

**Conservation Commission**  
**MINUTES**  
**Regular Meeting – December 11, 2012 @ 7:00 pm**  
**Newtown Municipal Center, 3 Primrose Street, Newtown, CT**

**Present:** Commissioners Astarita, Cramer, Gaudet-Wilson, and Hovious;  
**Absent:** Henderson and McLeod; **Staff:** 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:** None

**CORRESPONDENCE:** Commissioner Wilson read a letter from Bill and Katja Pieragostini regarding a forest stewardship plan for 53 acres of land (49 acres of this is a conservation easement). The commissioners will review the original easement language. Commissioner Wilson will follow-up on this.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Commissioner Hovious motioned to approve the minutes of November 13, 2012. Commissioner Wilson seconded the motion. Changes to the minutes are as follows: Under “Curtis Pond/Turnberry Lane Project” change “... no trees will be cut down” to “... a minimal number of trees will be cut down”. Also the last sentence should read “There is a change in the retaining wall.” The minutes were approved as amended.

Commissioner Hovious motioned to approve the minutes of December 5, 2012. Commissioner Cramer seconded the motion. All were in favor.

**ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS**

Membership Appointment/Opening – Commissioner Wilson welcomed Ann Astarita as a new member. There is still one opening that may be filled soon.

Budget Update – No updates.

Meeting Schedule for 2013 – The commissioners discussed having the regular meetings changed to the second and fourth Mondays of each month. This will be discussed with the commissioners that are not in attendance and with Mr. Sibley. Once agreed, Ms. Hazen will inform the Town Clerk of the change.

Appointment of Nominating Committee – Commissioner Wilson said Commissioner Henderson offered to be in the nominating committee.

**OLD BUSINESS AND ACTION ITEMS**

Fairfield Hills Open Space

1. **Kiosks** – Commissioner Cramer said that John Vaughn (Life Scout) did a great job completing the kiosks. He will work on installing Plexiglas. Commissioner Hovious will contact him.
2. **Committee to Integrate Documents** – Commissioner Cramer said the commission has been asked to provide input on open space potential (small parcels) within the main campus area.

Curtis Pond / Turnberry Project – Commissioner Wilson discussed the changes in the Turnberry project. Access to open space and the pond will remain the same. The issue still outstanding is the signage for parking spaces to be designated for those wishing to access open space or the pond.

Reports Rivers Alliance and CACIWC – Commissioners Wilson discussed the Rivers Alliance Seminar in Ridgefield held on November 14<sup>th</sup>. She said the information was excellent, including presentations on saving state conserved lands and planning for extreme rainfall. She learned that updated rainfall data shows that flood plains info can change; what use to be considered a 100-year flood is now considered an 83-year flood; and that New England has the most changes in precipitation.

Commissioner Hovious attended CACIWC. He encouraged everyone to attend next year. He discussed the three presentations he attended that provided ideas about open space inventory and fundraising. Ridgefield has a successful annual fundraiser and their NRI is a live document on an interactive website. Residents can update information and provide input. Also, the CT Review Committee can do walkthroughs of properties and offer environmental recommendations (provided by NRCS and USDA with DEEP funding).

Development of Website – Commissioner Wilson said Alisha Aggarwal, a freshman at Newtown High School, has agreed to work on the commission's website. Commissioner McLeod will be the lead on this project which will begin in January.

## **SUBCOMMITTEES**

### Open Space Inventory and Maintenance Subcommittee

1. **Possible Invasive Removal Orchard Hill, Pole Bridge, et al** – Commissioner Wilson is in contact with Glen Ekstrom who will be completing the work. The lot line revision for Pole Bridge needs to be recorded. She will e-mail Mr. Sibley to find out when Mr. Ekstrom can begin the work.
2. **Pole Bridge Trail Work** – No update.
3. **Addition/Lot Line Revision for Five Properties** – Commissioners Hovious and Wilson and Mr. Sibley attended the Legislative Council Meeting on December 5<sup>th</sup> where five parcels of land were added to Town Open Space. There are three parcel donation in the Laurel Trail area, a donation on Poor House Road, and a lot line revision that enhances the Pole Bridge Preserve.

### Education Subcommittee

1. **Pole Bridge Pamphlet** – No update.
2. **Website** – Please see “Development of Website” above.

### Invasives Subcommittee

1. **Akebia Follow-up** – Commissioner Wilson, Hovious and Astarita inspected the Route 34 area and found Akebia more extensively. Kendra Bobowick from The Bee requested information for an article.
2. **Nunnawauk Meadows Report** – Commissioner Wilson presented the report to personnel at Nunnawauk Meadows. It was found that some trails previously accessible are now posted with no trespassing signs. She will call and ask them about this.
3. **Disposal of Invasives at Transfer Station** – No update.
4. **Mile-a-Minute / Bamboo** – Commissioner Astarita said the weevils have gone underground for the winter now that the Mile-a-Minute is dead. Commissioner Wilson asked the State to address the Bamboo situation since the Town cannot pass an ordinance unless the State has a ban or restriction.

The First Selectman invited the Commissioners to a State Rep's meeting. The commission will ask for support regarding the banning of or regulating of the sale of Bamboo.

Strategic Planning Subcommittee – No update.

POCD Subcommittee – Commissioners Wilson, Astarita and Hovious reviewed their work and revisions to the POCD, specifically sections including Natural Resources, Open Space and a list of goals and needs.

NRI Subcommittee – No update

Al's Trail – The commissioners were pleased to hear that an anonymous donor paid for the removal of Autumn Olive and other invasives along Deep Brook and Al's Trail.

**STAFF REPORT / CIP** – No Update.

**NEW BUSINESS** – None

The commissioners discussed reviewing minutes of other commissions/committees/boards that are critical to Conservation. They asked Ms. Hazen to send copies of all Inland Wetland Agendas and Minutes to the commissioners.

Commissioner Cramer motioned to adjourn at 9:15 pm. Commissioner Astarita seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

The next meeting will be held on Monday, January 14<sup>th</sup>.

Respectfully Submitted by Tammy Hazen