

**Conservation Commission**  
**MINUTES**  
**Regular Meeting – November 4, 2013 @ 7:00 pm**  
**Newtown Municipal Center, 3 Primrose Street, Newtown, CT**

**Present:** Ann Astarita, Marjorie Cramer, Bill Darrin, Joe Hovious and Mary Gaudet-Wilson; **Staff Present:** Tammy Hazen, Clerk;  
**Others Present:** Martha Wright, Bart Smith & Guy Peterson from the Newtown Forest Association.

These Minutes are subject to the approval of the Conservation Commission

The Public Meeting was called to order at 7:01 pm.

**CORRESPONDENCE** – Ms. Wilson said that Nick Tarantino from the high school has offered to volunteer for the commission. She will reply to his email to let him know that Mr. Hovious will contact him.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES** – Mr. Hovious motioned to approve the minutes of October 22, 2013. Mr. Darrin seconded the motion. Ms. Astarita abstained. Changes are: Under Correspondence, 2<sup>nd</sup> sentence, begin the sentence with “Ms. Hallquist “ instead of “She”. Under “Review of Other Commissions”, last sentence to read “Mr. Hovious said there is a forestry permit coming up for Inland Wetlands which may impact a parcel of Town OS.”; Under “Meadows Initiative ..”, 1<sup>st</sup> sentence should read “Ms. Wilson said the meadow management plan was sent out to the Inland Wetlands commission and Land Use.”; Under “Sherman Woods Subdivision”, 2nd sentence should read “Mr. Hovious asked about impervious surface increases, the percentage of wetlands and steep slopes proposed as open space on this property.”; Under “Staff Report”, 1<sup>st</sup> sentence should read “Mr. Sibley received approval from DOT to build the parking area off Rte 34 for the Loveland property.”; lastly, the Executive Session adjourned at 9:40 pm. With those changes, all were in favor and the minutes were approved as amended.

#### **ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS**

**Review of Other Commissions** – The commissioners discussed items reviewed by other commissions.

**Task List** – The commissioners reviewed and updated the task list. Ms. Hazen will get the 2009 map to the commissioners via e-mail. Ms. Hazen will also forward the meadow management plan to P & Z and Fairfield Hills Authority.

**Open Position** – No update.

#### **OLD BUSINESS AND ACTION ITEMS**

##### **Fairfield Hills**

1. Meadows Initiative / Management Plan, Bike Race, etc. – The commissioners noted concerns over the Bike Race and how it may harm the meadow. Ms. Wilson will contact Amy Mangold from Parks and Rec. to discuss.
2. Revised Master Plan – Ms. Wilson has discussed this with Mr. Benson. She feels it is heading towards the right direction.
3. Corn Fields – No updates

**Conservation Easements** – Mr. Hovious provided an update of the list of easements.

**Meadow on 38-9-34 Riverside Road** – Ms. Wilson emailed Amy Mangold about benches Parks and Rec may have that can be used on this parcel.

**Sherman Woods Subdivision** – Bart Smith from the Newtown Forest Association presented an overhead and discussed the preservation of the Sherman Woods open space. The presentation included an example of a Property Management Plan they would prepare for this property. He noted that an aerial view of 1934 shows there was not a pond. He estimates the original dam may have been built in the 1940s. They believe passive recreation would be good for this parcel, but should not include equestrian use, hunting, camping or campfires, or the use of motorized vehicles. Since there will be 30+ abutters, it would need to be carefully delineated. Invasive remediation and meadow management should be addressed soon since the property has been changing rapidly within the last three to four years. Invasives, woody shrubs and saplings are taking root in the meadows. Other general maintenance should be addressed including clearing the trails and repairing fences. He shared concerns over dam safety and maintenance and the need for access to make repairs. He discussed defining a long term management plan. There was discussion of the owner potentially transferring the property before it is developed in order to begin proper maintenance. Liability aspects

were discussed. Mr. Smith said that they have dedicated people who work and maintain their properties and engage neighbors in helping to keep a watchful eye on their properties. They will discuss this with Planning and Zoning to get a perspective on the process and timing.

**Farmland Preservation** – Ms. Wilson noted that the First Selectman is interested in being involved with these discussions. Deeds and titles need to be researched, possibly by the State. The Department of Agriculture needs to be contacted in order to get a better sense and understanding. Then it would need to go to the Legislatures. Mr. Peterson has a letter drafted and will review it with the First Selectman. There will need to be a public act in order to transfer the parcels to the NFA. The group discussed protecting the pasture areas of the Horse Guard as well.

**Pole Bridge Preserve** – Mr. Hovious said the pamphlet needs a map. The commissioners discussed an original agreement between the CC and the trails group.

## **SUBCOMMITTEES**

**Open Space Inventory and Maintenance Subcommittee** – Mr. Hovious provided an update. The subcommittee will meet on Wed, 11/06 to discuss the maps and connectivity. There are 331 parcels and the commissioners will work on combining as many as possible.

### **Education Subcommittee**

1. Development of Website – No update.

### **Invasives Subcommittee**

1. Invasives at Fairfield Hills (Japanese Knotweed) – Tabled.
2. Bamboo – No update.
3. Porcelain Berry – Ms. Wilson said this invasive is on State land and close to Deep Brook. It's the first time she saw it in Newtown and is growing in and around other invasives.

Al's Trail – Commissioners are going out to mark the trail on 11/03. The standard language for easements were given to Mr. Hovious by Mr. Sibley. A list of adjacent landowners along the trail is still needed.

POCD – No update.

**STAFF REPORT** – No update.

**NEW BUSINESS** – Mr. Hovious discussed the original handbook for Conservation Commissions. Ms. Hazen will see if CACIWC has an updated CC handbook. Schedule of Meetings for 2014 Mr. Darrin motioned to approve the 2014 schedule of meetings and to forward it to the Town Clerk. Ms. Astarita seconded the motion and all were in favor.

Ms. Cramer motioned to go into Executive Session at 9:40 pm. Mr. Darrin seconded the motion and all were in favor. Ms. Astarita motioned to exit Executive Session, which was seconded by Mr. Hovious.

Mr. Darrin then motioned "As Conservation Commission members we believe that parcel designated as OS #06-06 is a valuable property to be added to our inventory. We previously rated it Number 1 on our list of potential purchases". The motion was seconded by Ms. Cramer. The motion passed 4 to 1 (Darrin, Cramer, Astarita and Wilson were in favor; Hovious voted against.)

Ms. Cramer motioned to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Mr. Darrin. The meeting adjourned at 10:01 pm.

Respectfully Submitted by Tammy Hazen