meeting

****Next regular meeting scheduled for February 3, 2016****