

Conservation Commission
MINUTES
Regular Meeting – May 28, 2013 @ 7:00 pm
Newtown Municipal Center, 3 Primrose Street, Newtown, CT

Present: Marj Cramer, Bill Darrin, Mary Gaudet-Wilson, Joe Hovious (VIA conference call), and Martha Wright (representing NFA); **Absent:** Ann Astarita and Michele McLeod. **Staff Present:** Tammy Hazen, Clerk

These Minutes are subject to the approval of the Conservation Commission

The Public Meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm

Ms. Wilson added one agenda item to Old Business; “Web Address”.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – None.

CORRESPONDENCE – None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Mr. Darrin motioned to approve the minutes of May 13, 2013. Ms. Cramer seconded the motion. Mr. Hovious abstained. The minutes were approved as written.

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

Review of Other Commissions – Mr. Hovious said Parks and Rec. are looking at a proposal for work to be done at Dickenson Park including some unearthing of additional streams. He was asked to attend a June 3rd meeting to hear this proposal. He is concerned about the existing stream they unearthed with rip/rap that has no plantings, which is not environmentally good. Ms. Wilson will also attend the meeting. She said there was an article in The Bee. Mr. Hovious then discussed some e-mails he received regarding the bicycle-friendly Newtown initiative that the Trails group is addressing. Mr. Hovious’ letter to the Editor was published in The Bee.

Task List – No update.

Open Position – Ms. Wilson said that Karlyn Sturmer has shown great interest in becoming a commissioner. She feels Karlyn would be a great asset to the commission.

Summer Schedules – No update.

OLD BUSINESS AND ACTION ITEMS

Fairfield Hills Open Space

1. **Kiosks** – Ms. Wilson bought corkboard and drafted flyers. The commissioners discussed having maps designating trails and open space, etc. for the kiosks as well.
2. **Committee on Fairfield Hills (Open Space)** – The commissioners reviewed the updated information in the updated FFH document.

Conservation Easements/Forestry Evaluation – Ms. Wilson discussed her conversation with Marylse Duguid regarding the Point o’ Rocks proposal and easement language. Ms. Duguid is working on her PhD at Yale and lives in Newtown. In her review she felt the Conservation Commission has the power to make a decision regarding the easement. Also, she noted that cottontail habitat can make it virtually impossible to walk through due to briar bushes. The management plan looks fine except that bringing the canopy down to fifty percent was borderline. She agreed to review any new proposals that are submitted.

Web Address – The new email address for the Conservation Commission is **newtownconservation@gmail.com**.

SUBCOMMITTEES

Open Space Inventory and Maintenance Subcommittee – The commissioners discussed their portions of research. Ms. Hazen will update the database and file documents gathered into the open space files.

Ms. Wilson said that Bethel purchased the Franc property. Ms. Wright said the NFA is working with the Town of Bethel to establish trails that will go from one section to another. They are also working with Brookfield.

Education Subcommittee

1. **Development of Website** – Ms. Wilson will meet with the teacher to see if the new software (CS5) is something Alisha can use. She noted that CS5 is a Dreamweaver application.
2. **Pamphlet on Wetlands** – No update.

Invasives Subcommittee

1. **Invasives at Transfer Station** – Pamphlets were left at the library.
2. **Bamboo** – Ms. Wilson said the Bamboo bill was passed and amended to enable not only conservation officers, but also any duly authorized municipal constable, municipal tree warden, zoning enforcement officer or Inland Wetland and Watercourses officers. Beginning on October 1, 2013, the bill makes people who plant running bamboo (or allow it to be planted) liable for any damage the bamboo does to neighboring properties.
3. **Inspections for invasives on Private Properties** – Ms. Wilson said a resident brought some plants (in Ziplock bags) to the Land Use office for identification and to see whether they were invasives. Ms. Wilson brought the samples to the UConn extension center where four they were identified as invasives. Ms. Wilson spoke with another resident who has a problem with bittersweet on her property that borders open space that also has bittersweet. Ms. Wilson will speak with George Benson on this. The commissioners then discussed funding needs to help invasive removal and will set up a meeting with Parks and Rec. and Land Use.
4. **Possible Town Task Force** – The commissioners discussed creating a Task Force to help with the invasive removal in town. This group can oversee larger groups of volunteers. Commissioners Wilson and Cramer will set up a meeting with the First Selectman to discuss.

POCD Subcommittee – The commissioners discussed the latest POCD update.

NEW BUSINESS

Bike Trails – Commissioner Hovious discussed the proposal to Parks and Rec. to make Newtown a bicycle friendly Town and his concern over mountain bikes on certain trails in town.

Newtown Forest Association – Martha Wright will be attending the Conservation Commission's meeting to be a link between NFA and the commission. Ms. Wilson said she would like the commission to work more closely with NFA in looking at properties in and around Newtown.

After no further discussion, Mr. Darrin motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:45 pm. Ms. Cramer seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

Respectfully Submitted by Tammy Hazen