

**CONSERVATION COMMISSION
MINUTES
Special Meeting – April 29, 2014 @ 7:00 pm
Newtown Municipal Center, 3 Primrose Street, Newtown, CT**

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

THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO THE APPROVAL BY THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

The Public Meeting was called to order at 7:02 pm.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – Steve and Diana Paproski were present to discuss their property.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – Ms. Astarita motioned to go into Executive Session to discuss matters pertaining to Mr. and Mrs. Paproski. Mr. Hovious seconded the motion and the commission entered Executive Session at 7:04 pm. Mr. Darrin motioned to exit Executive Session. Ms. Sturmer seconded the motion and the commission resumed the regular meeting at 7:25 pm.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Mr. Darrin motioned to approve the minutes of the April 14^h, 2014 regular meeting. Mr. Hovious seconded the motion. Changes noted: Under Budget, the 4th sentence, “The commission will work on a proposal for work scope (definition of work the commission wants to accomplish on open space).” Is to be moved under a separate heading called “Open Space Presentation”. The 4th sentence then should read “A budget request list (estimation of costs) will be created.” With those changes, the minutes were approved as amended.

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

Review of Other Commissions: Mr. Darrin said P & Z discussed zoning changes in connection with the new gas station on Church Hill Road. The commissioners discussed Tom Brook that runs along I-84; it’s a flashy stream that drains into the lower Pootatuck River.

Budget: Mr. Gogliettino discussed the First Selectman’s suggestion to meet with Parks and Rec and the Trails Committee in order to gather information that would assist in the commission’s budget line item request. The commission will finalize a mission statement and gather costs of work that has been completed on open space in the past. Ms. Astarita drafted a mission statement for the commissions review. She also e-mailed Amy Mangold asking for a history of the work that Parks and Rec completed in the past on open space. Mr. Gogliettino will work on benchmarking and researching budgets in other towns. He then discussed the Open Space Acquisition Program in the CIP and asked about the history of these figures. It shows the current year’s allocation is \$200,000, next fiscal year it’s \$1 million, and then the numbers drop off. He will contact Rob Sibley for more information on this.

Website: Ms. Sturmer and Ms. Astarita will meet to discuss this. Ms. Sturmer will contact Joanne to see if she wants information sent sporadically or would rather wait until everything is ready to give her.

ACTION ITEMS

Task List: Ms. Astarita reviewed the task list with the commissioners.

Meadow Initiative –Ms. Astarita said the declaration needs to be approved and recorded in the Town Clerk’s office with the new map for the High Meadow (recorded as Map #8194). After discussion, Ms. Sturmer motioned to approve the declaration. Mr. Darrin seconded the motion. Ms. Astarita suggested

the line regarding haying be removed. After discussion, the motion was tabled in order for the commission to review the map before voting.

Earth Day – Ms. Sturmer said the day went well. Mr. Hovious complimented Ms. Sturmer on her hard work and the presentation. Ms. Sturmer said thank you letters will be sent to Earthtones and Planter's Choice for their donation of native plants. The commissioners will work on having a banner or sign created to hang during future events.

Open Space Marking – Commissioners will meet on May 13th to mark open space on Hoseye Coach.

SUBCOMMITTEES

OS Inventory and Maintenance: Mr. Hovious distributed and discussed a document listing Town-owned natural open space parcels with a total of 1,659.14 acres. Other parcels include Town parks (188.19 acres); private organizations (1,964.94 acres); State of Connecticut (2,615.76 acres) and public utilities (1,226.05 acres). The next step is to take the updated inventory list and combine and name connecting parcels as larger preserves.

Invasives Subcommittee: Ms. Astarita said Dan Holmes plans to place herbicide on invasives in the West Meadow.

NEW BUSINESS

Agenda Items: Ms. Astarita opened discussion regarding streamlining the agenda and focusing on priority items. She suggested that subcommittees meet during the month and cut down the regular meetings to once per month. The commissioners will review the task list and strategic plan before the next meeting to come up with suggestions on future meetings.

Ms. Sturmer motioned to adjourn the meeting which was seconded by Mr. Darrin. The meeting adjourned at 9:30 pm.

Respectfully Submitted by Tammy Hazen