

**CONSERVATION COMMISSION**  
**MINUTES**  
**Regular Meeting – February 25, 2014 @ 7:00 pm**  
**Newtown Municipal Center, 3 Primrose Street, Newtown, CT**

**Present:** Ann Astarita, Marjorie Cramer, Bill Darrin, Joe Hovious, Karlyn Sturmer and Mary Gaudet-Wilson;  
**Absent:** Steven Gogliettino; **Staff Present:** Rob Sibley, Deputy Director of Planning & Land Use and Tammy Hazen, Clerk

**These Minutes are subject to the approval of the Conservation Commission**

The Public Meeting was then called to order at 7:03 pm.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** – Ms. Astarita introduced Joanne Marcinek from "Ask Joanne, Inc." of Sandy Hook who presented her approach in developing a website and provided costs and references. She uses WordPress as a publishing platform. The commissioners will review this information and they thanked Ms. Marcinek for her time.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION** – Mr. Hovious motioned to go into Executive Session at 7:16 pm to discuss potential open space purchases. Ms. Cramer seconded the motion which was unanimously approved. Ms. Astarita motioned to adjourn Executive Session at 7:57 pm, which was seconded by Ms. Wilson and unanimously approved.

Mr. Hovious motioned to approve that the Conservation Commission endorse the purchase of property OS #08-07 and to seek a grant from the CT DEEP Open Space and Wetlands and Watershed Land Acquisitions Grant Program and from the CIP. The motion was seconded by Ms. Wilson and unanimously approved.

**CORRESPONDENCE** – Ms. Wilson said there are three volunteers to help with Invasives, etc. She will keep a file on this.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES** – Ms. Astarita motioned to approve the minutes of 2/10/14. Mr. Darrin seconded the motion. Ms. Cramer abstained. Under Task List, the last sentence should read: "The Legislature approved the transfer from the State to the Town but it is being delayed." The minutes were approved as amended.

#### **ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS**

Review of Other Commissions: Ms. Wilson discussed appropriations noted at the Legislative Council's meeting.

Task List: Ms. Astarita discussed the updated task list and noted she added a "Cost" column that can help track money spent to help with the budget process.

Ms. Astarita motioned to ask Joanne Marcinek to begin development of the website. Mr. Hovious seconded the motion and all were in favor. The motion passed. Ms. Sturmer, Ms. Wilson and Ms. Astarita will be trained on this, as well as a staff member (Ms. Hazen). Mr. Sibley said that the printing of the Pole Bridge pamphlet can be funded by Land Use. Ms. Astarita received a map (by Stantec) of the proposed trail system on Fairfield Hills from Parks and Rec. She shared concerns over a portion of trail that shows it would go through a wetland. Ms. Astarita asked Mr. Sibley about limiting mowing on the high meadow. He felt she should contact Mr. Benson about this.

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

Conservation Easements: Mr. Hovious received Ms. Sturmer's work on some of the properties. Mr. Sibley provided him with a list of subdivisions from the last 20 to 30 years, which is about 90% complete. He and Mr.

Sibley worked on the process of recording easements. Mr. Sibley explained how files for easements from many years back were spare and gave kudos to the current commission for working on this project.

Earth Day Participation: Ms. Wilson said the commission has been signed up to participate at the Earth Day event to be held on April 26<sup>th</sup> at the Middle School. Volunteers were asked to be there at 9:00 am for a 10:00 am opening. A new printout of open space map is needed by staff.

## **SUBCOMMITTEES**

Open Space Inventory and Maintenance Subcommittee: Mr. Hovious said the open space inventory spreadsheet updates are currently being completed by Ms. Hazen. He said that after connecting parcels, 123 smaller parcels have become 23 larger parcels which total 813 acres. Once this is completed, it will be sent electronically to the commissioners with a hard copy handed out.

Invasives Subcommittee: Ms. Wilson discussed working towards having a seminar in the spring. She feels the commission should work on having another Barberry Blitz.

Legislative Subcommittee: Ms. Wilson reported that there is a pending bill that would punish property owners for having bamboo on their property even if they did not plant it.

**STAFF REPORT** – Mr. Sibley said that in looking through old files he found current topics and discussions were discussed 40 years ago. He explained the history of the commission's charge for open space and that Julia Wasserman was instrumental in creating an open space subcommittee. He encouraged the commissioners to continue to fill the voids they may see and is encouraged by the years of dedication of this Commission. He said many years from now others will look back at their work and say "Good Job".

## **NEW BUSINESS**

NCC Strategic Plan (Initial Discussion): Mr. Hovious asked everyone to review the Strategic Plan sent recently via email before the next meeting. Ms. Astarita said individual ideas or talents by new commissioners should be encouraged and openly discussed. Ms. Hazen will print out the Strategic Plan for the commissioners and place them in their folders.

Aquarion Conservation Award: The commission decided they will not pursue the award this year.

Other: Mr. Sibley discussed FOI regulations. Mr. Darrin thanked the commission for the opportunity to Chair the commission and turned the baton over to Ann Astarita. He felt for future meetings that everyone should read any reports or documents to be discussed (including minutes to be approved) prior to each meeting in order to save time.

Ms. Astarita motioned to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Ms. Cramer and unanimously approved. The meeting adjourned at 9:19 pm.

Respectfully Submitted by Tammy Hazen