

Conservation Commission
MINUTES
Special Meeting – Friday, December 13, 2013 @ 9:00 am
Newtown Municipal Center, 3 Primrose Street, Newtown, CT

Present: Ann Astarita, Marjorie Cramer, Bill Darrin, Joe Hovious, Karlyn Sturmer and Mary Gaudet-Wilson; **Staff Present:** George Benson, Director of Planning and Land Use.

These Minutes are subject to the approval of the Conservation Commission

The Public Meeting was called to order at 9:00 am.

Working Group - Draft Document for High Meadow – Mr. Benson opened discussion regarding the Board of Selectmen requesting to review the final document to be filed with the deed regarding management of the high meadow open space. The language needs to reflect the roles and responsibilities of the Conservation Commission and the Fairfield Hills Authority. Mr. Benson said it would be similar to a conservation easement where the Fairfield Hills Authority owns the underlying land but any request to do activities on the property would come before the Conservation Commission. The commissioners discussed concerns and the protection of the parcel in perpetuity. He reassured the commission that the open space would be governed by the Conservation Commission. The commissioners and Mr. Benson reviewed an A2 survey of the meadow that was voted on by the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Benson will have check into getting the wetlands delineated on the high meadow. Ms. Astarita will write up preliminary easement language for the commissioners to review and comment on via e-mail. The commissioners reviewed a draft of the conservation declaration for the high meadow. It will be reviewed and updated as needed.

Preliminary Discussion of Budget Items – Ms. Wilson said that Amy Mangold asked that the commission to update the list of items they want included in Parks and Rec.'s budget. Mr. Hovious shared frustrations with the fact that the town spends a great amount of money to purchase open space but does not allow funding in the budget for maintenance. Mr. Benson discussed budget issues. He feels the commission should look more aggressively towards grants, etc. He will check into the availability of the Fee-in-Lieu-of open space funds for maintenance issues on open space.

Update on Al's Trail – Ms. Wilson said Mr. Sibley has three Eagle Scouts lined up to work on Al's Trail behind the Methodist Church. Mr. Hovious discussed his meeting with Mr. Gadbut who owns 76A Walnut Tree Hill Road. They have come up with a proposed property swap (revision of property lines) between the Town and Mr. Gadbut that would provide the area needed for Al's Trail. Mr. Benson said it would be an equal transfer which would be beneficial to both parties. This will be voted on at the January meeting.

Trail Proposals at Pole Bridge Open Space – Ms. Wilson opened discussion on an approved mountain bike trail on Pole Bridge Preserve, submitted to the commission by the New England Mountain Bike Association and approved in 2010. Mr. Hovious received this map by Paula Burton. One of their trails is completed. The other trails have not been started yet. He said the plans for trails need to be completed in order to finish the brochure.

Ms. Astarita motioned to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Mr. Hovious. The meeting adjourned at 11:15 am.

Respectfully Submitted by Tammy Hazen