

Conservation Commission
MINUTES
Regular Meeting – February 14, 1012 @ 7:00 pm
Newtown Municipal Center, 3 Primrose Street, Newtown, CT
Present: Commissioners Cramer, Gaudet-Wilson, Germain, Kaley
Staff: None

The Public Meeting was called to order at 7:10 pm.

Items Added to the Agenda – Commissioner Wilson added “FOI Regulations” under Administrative Items, and “Strategic Planning” under Committee/Staff Reports.

Public Participation – None.

Correspondence – Commissioner Wilson reported receipt of a letter from Department of Agriculture Commissioner Steven Reviczky stating that he will keep Newtown informed of any progress/changes in the effort to convey Open Space 37-3-14 to the Town.

Approval of Minutes – Approval of minutes from the 01/26/12 meeting was tabled until the Commission’s next meeting.

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

Project Management Task List – No report.

Year End Review - Commissioner Wilson will send the Commission’s Year End Review to the Board of Selectmen.

FOI Regulations – Commissioner Wilson attended a seminar covering recent regulation changes which pertain to subcommittee meetings. Subcommittee meetings must now be publicly noticed but do not have to be held in the Town Municipal Center. Minutes from any Commission meeting must be publicly posted within seven calendar days of the meeting.

OLD BUSINESS – ACTION ITEMS

Fairfield Hills Open Space Update –No report.

Work Orders – No update.

Open Space 37-3-14 – No report other than DoA letter referenced in **Correspondence** above.

Tick Borne Disease – Commissioners Cramer and Wilson addressed this subject at the 02/06/12 Board of Selectmen meeting. They reported that the BoS is still considering how to proceed in this effort, and will have DEEP present a proposal thereon.

Use of High School Volunteers – Commissioner Wilson reported that one student has volunteered to work on Commission activities but has not indicated a preference for type of work. Commissioner Wilson will request volunteer help from students with artistic and Power Point skills.

COMMITTEE/STAFF REPORTS

Trail Building – Commissioner Kaley presented the Trail Proposal draft to be submitted to the Town Trails Committee. Commissioner Germain moved to approve the draft, Commissioner Cramer seconded and the motion passed unanimously. Commissioner Kaley will send the draft to the Trails Committee for feedback.

Forest Evaluation – Commissioner Kaley displayed the Open Space map highlighting several large (>30 acres) contiguous parcels of forested Open Space. She expressed the need to identify these properties with common names so they may be easily referenced and grouped in the Open Space Inventory. She will ask Rob Sibley about name suggestions and also the survey status of the parcels.

OS Inventory and Maintenance Progress – Commissioner Kaley reported that approximately two-thirds of the Open Space property deeds have been printed from the Town Clerk's computer system. Work will proceed on copying the remainder as well as labeling and filing the deeds.

Property Marking Plans, Surveying Status – Commissioners Kaley and Wilson marked the Tunnel Road Open Space on 02/07/12, so the OS Neighbor letter can be sent to abutters of this property. Marking the Middleton Road OS was scheduled for 02/21.

Natural Resources Inventory Status Report – Commissioners Germain and Wilson borrowed NRI copies to read before the Commission's next meeting.

Conservation Easement on WWTP – No update.

Status of Halfway River Fishing Access – No update.

Iroquois Invasive Documentation – No update.

Education Committee – Commissioner Wilson reported that Dan Holmes agreed to conduct a Commission-sponsored seminar on meadow ecology. She would like to include a session about barberry management in the seminar and will ask area specialists to participate.

Invasives Subcommittee – The upcoming Commission-sponsored Barberry Blitz initiative was discussed. Several changes to the draft flier were made, and Commissioner Wilson will investigate the feasibility of printing the flier in large poster format. The Subcommittee will coordinate (press, flier, etc.) publicity and identify and recognize Town shrub retailers who do not sell barberry. Commissioner Wilson will consult Pat Llodra for approval before rollout, and also about elevating this project to the HVCEO.

AI's Trail – No update.

Strategic Planning – Commissioner Wilson discussed the Strategic Plan draft, on which Commissioners should be prepared to comment during the next meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Federal Recreational Trails Program – Commissioner Kaley reported that \$85M in recreational trail funding has been restored to transportation bill MAP-21 but funding for rail to trail conversion is not included. Commissioner Wilson will ask Commissioner Hovious to draft a Commission position letter on this subject.

The Public Meeting was adjourned at 8:30 pm.