

Conservation Commission
MINUTES
Regular Meeting – September 25, 2012 @ 7:00 pm
Newtown Municipal Center, 3 Primrose Street, Newtown, CT

Present: Commissioners Hovious, Gaudet-Wilson, Hovious, and McLeod
Staff: Rob Sibley, Deputy Director of Planning and Land and Tammy Hazen, Clerk

These Minutes are subject to the approval of the Conservation Commission

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

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: None

CORRESPONDENCE: Commissioner Wilson discussed a letter from Legislative Council regarding the Charter revision. She will contact Jeff Capeci to confirm what they need from the commission.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Commissioner Hovious motioned to approve the minutes of September 11, 2012. Commissioner McLeod seconded the motion. Changes were made as follows: Under Fairfield Hills Open Space, Item #3, the sentence “Commissioners Cramer and Wilson ...” was changed to “Commissioner Wilson ...” The minutes were approved as amended.

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

Membership Openings – Commissioner Wilson will contact the First Selectman regarding John Feder. He has not officially submitted his resignation yet.

Staff Support – Commissioner Wilson explained how the commission has been looking at ways to operate more effectively using better communication and teamwork between the commission and staff. The Strategic Plan Subcommittee (Commissioners Hovious, Wilson and Cramer) met with Mr. Sibley to discuss objectives while reviewing processes that support the commission. This meeting resulted with positive ways to enhance the communication and support between staff and commissioners.

Charter Revision – The commissioners discussed the limited amount of information there is about the Conservation Commission in the Charter and felt additional information should be included. The Town Code Book and Ordinance 65 were also discussed. Commissioner Wilson will inform the Legislative Council that the commissioners are working on a revision of the commission’s portion of the Town’s Charter.

OLD BUSINESS AND ACTION ITEMS

Fairfield Hills Open Space

1. Barberry Removal Project/Publicity – Commissioner Wilson said there continues to be good publicity on this project.
2. Kiosks – No updates.
3. Committee to Integrate Documents – Commissioners Cramer and Wilson will attend the next meeting scheduled for September 27th at 9:00 am.

Curtis Pond/Turnberry Project – Commissioner Hovious said the P & Z proposal has been withdrawn but that it will be re-submitted with a Public Hearing tentatively scheduled for October 18th. Mr. Sibley noted that Public Works mowed the top of the dam and the access way. Commissioner Hovious said the area needs to be clearly marked. He compiled seven points to add as comments by the commission on this application. This

draft will be emailed to the commission for review and discussion at the next meeting. It was suggested that parking for access to the pond should be requested.

SUBCOMMITTEES

Open Space Inventory and Maintenance Subcommittee – Commissioner Hovious discussed a potential budget item for assistance on open space work. In reviewing the Yale and Forestry reports, he compiled a draft priority list entitled “Budget for 2013 Care and Custody Ideas from Yale Studies and Forester Walks – JCH 9/25/2012”. The items included improvements to Pole Bridge, Pond Brook, and Grady (Stone Bridge) open space parcels. Mr. Sibley explained that most of this work would fall under the operating budget for Parks and Rec. He will also look to see what funds are available in the open space gift fund account and said funds could be requested for open space improvements or projects through the CIP (Capital Improvement Plan) requests. He stated that the physical care of open space would fall under Parks and Rec.’s budget. Commissioner Hovious was concerned that this was not working acceptably to date. Mr. Sibley noted that Parks and Rec. have not had this line item in their budget. He felt the commission can support the line item for Parks & Rec.; he will be meeting with Amy Mangold and will find out more information. The commission will provide a letter to Parks and Rec. with a list of things that are needed for open space and AI’s Trail.

Commissioner McLeod left at 8:25 pm.

1. Pond Brook Marking/Inspection – Commissioner Hovious discussed their walk on this property with the landowner adjacent to the parcel who wants to mow the meadow. He said that currently there is no easy access to this open space parcel for maintenance. The neighbors are using it as a personal riding ring. Mr. Sibley discussed the possibility of a lot line revision, but this needs to be researched. There is also an issue of liability if neighbors are using the open space. Commissioner Hovious felt it may be best to keep it a meadow. The concern is that it be mowed while keeping the nesting birds in mind. Mr. Sibley will research options and get back to the commission.

Education Subcommittee

1. Pole Bridge Pamphlet – Commissioner Hovious will forward the information to Mr. Sibley and Ms. Hazen.
2. Barberry Banner at Edmond Town Hall – No updates.
3. Invasive Fliers – Commissioner Wilson will order more flyers.

Invasives Subcommittee

1. Response to Letters to Landholders – There have been minimal phone calls in response to these letters.
2. Info to Private Property Owners – No update.
3. Disposal of Invasives at Transfer Station – Mr. Sibley said there will be a four to six yard dumpster placed for invasive removal at the transfer station. Fred Hurley needs language for a sign and flyers with basic instructions made up that can be handed out. Commissioner Wilson will put something together for this.
4. Bittersweet Signs – Mr. Sibley said that several signs have been placed up around town.
5. Invasives in Local Nurseries – Commissioners Cramer and Henderson visited eight out of the twenty nurseries they planned to visit to see whether invasives are being sold. The commission discussed different varieties and whether they would be considered invasive or not. If they are, it can be reported to ENCON.
6. Volunteers – Commissioner Wilson said someone has volunteered to remove invasives using large equipment. The commission will expect to receive something in writing from him soon.

Strategic Planning Subcommittee – Commissioner Hovious explained that he has integrated all the changes to document “Newtown Conservation Commission Strategic Plan” dated 9/25/12 (revision 3), but there were

issues in the way the document printed, so this will be tabled to the next meeting. He will forward this via email to Mr. Sibley.

NRI Subcommittee – No updates.

AI's Trail – No updates.

TBDAC Follow-up (Four posters, Redding plan, etc.) – Commissioner Wilson opened discussion on four posters and whether the commission should have a position on it. She discussed a possible test site in Newtown for a research project that may be able to be funded by another source. This would need to be brought forth to the Board of Selectmen. She noted that the CDC funded \$900,000 for Redding to use four different techniques, Tick X (a fungus) being used in conjunction with four posters being one of them.

STAFF REPORT – Mr. Sibley said that the presentation to Legislative Council (on open space donations and lot line revisions) was postponed to October 3rd.

NEW BUSINESS – None.

Commissioner Hovious motioned to go into Executive Session at 9:20 pm. Commissioner Henderson seconded the motion. Motion was approved unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted by Tammy Hazen