

**Conservation Commission
MINUTES
Regular Meeting – August 14, 2012 @ 7:00 pm
Newtown Municipal Center, 3 Primrose Street, Newtown, CT**

Present: Commissioners Cramer, Gaudet-Wilson, Henderson, McLeod (joined at 7:30 pm)

Staff: Rob Sibley, Deputy Director of Planning and Land Use; and Tammy Hazen, Clerk

These Minutes are subject to the approval of the Conservation Commission

The Public Meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: Two members of the press were present.

CORRESPONDENCE: Commissioner Wilson received a letter from Energy & Environmental Protection regarding the Sewage Treatment plant. The letter was received too late to respond to.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Commissioner Henderson motioned to approve the minutes of July 24, 2012, and seconded by Commissioner Cramer. After lengthy discussion, Commissioner Cramer requested a correction be made to the minutes under "TBDAC Follow-up". The correction is as follows: "A discussion ensued and it was decided that the commissioners will generate comments regarding the DEEP survey and forward them to Commissioner McLeod. Commissioner McLeod will compile the comments". (This change was per the tape recording of the meeting). After discussion, the minutes were unanimously approved as amended.

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

Membership Openings – Commissioner Wilson noted there are two openings now on the commission.

Committee Assignments – The commissioners discussed rearranging the memberships within the subcommittees.

Work Orders – No updates.

Task List – No updates.

OLD BUSINESS AND ACTION ITEMS

Fairfield Hills Open Space

- a. Barberry Removal Project – Commissioner Cramer will contact Dan Holmes to discuss the work he will be doing on the Barberry removal at FFH. She will plan to walk the area with Mr. Holmes and Mr. Sibley. Commissioners Wilson and Cramer began work on the updates of the Barberry Blitz signs.
- b. Kiosks at FFH – Commissioners Wilson and Cramer will attend the FFH Authority meeting on August 15th to ask about the design requirements for the two kiosks. They will propose building two kiosks

similar to the one at the Orchard Hill Preserve. There may be funding assistance through the Land Use Agency.

- c. Regulations for Events at FFH – Commissioners Wilson and Cramer attended a P & Z meeting that discussed regulations and the types of events that would be allowed at FFH. P & Z intends to protect the site as much as possible. Land use is working on streamlining the application process.
- d. Committee to Integrate Documents – Commissioner Wilson discussed a new committee that will integrate the FFH Master Plan Review Committee’s document with the Master Plan itself, and make sure the document will be consistent with the POCD.

High Meadow Follow-Up – Commissioner Wilson said that Herb Rosenthal explained the original agreement with the farmer who does the mowing. Commissioner Wilson forwarded a list of questions to Mr. Sibley that he can ask when he meets with the farmer.

COMMITTEE / STAFF REPORTS

Conservation Easement on WWTP – P & R – Mr. Sibley forwarded a copy of a memo from Carl Samuelson (Parks & Rec.) to George Benson regarding the Dog Park (memo dated 7-16-12). The Parks and Rec. Department is requesting the use of 15,000 sq ft of delineated Conservation Easement in order to extend their fenced area for the park. The increased area will allow for greater traffic dispersion. A map entitled “Zoning Location Survey, prepared for Town of Newtown, Old Farm Road, Newtown Connecticut” (dated 06-15-19/revised 11-18-11) was also reviewed by the commissioners. After thorough discussion, Commissioner Cramer motioned that the Conservation Commission approve the request from Parks and Rec. regarding the expansion of the dog park site utilizing a conservation easement. The conservation easement is to be approved only for the dog park and is to revert back to the Town at any point the dog park no longer exists. Commissioner Henderson seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Status of Halfway River Fishing Access – No updates.

Iroquois Invasive Documentation – No updates.

OS Inventory and Maintenance Subcommittee – No updates.

Property Marking Plans, Surveying Status – No updates.

Education Sub-committee

- a. Pole Bridge Preserve Pamphlet – No updates.
- b. Barberry Banner at Edmond Town Hall – Commissioner Wilson said the banner was approved for the front of Edmond Town Hall. She will fill out the appropriate forms and forward them to Jean St. Jean. Commissioner Cramer said that Mr. Benson said the banner can be placed on the FFH fence (along Wasserman Way).

Invasives Sub-Committee

- a. Mile-A-Minute Update – Commissioner Henderson will be receiving information from Ann Astarita soon. Commissioner Wilson said that Holly Kocet heard that Mile-a-Minute was found behind the Laundromat in Sandy Hook as well as another location. Commissioner Wilson and Ms. Kocet will be walking this area on Thursday afternoon.
- b. Letter to Landholders – Ms. Hazen mailed the first two batches of letters to landholders (of 20+ acres). The commissioners discussed a possible follow up with some of the non-private large property owners. Commissioner McLeod will e-mail the First Selectman about reaching out to the community with this information.
- c. Inspection of Private Properties – No updates.

Strategic Planning Subcommittee – No Updates.

NRI Subcommittee – No updates.

Al's Trail – No updates.

TBDAC Follow-up – Statement on Survey – Commissioner Wilson discussed the Conservation Commission's presentation of their statement to the Board of Selectmen. She felt that the statement was appropriate, non-aggressive and written in the spirit of good faith.

The commissioners discussed how to proceed when speaking on subjects related to the Conservation Commission. Commissioner Wilson felt that when statements are made by an individual either public or in writing, that person should state what commission they are representing or whether they are speaking as an individual. Commissioner Cramer felt her job as a member of the Commission is to do what is right for the health of the open space in town and that the protection of open space is the commission's responsibility.

After discussion, the members agreed on the following: (1) When making statements in person or in writing, each individual will identify themselves as either a member of a commission or as an individual; (2) Each individual will know what documents the commission has agreed upon (position paper, etc.); (3) An individual will not speak to any boards or officials on behalf of the Conservation Commission unless authorized by the commission; (4) All documents or correspondence should be circulated for review before being forwarded to others; and (5) Commissioners will show a clarity of thought and written word.

NEW BUSINESS - None

Commissioner Henderson motioned to adjourn at 8:12 pm. Commissioner Cramer seconded the motion. Motion was approved unanimously.