

Conservation Commission
MINUTES
Regular Meeting – January 14, 2013 @ 7:00 pm
Newtown Municipal Center, 3 Primrose Street, Newtown, CT

Present: Marj Cramer, Mary Gaudet-Wilson, Adria Henderson and Joe Hovious;
Absent: Ann Astarita and Michele McLeod

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 mentioned that Anne Peters forwarded registration information for Connecticut Conference on Natural Resources.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Commissioner Hovious motioned to approve the minutes of December 11, 2012. Commissioner Cramer seconded the motion. Changes to the minutes are as follows: Under Administrative Items / Appointment of Nominating Committee: the word “in” to be changed to “on”. Under Fairfield Hills Open Space / Kiosks: change “Commissioner Hovious will contact him.” to “John Vaughn will contact Commissioner Hovious if he needs further information.” Under Reports Rivers Alliance and CACIWC, the last sentence to be deleted. Under Invasives Subcommittee / Mile-a-Minute / Bamboo, change the word “dead” to “dormant”, then the following sentences to be deleted and replaced with “Commissioner Wilson has spoken with State officials about the possibility of State action regarding Bamboo control.” The minutes were approved as amended.

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

Membership Appointment/Opening – No Updates

Meeting Schedule for 2013 – The 2013 calendar was discussed and will remain as planned.

Election of Officers for 2013 – Commissioner Henderson said it is suggested that Commissioner Gaudet-Wilson continue on as Chair, that Ann Astarita agreed to be Vice-Chair, and that Joe Hovious agreed to be Secretary. Commissioner Cramer then motioned that the slate of officers as specified by Commissioner Henderson be approved. Commissioner Hovious seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

Monitoring of Town Commissions – The commissioners discussed monitoring other pertinent Newtown commissions (i.e., Inland Wetlands, Planning & Zoning, Legislative Council, Board of Selectmen, and Parks & Rec.). Each commissioner will review certain agendas and minutes and will report on anything pertinent to the Conservation Commission. Commissioner Henderson agreed to review P & Z; Commissioner Cramer will review Board of Selectmen; Commissioner Hovious suggested that Commissioner Astarita review Inland Wetlands and that he will review Legislative Council. Commissioner Wilson will review Parks and Rec.

OLD BUSINESS AND ACTION ITEMS

Fairfield Hills Open Space

1. **Kiosks** – Commissioner Cramer said it is moving along and has met with the Life Scout who showed her a model of what the Plexiglas will look like. She said it will be mounted on a piece of wood and will close with a hook. There will be space between the glass and the back of the kiosk. Commissioner Hovious mentioned that they have found problems with people kicking in the Plexiglas on other kiosks

so they make them now with no space in between. At one point someone had reached up and kicked the kiosk to break the Plexiglas. Commissioner Cramer will speak with John again to see if it's too late to make them this way.

2. **Committee on Fairfield Hills (Open Space)** – Commissioner Cramer said Debbie Zukowski has asked her for information on open space including what parts of Fairfield Hills will fall under that designation. She needs this by the end of January. Commissioner Cramer will draft something up and email it to the commission for review.

POCD Documents Discussion – The commissioners had a lengthy discussion regarding the draft POCD documents. Each item was discussed and suggestions and comments from commissioners and Anne Peters from the Inland Wetlands Commission were reviewed.

Tree Donations – Commissioner Wilson said the Town has received numerous donations of trees slated to be planted in Newtown. It is unknown who will coordinate this work.

Project at Pieragostini – Commissioner Wilson opened discussion on a request by the Pieragostini's for the commission to review a forest stewardship plan that includes clear cutting forest for agricultural use on the existing conservation easement. The commissioners reviewed the request, the conservation easement language and other documents. The proposal includes clear cutting to convert portions of the property into agricultural use (fruit orchards, barley, rye, wheat and asparagus crops). It also includes cutting forest for cottontail habitat. This includes 33 acres of clear cut. The crops will be grown for commercial use. Commissioner Hovious requested to move into Executive Session at 8:38 pm. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Cramer and unanimously approved. The commission came out of Executive Session at 9:05 pm. The commissioners discussed preparing a position paper regarding this request. They will continue to discuss this at the next meeting on January 22nd.

SUBCOMMITTEES

Open Space Inventory and Maintenance Subcommittee

1. **Pole Bridge Trail Work** – On hold pending the transfer of the property.
2. **Review of Open Space Parcels, Spreadsheet** – Commissioner Hovious said they need another commissioner to help with the review of the open space files.

Education Subcommittee

1. **Pole Bridge Pamphlet** – No updates, waiting for property transfer.
2. **Development of Website** – Commissioner McLeod recently met with Alisha Aggarwal. Commissioner Wilson informed the Monroe Conservation Commission that their site's template will be used for the Newtown CC's website. Monroe uses Dreamweaver as a platform. Ms. Aggarwal has requested materials and asked the commissioners for their ideas and as many pictures as possible to help with the website creation. She is also working to develop a logo for the commission

Invasives Subcommittee

1. **Nunnawauk Meadows Trails** – Commissioner Wilson talked to Linda Manganaro at Nunnawauk Meadows who told her that although the trails are on private property, the public is free to use the trails. Commissioner Wilson had walked the trails in early December and found them to be well maintained.
2. **Disposal of Invasives at Transfer Station** – No update.
3. **Bamboo** – No update.

Strategic Planning Subcommittee – Commissioner Hovious sent out an update and is working on a mission statement. He will resend the latest version to all the commissioners

NRI Subcommittee – Tabled.

Al's Trail – Commissioner Hovious said he received an email from Dan Holmes about reforestation on Al's Trail up on top near the Mason property. He will refer Mr. Holmes to Commissioner Henderson. Commissioner Wilson said to keep the donated trees that are coming into town into mind.

STAFF REPORT / CIP – Commissioner Wilson said the CIP is coming up at the Legislative Council. Mr. Sibley will not attend but said there should be no issues. Commissioner Wilson will attend and keep the commission updated.

NEW BUSINESS – Commissioner Hovious discussed the budget items for Parks and Rec., he will follow up with Amy Mangold.

Commissioner Hovious then said that he felt the owner of 31 Clearview Avenue has not complied with a request to remove items from Town open space. He asked the commissioners to drive by to take a look.

Commissioner Cramer motioned to adjourn at 9:45 pm. Commissioner Hovious seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

Respectfully Submitted by Tammy Hazen