

**Conservation Commission**  
**MINUTES**  
**Regular Meeting – September 9, 2013 @ 7:00 pm**  
**Newtown Municipal Center, 3 Primrose Street, Newtown, CT**

**Present:** Ann Astarita, Bill Darrin (by phone), Joe Hovious, Mary Gaudet-Wilson; **Also Present:** Martha Wright;  
**Absent:** Ms. 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 7:05 pm.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** – None.

**CORRESPONDENCE** – None.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES** – Ms Astarita motioned to approve the minutes of August 12, 2013. Mr. Darrin seconded the motion. Changes include: Under “Public Participation”, change “West Meadows” to “West Meadow”; Under “Fairfield Hills Meadows”, add “Ms. Astarita saw several species of special concern in Connecticut, including the Bobolink”. The minutes were approved as amended.

**ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS**

Review of Other Commissions – Mr. Hovious noted Parks and Rec.’s discussions for a playground at Dickenson Park, their request for a bike route in Newtown with the Police Commission, and trails on Fairfield Hills campus.

Task List – Mr. Hovious gave Ms. Hazen handwritten updates. She will update it and send it out to the commission.

Open Position – Ms. Wilson said there are a couple people still interested in the two open positions.

**OLD BUSINESS AND ACTION ITEMS**

Fairfield Hills

1. **Kiosks** – Ms. Wilson fixed some of the information posted in the kiosks.
2. **Fairfield Hills Meadows** – Ms. Astarita discussed the draft reports and said she incorporated the two meadows into one report (Habitat Management Plan). Potential perimeter trails were discussed and the importance of having the High Meadow soils delineated. The report will be finalized and sent to the commissioners for review, then will be forwarded to Planning & Zoning.
3. **Revised Master Plan** – Ms. Wilson said she spoke with Mr. Benson and asked to have an outdated map removed from the document.
4. **Corn Fields** – Ms. Wilson drafted a letter to the Commissioner of Agriculture (State of CT) requesting information on potential agricultural experiments in corn fields at the junction of Deep Brook and Pootatuck River. There is a noticeable browning of fields after apparent pesticide and/or herbicide applications where applied in large swaths. The vegetation turn brown in the mid- to late summer and are bordered by green strips, appearing to be possible paths traveled by equipment used to apply the chemicals. The concern is potential danger to residents, adjacent watercourses, and effects on native wildlife. This may or may not be associated with the recent fish kill in Deep Brook currently being investigated by DEEP.

Conservation Easements – Mr. Hovious said he and Chris Zakur continues to work on the list of easements. A report should be ready by the next meeting.

Bike Trails – Potential areas for bike trails were discussed, including a proposal for a bike trail along the streets, which was turned down by the Police Commission.

Fish Kill on Deep Brook – Ms. Astarita said a letter dated 7/16/13 from Mike Humphreys to Trout Unlimited states that DEEP sampled fish populations of Pootatuck and Deep Brook in July where between the old bridge on Deep Brook by the dog pound and 350 yards upstream there were only three 3” Brown Trout, but immediately above the oil tributary they found it abundant with up to 14” trout. Conductivity in the tributary was extremely high indicating that toxic material was still present. A water sample will be analyzed. He could not find the source of the toxic material. Mr. Hovious said a letter dated 8/9/13 was received from Mr. Humphreys stating his investigations. He measured conductivity near a storm drain on Fairfield Hills campus and the upstream watershed. He met with Public Works who supplied blueprints of the campus’ storm drain system and reviewed recent activities in the area. He worked with Carl Samuelson from Parks and Rec and went through records of herbicide and pesticide applications on campus ball fields. He said nothing jumped out as a likely cause of the fish kill. The water sample is still to be processed by the DEEP water bureau.

Meadow on 38-9-34 Riverside Road – Ms. Wilson found that this parcel is part of the Treadwell Parks complex. The commission will encourage protecting this meadow. Mr. Hovious said there are a number of parcels in town that should have the open space designation. It may require looking back to see how they were acquired. Ms. Astarita will check in the Town Clerk’s office.

## **SUBCOMMITTEES**

Open Space Inventory and Maintenance Subcommittee – Commissioners Wilson, Hovious and Ms. Hazen will meet on Wednesday September 25<sup>th</sup> 9:00 am in Conference Room #3 to review the open space maps printed and information gathered by the volunteer/student.

### Education Subcommittee

1. **Development of Website** – There are still issues with having the GIS Department getting the software loaded onto the Conservation Commission’s laptop. Ms. Wilson will speak with Mr. Sibley about this.
2. **Distribution of Wetlands Pamphlet** – Complete.

### Invasives Subcommittee

1. **Invasives at Fairfield Hills (Japanese Knotweed)** –The First Selectman approved having Dan Holmes remove Japanese Knotweed on campus. Invoices should be sent directly to the Director of Finance, Bob Tait.
2. **Possible Town Task Force/Subcommittee** – Ms. Wilson said there are five residents ready to help with invasives. This would be a task force working under the Conservation Commission, as per George Benson.
3. **Bamboo** – Ms Wilson discussed a training session she attended for enforcement and citation process for the Bamboo bill. It was noted that there are still some invasives being sold in nurseries. Jim Gaston will work on setting up an ordinance in the Borough. There is a meeting on Friday morning at 8:30 with George Benson.
4. **Mile-a-Minute** – Ms. Wilson discussed a resident on Fallen Leaf Drive who has Mile-a-Minute on her property. It is creeping down an ravine and up an embankment and into this neighborhood. There are evidence of Weevils working. Ms. Wilson said she and others have pulled over five bags of MAM in this area. She feels letters should be sent out to residents in the subdivision. Ms Astarita discussed a new invasive called Japanese Hops. Wind pushes the pollen and it follows streams.

Al’s Trail – The commissioners discussed members of CT Forest and Parks Association (CFPA) walking the trail and finding portions of it impassable. Ms. Astarita said they are interested in pursuing the trail (as a Blue Trail) from Dayton Street and North, however they wanted to see local people involved. She feels with the amount of work to be done, it may need to be contracted. Blue Trails cannot cross over roads and a portion of it does. Mr. Hovious

discussed the history of an easement needed on the Mason property. The commissioners need to review this portion of property on 76A Walnut Tree Hill Road (M/B/L 42-15-24 LT A). The current owner needs to be contacted.

NRI – Item tabled.

POCD – No updates.

**STAFF REPORT** – None.

**NEW BUSINESS** – None.

Mr. Hovious motioned to go into Executive Session at 9:12 pm. The motion was seconded by Ms. Astarita and unanimously approved.

Respectfully Submitted by Tammy Hazen