

CONSERVATION COMMISSION
MINUTES
Regular Meeting – July 22, 2014 @ 7:00 pm
Newtown Municipal Center, 3 Primrose Street, Newtown, CT

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

THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO THE APPROVAL BY THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Ms. Astarita called to order at 7:03 pm.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: Terry Hennessey and Monica Fusaro from NBLA (Newtown Bridle Lands Association) were present to discuss a potential trail near Eden Hill Road / Oak Ridge open space. Mr. Hovious provided an overhead of the area via GIS. Ms. Hennessey said the area is impassable due to trees, stones, wetlands, etc.. Ms. Astarita said any construction debris will need to be removed by the developer and that wetlands must be avoided unless they want to go before the Inland Wetlands Commission. NBLA members have met with the Trails Committee. The ability to fund this project is unclear. The commissioners will arrange a time to walk the area. Ms. Astarita will be in touch with Ms. Hennessey.

Two Eagle Scouts joined as observers 37 minutes into the meeting.

CORRESPONDENCE: Ms. Astarita received an email from Kendra Bobowick at The Newtown Bee who had asked for a statement on Emerald Ash Borer. She forwarded information from the CT Agricultural Experiment Station website.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Tabled

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

Review of Other Commissions: Ms. Astarita noted that Inland Wetlands closed the public hearing on the Sandy Hook Elementary School. A decision on this is forthcoming.

Budget: Mr. Gogliettino discussed a meeting he and Ms. Astarita had with Pat Llodra and Bob Tait. The main object for the meeting was to discuss a budget proposal for fiscal year 2015-2016. Open Space funds include three main items, Contributions, Fee in Lieu of, and Bonding. Mr. Tait will provide more details on these soon. Ms. Astarita will ask Land Use officials (Mr. Sibley and Mr. Benson) to attend the next meeting. Ms. Astarita worked on the Capital Improvement Plan and discussed this with Mr. Tait, who will provide the commission with a workbook to prepare for budget requests. The commissioners will develop a list of priorities of work needed on open space.

Website: Ms. Astarita asked the commission for a final approval of the commission's Mission Statement. Ms. Sturmer motioned to adopt the following mission statement "*The Conservation Commission's mission under Connecticut General Statute 7-131 and Newtown Code Ordinance 65 is to conserve and maintain the natural resources of Newtown including open space, water resources, farmland, forests, meadows, scenic vistas and historic features.*" Mr. Darrin seconded the motion which was unanimously approved. Ms. Sturmer then discussed more details about the contents of the website, which can be adjusted or amended as needed.

New Legislation: No updates.

ACTION ITEMS

OS Parcels: Mr. Hovious distributed the new Deep Brook Preserve tri-fold brochure. He and Ms. Astarita fixed up the kiosk on Deep Brook (which Eagle Scouts had built). Trout Unlimited donated materials (Plexiglas, etc.) to complete it. The commission is appreciative of Trout Unlimited's assistance. Mr. Hovious said that there is another kiosk by Oak Ridge Road that could use some work.

New OS Acquisition: No updates.

Reduction of Invasive Species: Ms. Sturmer discussed Mile-a-Minute on Valley View Road and that there was a Mile-a-Minute pulling party in Dickinson Park. Ms. Astarita discussed the Weevils that were released a few years back and that although they are helping in elimination, they are still spreading. Ms. Sturmer said there are neighbors with concerns over it spreading onto their properties. Ms. Sturmer will talk with Donna Ellis and will draft a letter to Dr. Draper, who is aware of the invasive on his property.

Conservation Education: No updates.

Outreach: Ms. Astarita said information in the kiosks will help inform the public about the commission's role in town, how they can get involved, and encouraging them to enjoy open space. The Trails Committee will keep the commission informed of their meetings. Mr. Hovious feels the Conservation Commission would benefit by having someone from NBLA as a member.

Monitor Key Natural Resources: Mr. Darrin discussed bridge work being done on Poverty Hollow. He was impressed by their work and doesn't feel there will be any adverse effects.

Discuss BOS Presentation: Ms. Astarita said they will continue to work on this presentation, which will first be presented to the First Selectman and Director of Finance in October.

STAFF REPORT – None

NEW BUSINESS – None

EXECUTIVE SESSION – None

Mr. Hovious motioned to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Mr. Darrin. The meeting adjourned at 8:50 pm.

Respectfully Submitted by Tammy Hazen