

Conservation Commission
MINUTES
Regular Meeting –June 10, 2013 @ 7:00 pm
Newtown Municipal Center, 3 Primrose Street, Newtown, CT

Present: Ann Astarita, Marj Cramer, Mary Gaudet-Wilson, Joe Hovious; **Absent:** Bill Darrin 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 7:10 pm

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – None.

CORRESPONDENCE – None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Ms. Cramer motioned to approve the minutes of May 28, 2013. Mr. Hovious seconded the motion. Ms. Astarita abstained. Changes are as follows: Under “Review of Other Commissions”, change “Dickenson” to “Dickinson”. Then the last sentence change to “Mr. Hovious’ letter to the Editor, on behalf of the Conservation Commission, was published in The Bee” ; Under “Open Position” delete the last sentence; Under “Conservation Easements/Forestry Evaluation”, delete the second to the last sentence. Then under “Inspections for invasives on Private Properties”, third line down, delete “four”. The minutes were approved as amended.

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

Review of Other Commissions – Ms. Cramer said she attended the Board of Selectmen meeting where the Health District did a great presentation on Ticks emphasizing prevention.

Task List – The commissioners reviewed and updated the task list. Ms. Hazen will update the list and send it out to the commission. With regards to the new email set up for the commission, Ms. Hazen will check the email daily and forward to the commissioners.

Open Position – Ms. Wilson discussed openings. Ms. Wilson will check with the First Selectman’s office about affiliation. She said that Ms. McLeod verbally resigned the commission but will send in a letter of resignation.

Summer Schedules – No changes to the regular schedule yet.

OLD BUSINESS AND ACTION ITEMS

Fairfield Hills Open Space

1. **Kiosks** – No update.
2. **Committee on Fairfield Hills (Open Space)** – Commissioners Wilson and Cramer attended the meeting. The commissioners discussed the value of maintaining the East, West and High meadows as open space. Commissioners Wilson and Astarita will walk the meadows to see the current habitats. Different types of trails and the term “Open Space” were discussed as they relate to public access vs. protection of natural wildlife and habitat.
3. **Mad Dash** – The commissioners discussed the mowing of paths made through the High Meadow for this event and its potential effects on nesting birds. There appeared to be more cutting done this year than last.

Conservation Easements – Mr. Hovious said Steve Birney should be getting a list of Conservation Easements completed by the end of the week.

Bike Trails – Mr. Hovious discussed the trails group meeting where he discussed areas on roads that could be marked for biking as opposed to developing new trails off-road.

SUBCOMMITTEES

Open Space Inventory and Maintenance Subcommittee – The commissioners prioritize open space parcels to mark. (1) Sanford Road, (2) Fulton/Platts Hill Road, (3) Hoseye Coach / Marlin, (4) Ridge Valley, and (5) Leopard Drive.

Education Subcommittee

1. **Development of Website** – Ms. Wilson said progress is being made. She spoke with the teacher and Alisha. It was determined that they need the Student Edition of Dreamweaver and Photoshop. Ms. Astarita will lead this project.
2. **Pamphlet on Wetlands** – The commissioners discussed the updated pamphlet. Ms. Hazen will make minor changes and e-mail to Ms. Astarita.

Invasives Subcommittee – Ms. Wilson opened discussion regarding funding for invasive removal and a possible task force or subcommittee. She said Mr. Sibley asked for a priority list of work the commission wants. The commissioners discussed and concluded with the following priorities: (1) Pole Bridge; (2) Pond Brook; (3) Fairfield Hills; (4) Point o' Rocks Preserve; (5) Stonebridge; and (6) Commerce Road along Deep Brook.

1. **Invasives at Transfer Station** – No update.
2. **Bamboo** – Ms. Wilson noted the bamboo bill, Public Act 13-82, was approved. Ms. Wilson sent a copy to Atty. Grogins for review and interpretation. He noted that enforcement on new or existing bamboo issues can begin on October 1, 2013.
3. **Inspections for Invasives on Private Properties** – No Update.
4. **Possible Town Task Force** – See first paragraph above.

POCD Subcommittee – Ms. Wilson attended the Planning and Zoning meeting. The commission's input was integrated into the POCD. Mr. Benson stated that the Conservation Commission will be added to the pre-app review list.

Al's Trail – no update.

NEW BUSINESS

Dickinson Park Project – Commissioners Hovious, Wilson and Astarita attended a meeting to discuss this project which includes a wetlands education center. Ms. Astarita drafted questions to be discussed, including the concern over the disruption to wildlife that board walks and viewing platforms may cause; whether technical people should be included in on the discussion and to see if there are wetland soils underneath the fill; whether a wildlife assessment should be done; and whether they may need to go through a Wetlands permitting process (possible Army Corp.). She will draft a letter for the commissioners to review. This is a project that Healing Newtown is proposing sponsored by Parks and Rec.

Dog Leash Flyer – Ms. Wilson was asked by Mr. Sibley for the commissioners to review a flyer regarding Town Ordinance 84 that states dogs should be leashed and cleaned up after on Town property.

After no further discussion, Ms Cramer motioned to go into Executive Session at 10:30. Ms. Astarita seconded the motion. The motion was approved .

Mr. Hovious motioned to adjourn the meeting at 11:00 pm. Ms. Astarita seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

Respectfully Submitted by Tammy Hazen