

**CONSERVATION COMMISSION
MINUTES
Regular Meeting – May 12, 2014 @ 7:00 pm
Newtown Municipal Center, 3 Primrose Street, Newtown, CT**

Present: Ann Astarita, Bill Darrin, Joe Hovious and Karlyn Sturmer; **Not Present:** Steven Gogliettino.

THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO THE APPROVAL BY THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

The Public Meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – No members of the public were present.

CORRESPONDENCE – In an email from Deputy Director of Land Use Rob Sibley, it was reported that a member of the public questioned the CC Agenda’s Executive Session’s lack of description under FOIA. This was discussed with the Town Clerk’s office and a representative at FOIA. It was noted the 5/12/14 agenda Section V.B. indicated that Acquisition of new OS would be discussed in Executive Session as needed. Since there was no need for an Executive Session at the meeting, Ms. Astarita motioned to remove Executive Session from the agenda. Mr. Darrin seconded and all were in favor.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Mr. Darrin motioned to approve the minutes of the April 29th, 2014 meeting. Mr. Hovious seconded the motion. Changes are as follows: 1) Under Public Participation, end the sentence after “were present”; 2) Under Executive Session after “Session to discuss”, add “potential OS purchases” in place of “matters pertaining to Mr. and Mrs. Paproski.” The minutes were approved as amended.

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

Discussion of one meeting per month: Ms. Astarita discussed eliminating a Conservation Commission meeting in June, July and August in order to meet as subcommittees to accomplish tasks. It was agreed but a formal vote will be taken at the next meeting on May 27th.

Review of Other Commissions: The commissioners briefly discussed minutes from other commissions but none required action at this time.

Budget: Tabled

Website: Ms. Sturmer and Ms. Astarita will meet with the web designer next week. Mr. Sibley will be invited to attend.

New Legislation: The Commission discussed the CT House and Senate approval of Substitute House Bill 5550, File No. 535, which awaits the Governor’s signature. This Act transfers 34.44 acres of undeveloped State-owned property worth \$4.8 million dollars (based on the state’s fiscal report) from the Department of Agriculture to the Hubbard Foundation for development. The same land originally had been given to the Town of Newtown for open space and passive recreation under special Act 03-19 almost ten years ago but had never been transferred by the Department of Agriculture. The commission was actively facilitating completion of the property transfer when the Special Act slating it for private development was introduced. Based on the proposed plans for development, the commission is concerned about potential impacts to wetlands, watercourses, and Deep Brook. In other State legislative news involving natural resources, legislation banning public input in the subdivision process was voted down. Senate bill 70’s review of state protected lands by DEEP passed as did a bill requiring state water plans.

ACTION ITEMS - The following duties were discussed and certain commissioners will lead each subject heading (with help from the entire Commission as needed):

OS Parcels (Care and Custody): Mr. Hovious will lead.

Finalize High Meadow Declaration – Ms. Sturmer made a motion to approve the Declaration Document concerning the High and East Meadows dated 5/12/14. Mr. Darrin seconded the motion and after discussion, all voted in favor.

Acquisition of New OS: It was suggested that Mr. Gogliettino may wish to lead, but this will be discussed with him first.

Reduction of Invasive Species: Tabled.

Conservation Education: Ms. Sturmer to lead.

Outreach: Ms. Astarita to lead.

Monitor Key Natural Resources: Mr. Darrin to lead.

STAFF REPORT - None

NEW BUSINESS – None

EXECUTIVE SESSION - None

Ms. Astarita motioned to adjourn the meeting which was seconded by Mr. Darrin. The meeting adjourned at 9:11 pm.

Respectfully Submitted by Tammy Hazen