

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

Present: Ann Astarita, Bill Darrin, Steven Gogliettino, Joe Hovious, Karlyn Sturmer; **Staff Present:** Tammy Hazen

THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO THE APPROVAL BY THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

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

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – No members of the public were present.

CORRESPONDENCE – None noted.

Ms. Astarita noted that Mary Gaudet-Wilson and Marjorie Cramer have resigned as members of the Conservation Commission. She wanted to commend them for their amazing service to the Town of Newtown, their dedication to the Conservation Commission and all things environmental. They will be truly missed.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Mr. Darrin motioned to approve the minutes of the March 10th, 2014 regular meeting. Ms. Astarita seconded the motion. Changes noted: Under Earth Day Participation, 5th sentence should read “Mr. Hovious reported that the DEEP bookstore has great things for kids.” After discussion, all were in favor and the minutes were approved as amended. Mr. Hovious then motioned to approve the minutes of the March 19th, 2014 special meeting. Ms. Astarita seconded the motion. Changes noted: First paragraph, 1st sentence, add “proposed” before “transfer;” The last sentences in that paragraph to read “Mr. Benson and Mr. Sibley joined the meeting at 3:33 pm. Ms. Astarita resumed the public meeting, stating that the commission was informed by Mr. Sibley that they could not have an executive session because it was not properly noticed.” After discussion, the motion to approve the minutes as amended was unanimously passed.

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

Review of Other Commissions: The commissioners reviewed items mentioned in minutes of other boards and commissions. The Board of Selectmen approved the purchase of the parcel off Berkshire Road. Park and Rec. Commission minutes noted that Commissioner Boritz has resigned. The Mad Dash is scheduled for June 7th, and the Rooster Run is scheduled for June 14th.

Budget: Mr. Gogliettino discussed the CIP budget proposed for 2014- 2017, noting Land Use line items for open space acquisition. He discussed the maintenance budget for Parks and Rec. The group discussed funding for open space maintenance.

Website: Ms. Sturmer reported that, in the first planning meeting, categories for the website were outlined and assigned to various commissioners to write. Ms. Wilson's and Ms. Cramer's resignations will slow that progress.

Grants: Mr. Gogliettino discussed an article in the paper regarding the open space acquisition on Chestnut Hill. Mr. Hovious spoke with Mr. Benson about a State of CT program, regarding preservation of agricultural land and family farms. Ms. Sturmer said she spoke with Elisabeth Moore of the CT Farmland Trust who would like to meet with the commission to talk about community farms preservation program for smaller farms.

ACTION ITEMS

Task List:

- (a) **Fairfield Hills** – No update.
- (b) **Open Space Inventory** – Mr. Hovious suggested the commission prepare a presentation to the Board of Selectmen advising them on the amount of open space the town has and then ask for official delegation for the management of these parcels. Ms. Astarita said the presentation could include identifying the open space, explaining the role of the Conservation Commission, requesting supervisory authority over open space and having a line item in the budget for maintenance. The commissioners will reach out to the First Selectman first for advisement.
- (c) **Meadow Initiative** – No update.
- (d) **Earth Day** – *Since Ms. Wilson was coordinating Earth Day activities, Ms. Sturmer and Ms. Astarita will now take charge of organizing materials in advance, and Mr. Hovious and Mr. Darrin will help with staffing the booth on April 26th.*

NCC Strategic Plan: No update.

SUBCOMMITTEES

OS Inventory and Maintenance Subcommittee: No update.

Invasives Subcommittee: No update.

Legislative Subcommittee: No Update

NEW BUSINESS

DOA Transfer: Mr. Darrin said he listened to the tape of the special meeting and felt there was no merit to the criticism levied against the Commission. He did not see how the commission did anything improper at the public hearing in Hartford since no one testified on behalf of the commission. Ms. Astarita read portions of the Newtown Code 20-24. The commissioners discussed how it pertains to the commission's duties and responsibilities. She feels the information they received and the discussion that was directed to the commission was inaccurate. She felt the commission was well within their purview to bring up the issue.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – Mr. Darrin motioned to go into Executive Session at 8:05 pm to discuss open space. Ms. Sturmer seconded the motion which was unanimously approved. Mr. Hovious motioned to adjourn Executive Session at 9:23 pm, which was seconded by Mr. Darrin and unanimously approved.

Ms. Astarita motioned to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Ms. Sturmer and unanimously approved. The meeting adjourned at 9:24 pm.

Respectfully Submitted by Tammy Hazen