

Conservation Commission
MINUTES
Regular Meeting –June 25, 2013 @ 7:00 pm
Newtown Municipal Center, 3 Primrose Street, Newtown, CT

Present: Ann Astarita, Bill Darin, Mary Gaudet-Wilson, and Joe Hovious; **Absent:** Marj Cramer; **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: Mr. Hovious motioned to approve the minutes of June 10, 2013. Mr. Darrin seconded the motion. Changes are as follows: Second page, third line down, change “prioritizes” to “prioritized”. Under “POCD Subcommittee”, change “The commission’s input was integrated into the POCD”, to “The commission’s input was integrated into the draft POCD”. The minutes were approved as amended.

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

Review of Other Commissions – Mr. Hovious discussed Parks and Rec’s minutes referencing a proposed trail on the Fairfield Hills campus. He will see if there are specific plans for this trail. There was also discussion about the wetlands education center at Dickinson Park. There will be a guided tour on June 27th at 5:30 pm. Ms. Wilson said the Board of Selectmen announced the opening on the Conservation Commission but she has not seen it announced in the Bee.

Task List – The commissioners reviewed and updated the task list

Open Position – The opening for the commission was announced at the Board of Selectmen meeting. Michele McLeod will need to send in a letter of resignation.

Summer Schedules – No changes to the regular schedule.

OLD BUSINESS AND ACTION ITEMS

Fairfield Hills Open Space

1. **Kiosks** – Ms. Wilson and her husband worked on placing information in the kiosks. More information will be added.
2. **Committee on Fairfield Hills (Open Space)** – Commissioners Wilson and Astarita walked the campus and wrote a report that lists the diversity of wildlife and habitat found. If there were a trail planned for the campus, they suggest it be around the perimeter of the property. Signage or lookouts for educational purposes were discussed. Ms. Wilson discussed developing a meadow management plan. Ms. Astarita will do some research on this. Mr. Hovious will contact Amy Mangold to see if there are any trail plans for the campus. Ms. Wilson voiced concerns about keeping the meadows protected. It was noted that on the east side of the campus there are nice trails in the woods that residents have used for mountain bikes and horses.

Conservation Easements – Mr. Hovious distributed and reviewed a list of conservation easements integrated with information provided by Steve Birney (GIS). More research in the Town Clerk’s office needs to be completed.

Bike Trails – A proposed bike trail at Dickinson Park was discussed and potential interest in a bike trail on the Sanford Road open space property. There is a great deal of Barberry on the Sanford Road open space.

Dog Leash Flyer – This will be discussed at the next meeting.

SUBCOMMITTEES

Open Space Inventory and Maintenance Subcommittee – The commissioners discussed the updated inventory list. Lines 2-55 was completed by Ms. Wilson; Mr. Darrin will complete lines 56-110; Ms. Astarita will complete lines 111-165; Ms. Cramer will work on lines 166-220; Ms. Hovious has completed lines 221-265 (he will complete 266-275); and Ms. Hazen will work on lines 276-330.

Education Subcommittee

1. **Development of Website** – Ms. Wilson said the appropriate software has been ordered.
2. **Pamphlet on Wetlands** – Ms. Hazen will send the updated pamphlet to the commissioners.

Invasives Subcommittee

1. **Invasives at Fairfield Hills (Barberry)** – Ms. Wilson said that Voices did an article on invasives at Fairfield Hills. Commissioners Wilson and Astarita found a large stand of Japanese Knotweed along Mile Hill Road. Other invasives were found near the East Meadow. In a separate meeting, Mr. Sibley suggested the commission get quotes and request funding from the First Selectman. Ms. Wilson contacted Dan Holmes to see if he has interest. Mr. Hovious also asked about the person who volunteered at one point last year to do this kind of work.
2. **Invasives Work this Summer** – Ms. Wilson said a landscaping company is scheduled to work on Al's Trail. Ms. Wilson walked Pole Bridge and noted the meadow looks good but that two large trees have fallen. The meadow should be mowed at the end of the summer. Mr. Sibley had said he would like to have more invasives removed in order to expand the meadow up the hill. Ms. Wilson noted there is \$5,000 set aside for invasive removal on Pond Brook.
3. **Possible Town Task Force/Subcommittee** – Ms. Wilson will discuss this with the First Selectman.

POCD (490 Status) – The commissioners reviewed and discussed State Statute 490. The agricultural (farming) and forest land portion is activate in Newtown but the open space portion has not been enacted as of yet.

Al's Trail – Ms. Wilson said she and her husband walked Al's Trail. The commissioners discussed it be designated as a Blue Trail with the CT Forest and Parks Association (CFPA). It would be beneficial to have a "Friends of Al's Trail's" group. They will contact Pat Barkman to discuss.

NEW BUSINESS

After no further discussion, Mr. Darrin motioned to go into Executive Session at 9:15. Ms. Astarita seconded the motion. The motion was approved. Mr. Hovious motioned to adjourn the meeting at 10:00. The motion was seconded by Mr. Darrin. The motion was approved.

Respectfully Submitted by Tammy Hazen