

**CONSERVATION COMMISSION**  
**MINUTES**  
Regular Meeting – June 24, 2014 @ 7:00 pm  
Newtown Municipal Center, 3 Primrose Street, Newtown, CT

**Present:** Ann Astarita, Bill Darrin (via telephone), Steven Gogliettino, Joe Hovious , James Ryan and Karlyn Sturmer; **Staff Present:** Rob Sibley, Deputy Director of Planning and Land Use and Tammy Hazen, Clerk

THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO THE APPROVAL BY THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

The Public Meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm. Ms. Astarita welcomed Jim Ryan as a new Conservation Commissioner.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:** No members of the public were present.

**CORRESPONDENCE:** Ms. Astarita said that Candlewood Valley Trout Unlimited has asked for the commission's support for an invasive plant clean-up this Saturday at 9:00 am at Deep Brook , removing Autumn Olive and Bittersweet from trees they had planted.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Ms. Astarita motioned to approve the minutes of the May 27th, 2014 regular meeting. Mr. Hovious seconded the motion. Changes: Under OS Parcels (Care and Custody), Ms. Sturmer should be added as the list of commissioners who assisted in the marking of open space off Marlin Road. The minutes were approved as amended.

**ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS**

**Review of Other Commissions:** The commissioners had a long and detailed discussion regarding the CIP (Capital Improvement Plan). Potential open space projects were discussed that could be requested to be funded out of the CIP. Some of the larger items included two bridges, one over Deep Brook near Commerce Road and one over Pond Brook. Mr. Sibley reviewed the CIP worksheets he received for Land Use. Mr. Ryan said he has experience in estimating costs of pedestrian bridges so will provide some input. The commissioners discussed having a CIP request that combine various tasks encompassing an overall larger project. Mr. Sibley said there are similar CIP requests that encompass different aspects of a project (i.e., Dickinson Park). Mr. Sibley suggested the commissioners meet with the First Selectman for her advice as to where this funding could come from.

Ms. Sturmer said she witnessed someone driving Jeep on the Pole Bridge property and found garbage near the kiosk. Mr. Sibley said the barriers (boulders) should still be there but that signs have been installed and regularly removed by unknown persons. He will get down there this week, clean it up and post more signs.

**Budget:** Mr. Gogliettino and Ms. Astarita will work on a draft for budget items to review with George Benson before discussing presenting a final draft to the commission during the August meeting.

**Website:** Ms. Sturmer provided an overview of Joanne Marcinek's work on the new website. Mr. Sibley brought the website up on the overhead. Everyone thought it was great.  
[www.newtownconservation.org](http://www.newtownconservation.org).

**New Legislation:** No updates

## **ACTION ITEMS**

**OS Parcels (Care and Custody):** Mr. Hovious distributed and provided an explanation on a prioritized list from 2010 of preparation and promotion for public access that includes Brook Heights/DeGraff, Deep Brook/Commerce Road, Grady, Mason/Gadbutt, and Pole Bridge. (See Attachment A) . The commissioners then discussed Al's Trail and the property swap with Mr. Gadbut. Mr. Sibley discussed potential parking area at the end of Farmfield Ridge Road; and (5) Pole Bridge property. The commissioners discussed potential diversion of Al's Trail that would follow along Black Bridge Road. Mr. Hovious noted that Trout Unlimited wanted to place information in the Kiosk at Deep Brook. Invasive information will be added as well.

**Acquisition of New OS:** Discussed in Executive Session.

**Reduction of Invasive Species:** Ms. Astarita discussed the work that Dan Holmes did at Fairfield Hills. Mr. Sibley felt it needs to be resprayed. Mr. Holmes will be asked if he had done the final spraying.

**Conservation Education:** No update

**Outreach:** Ms. Astarita spoke with Amy Mangold about a kiosk at Deep Brook. She wanted to ensure Parks & Rec did not share kiosk with CC before the commission revamped it. Ms. Mangold said it was not Parks and Rec's. Candlewood Valley Trout Unlimited (CVTU) wants to add environmental information to the Deep Brook kiosk. The commission will review and approve materials prior to posting. CVTU will donate cost of plexiglass installation to improve kiosk. Ms. Astarita also spoke with Ms. Mangold about CC and Parks & Rec doing joint seminars and camps for adults and youth respectively. She sent Ms. Astarita the program application. Ms. Astarita will consider this for next summer or possibly next fall. This may be a way to generate some income for OS care and maintenance. Mr. Hovious said the Pootatuck Watershed Association will do a camp this year to focus on natural resources. Ms. Astarita met Trumbull's Conservation Commission chair. They briefly discussed working together on resource conservation issues.

**Monitor Key Natural Resources:** No update

**STAFF REPORT** – Mr. Sibley said there may be an intern available for work in the Fall who may be able to assist in some office work. The commission will see if there is some clerical work that can be done. A discussion regarding the Gadbut property along Walnut Tree Hill Road was discussed as well.

Mr. Sibley discussed the property swap with Mr. Gadbut to allow Al's Trails through properly. The approvals will go through P & Z, Board of Fiance, Board of Selectmen and then Legislative Council.. The commissioners discussed the funding for a fence. Ms. Astarita then motioned to approve the map regarding the Gadbut property swap, CCA, LLC, dated June 3, 2014. Mr. Hovious seconded the motion which was unanimously passed.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

Discuss Trail Creation on Open Space – Mr. Hovious discussed a history of trail proposals. He handed out a suggested outline that a trails group would use to get a trail on open space approved by the commission (Attachment B). Members of the Trails group are interested in mountain biking and equestrian trails. They have specs on how to build mountain biking trails. Mr. Hovious also submitted an assessment form that the commission could use for trail proposals. It was noted that some areas (such as Al's Trail) may be too dangerous for mountain bikes or may be inappropriate for horses. The commission should discuss potential areas for trails with the Trails group and that there should be discussions with adjacent property owners when a trail is proposed. Trails should be usable and accessible to local residents. Commissioners will attend the July 17 Trails Committee meeting.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION** – Ms. Astarita motioned to go into Executive Session at 8:54 pm to discuss open space acquisitions. Mr. Darrin seconded the motion which was unanimously approved. Mr. Sibley was invited into the meeting. Ms. Sturmer motioned to adjourn Executive Session at 9:15 pm, which was seconded by Ms. Astarita and unanimously approved. Mr. Ryan motioned to adjourn the meeting which was seconded by Mr. Hovious. The meeting adjourned at 9:15 pm.

Respectfully Submitted by Tammy Hazen

Suggested properties suggested for preparation and promotion for public access (1/5/2010)

1. Brook Heights/DeGraff – needs bridge for access unless users wade stream. Parking unimproved along Pond Brook Road
2. Deep Brook/Commerce Road – a mower to cut swath for paths helpful. TU doing maintenance on trees Saturday. Needs to be marked.
3. Grady – Trails exist but need marking. Parking could use some additional gravel. Access to State Forest.
4. Mason/Gadbutt – Contains portion of Al's Trail. Needs completion of land swap with Gadbutt, then trail construction down hill.
5. Pole Bridge – needs a load of gravel for parking area. Kiosk needs to be "loaded"  
Pieragostini was on this list but has since been lost to public use

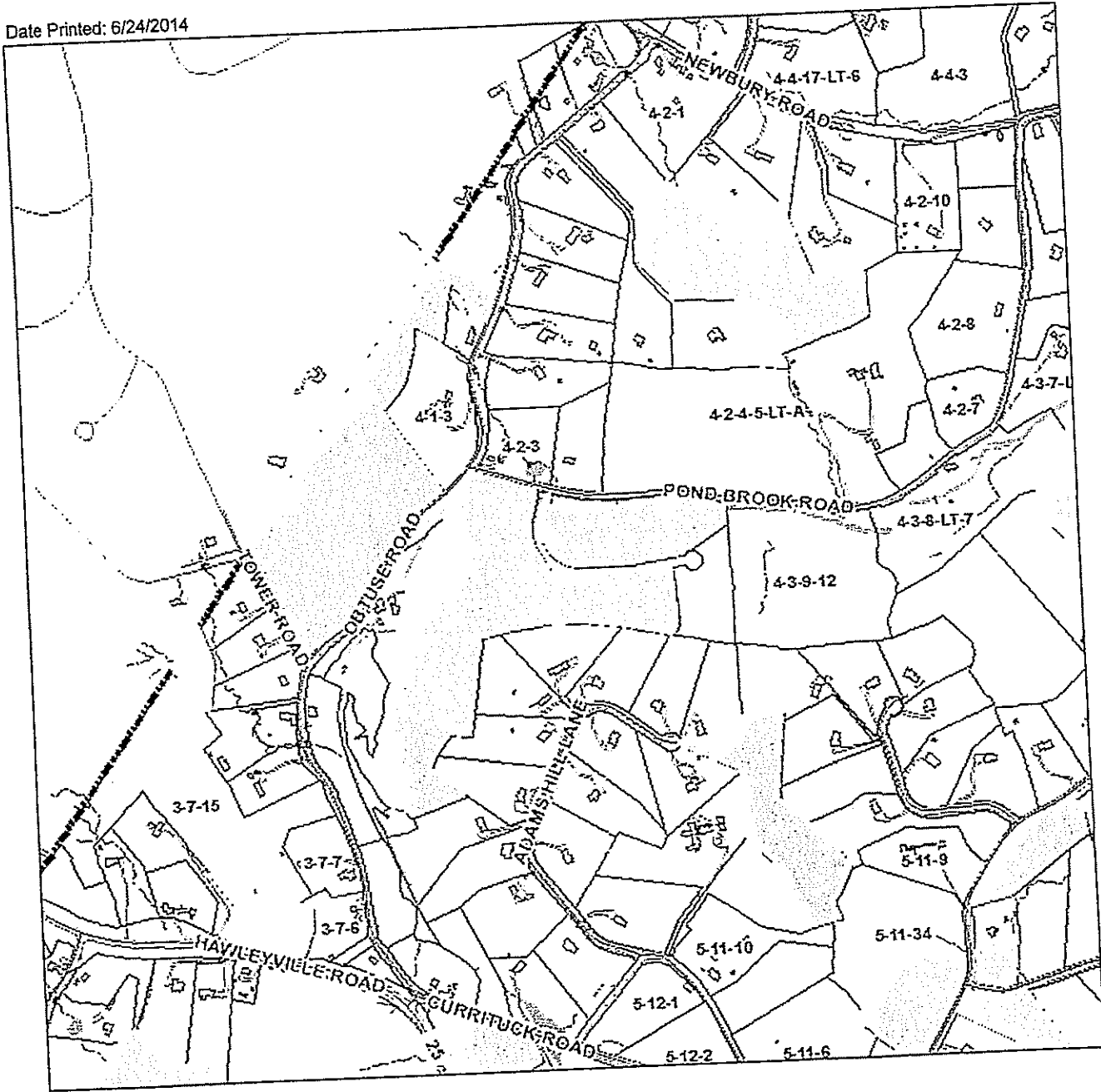
Properties should be surveyed, marked (boundaries and trails), signed, cleared of any known safety hazards. Funds were requested to do this work in 2010/2011 fiscal year.

# Town of Newtown

Geographic Information System (GIS)



Date Printed: 6/24/2014



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**MAP DISCLAIMER - NOTICE OF LIABILITY**

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Approximate Scale: 1 inch = 800 feet



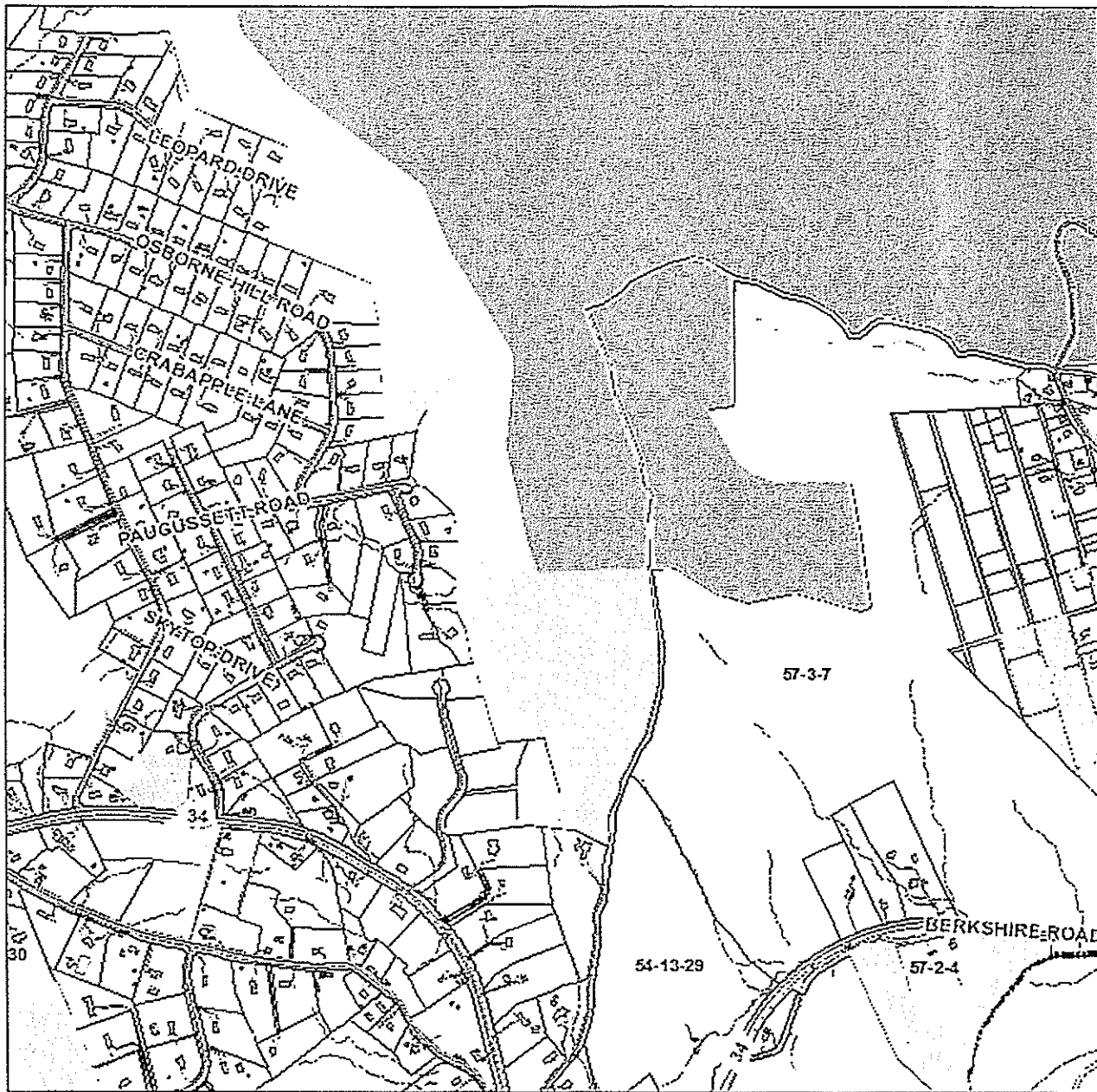
# Town of Newtown

Geographic Information System (GIS)



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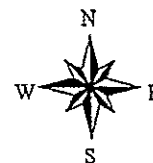
Date Printed: 6/24/2014



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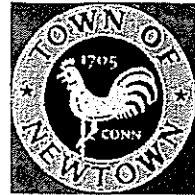
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Approximate Scale: 1 inch = 1000 feet



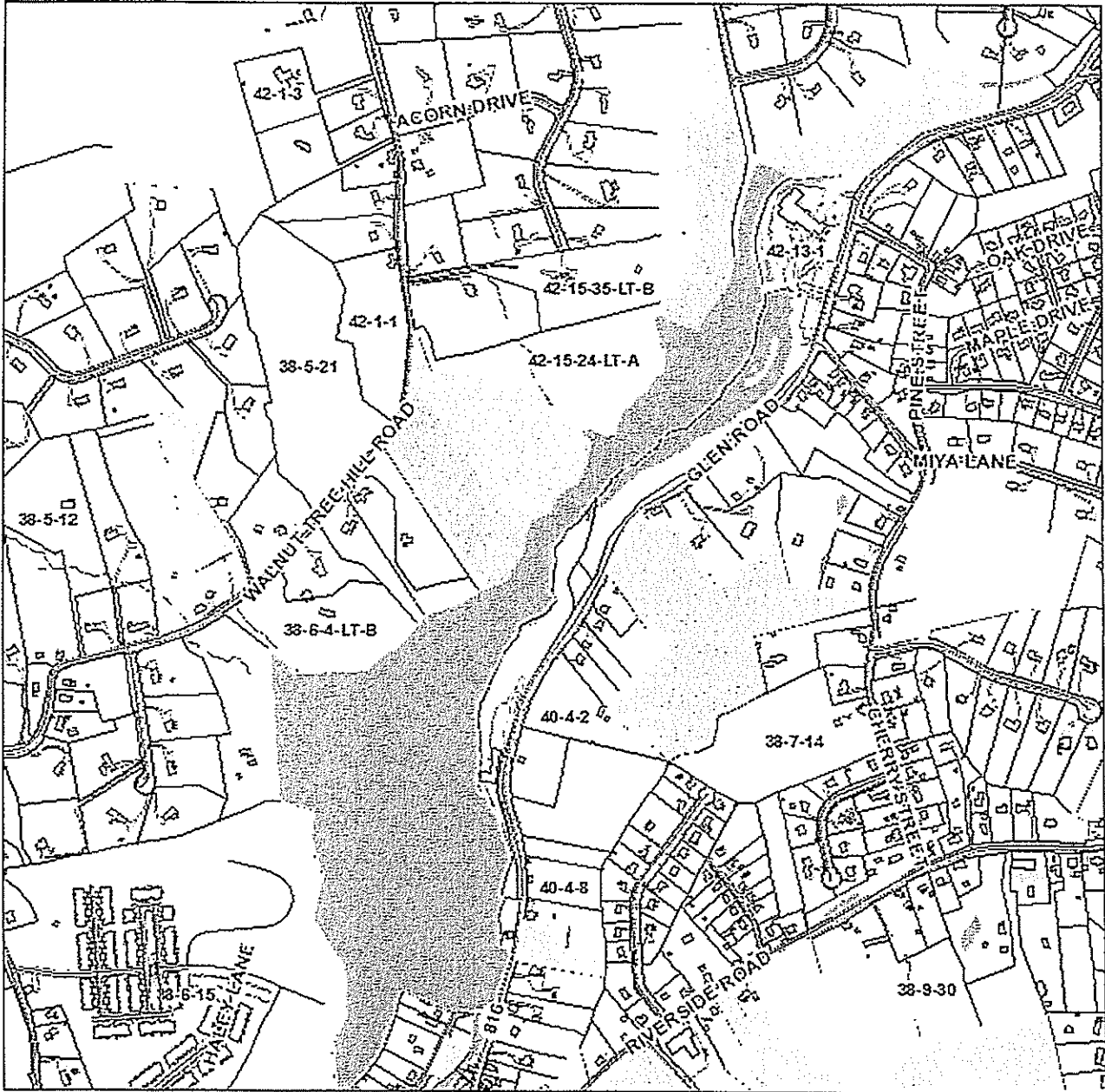
# Town of Newtown

Geographic Information System (GIS)



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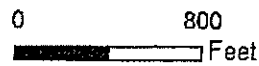
Date Printed: 6/24/2014



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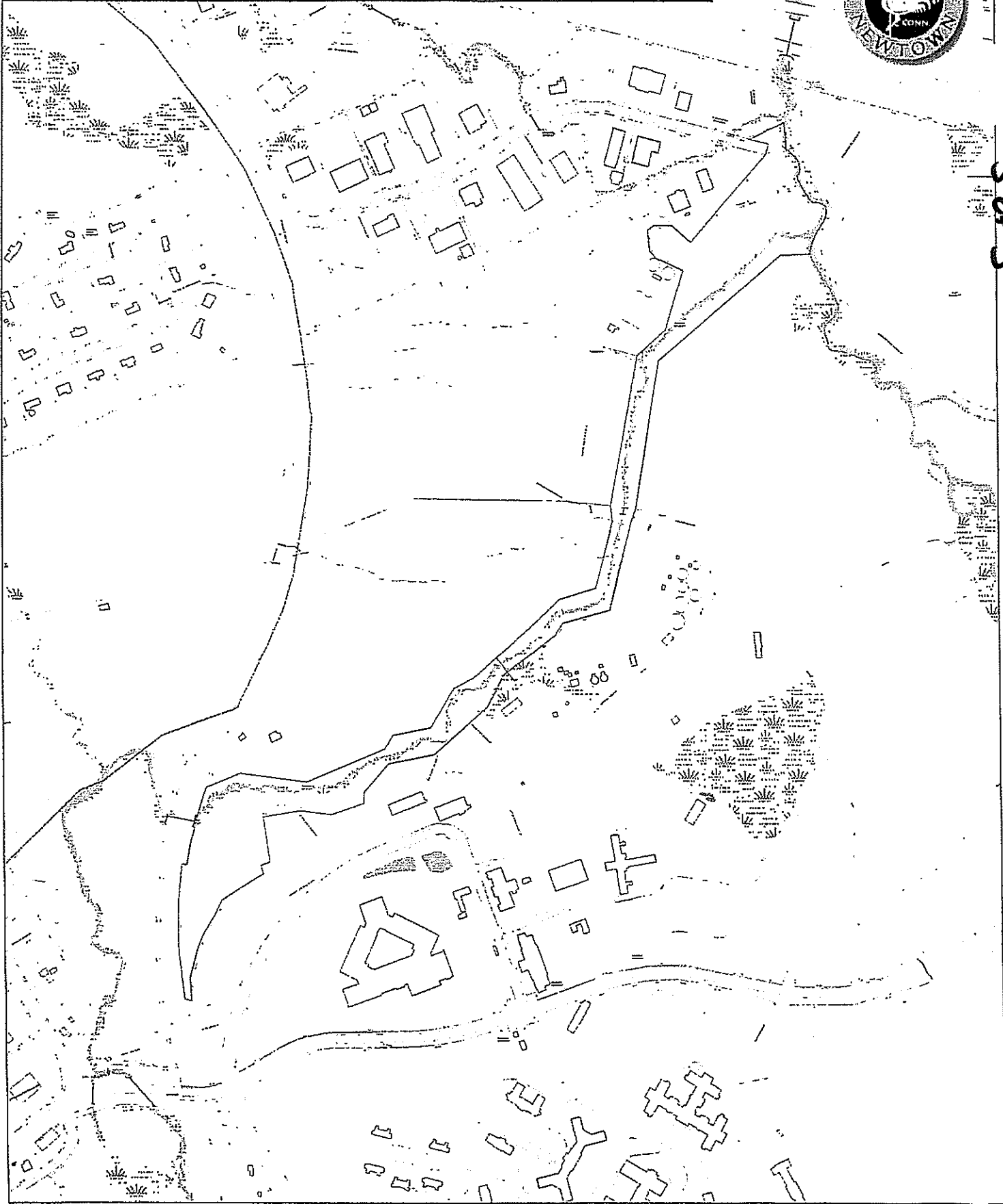
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# Town of Newtown, Connecticut - Assessment Parcel Map

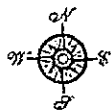
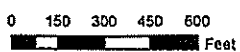
Parcel: 37-3-1-A-OS

Address: 26 COMMERCE ROAD



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Approximate Scale:



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Map Produced July 2013



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## **Newtown Open Space Trail Proposal Suggested Outline**

Prior to drafting any trail proposals on Newtown Open Space (OS), the Trails Committee should confirm with the Conservation Commission that the following have been done:

1. The property has been surveyed by the Town
2. The property boundaries have been marked by the Conservation Commission
3. The property deed has been checked for any restrictions
4. The current survey map and deed are filed in the OS Index at the Town Land Use Office.

All proposals will include a written application including the information contained in the following outline:

- 1) Trail Sponsor Information
  - Primary and alternate sponsor names and contact information
- 2) Trail Location
  - a) Property ID
  - b) Access point(s) specification, including parking availability
  - c) Existing/potential connectivity to other trails
- 3) Trail Usage Statement
  - a) Intended use(s)
  - b) Known constraints – e.g., seasonal limitations (hunting, wet footing, etc.), species of interest, steep grades
- 4) Trail Design Overview (see Appendix A for details)
  - a) Map showing trail layout
  - b) Existing trails incorporated/upgraded
  - c) Route
  - d) Length
  - e) Minimum and maximum widths (include only if different from Appendix A specs)
  - f) Surface material(s) (include only if different from Appendix A specs)
  - g) Areas requiring benching, armoring, switchback construction, etc.
  - h) Notable features accessed – natural, historical, scenic, etc.
  - i) Environmental impact – tree removal, stream crossing, rock wall breaching, etc.

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- 5) Trail Maintenance Plan
  - a) Primary and alternate names and contact information
  - b) Monitoring/reporting plan
  - c) Anticipated maintenance, if any
- 6) Project Resources Required
  - a) Town resources
  - b) Volunteer
  - c) Financial
  - d) Materials
- 7) Estimated Project schedule
  - a) Flagging completion date
  - b) Construction start date
  - c) Construction complete date

The Conservation Commission reserves the right to close the trail at any time to preserve natural resources.

## **Appendix A**

### **Trail Design Guidelines:**

- i) Width:
  - 18-36 inches wide
- ii) Surface Materials:
  - a) Dirt
  - b) Rock ( where trail hardening is needed)
  - c) Wood ( either natural rot resistant wood such as cedar) or non-arsenic pressure treated wood or wood found in the area where the trail is being built)
  - d) Gravel ( process or aggregate)
  - e) Geo tech
- iii) Trail Grades:
  - Rolling contour design trail, built with low average grades of 15% or less, and preferably 10% or less, on the side slope, not straight up and down a hill
- iv) Design Features:
  - Trail is built with features to mitigate erosion such as slight variations in the grades, rolling grade dips, knicks ( half-circle depressions cut out of trail to drain water), and benching where needed (wherever the tread way is on a side slope), also frequent turns and avoidance of long straight-aways.

Modern trail design techniques will be used wherever possible such as avoiding wet areas, incorporating adequate sight lines for shared use, using a stack loop style of design for multiple trails to allow for various users and skill levels, sometimes with features on the sides of the trail for higher skill levels ( mostly for mountain bikers- usually a natural feature such as a rock to ride over); again low grades ( which means the trail will be longer and curvier than a traditional trail), identification of negative and positive control points. These design techniques will allow for shared use as well as reduce the amount of time and energy that will be needed for basic maintenance.

Wet areas that cannot be avoided will need to be addressed. An example might be a small, seasonal damp area. Other larger wet areas may need rock armoring, a boardwalk, or small bridge. Any mitigation of wet areas should allow the water to continue its natural flow.

The trail builder may need to make minor changes to the original plan if some obstacle or issue arises and should be able to make those changes as long as it is in the identified trail corridor.

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### Other Environmental Impacts:

- i) Vernal pools must be avoided
- ii) Nesting areas must be avoided
- iii) Old foundations should allow users of the trail to see them without impact to the feature
- iv) Any identified rare or unusual plants must be preserved
- v) Stone walls

There should be a minimum of stone wall breaches. However, sometimes to maintain grades and good design a stone wall may need to be slightly modified. Often there are existing breaches but if not, then a ramp can be built to maintain the integrity of the wall. Equestrians need a wide (3 ft.), flat area to go through a wall, but hikers and mountain bikers can usually negotiate rock ramps or steps. Stone walls should not be 'mined' for rocks, and if stone is needed for armoring of the trail it will be found on the ground.

- vi) Cutting brush

Up to two-inch diameter (at breast height) trees may be cut.

- vii) Other

If the trail builder notices anything of importance that has not been previously identified, the concerned committees and commissions should be notified as soon as possible.

*DRAFT*  
*DRAFT*

**Newtown Open Space Trail Proposal**  
**Assessment by Conservation Commission**

*DRAFT*  
*DRAFT*

Trail Proposal ID: \_\_\_\_\_

Submitted by: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Proposal Assessment:

Approved

Denied

Comments:

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