

**CONSERVATION COMMISSION**  
**MINUTES**  
**Regular Meeting – August 26, 2014 @ 7:00 pm**  
**Newtown Municipal Center, 3 Primrose Street, Newtown, CT**

**Present:** Ann Astarita, Bill Darrin, Steven Gogliettino, Karlyn Sturmer and James Ryan; **Not Present:** Joe Hovious; **Also Present:** Rob Sibley, Deputy Director of Planning and Land Use; Tammy Hazen, Clerk

THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO THE APPROVAL BY THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Ms. Astarita called to order at 7:05 pm.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:** Mike McCarthy of 118 Alpine Drive in Sandy Hook (Newtown Tree Warden and a Certified Forest Practitioner for the State of Connecticut) was present to request approval for a timber cut on a 14 acre parcel that is part of the Stone Bridge Trail open space. He discussed the importance of opening up the canopy to allow undergrowth and habitat for wildlife. Mr. McCarthy handed out a hard copy of a PowerPoint presentation (Attachment A) showing examples of his work done in 2006 on 64 Pond Brook Road. The Town will receive 45% of what the mill pays him for the timber. He will mark the timber for commissioners and will submit a tally of the timber and estimate of what the mill would pay. Mr. Sibley said the property has a reserve account but that the commission can request the funds to be used for other open space use. He agreed that since the lot has no understory, a logging effort would be beneficial. Mr. McCarthy said there is mostly oak and some Tulip on the property. Ms. Astarita said the commission will also review the deed and maps.

**CORRESPONDENCE:** Ms. Astarita said Terry Hennessey with NBLA would like to attend the September meeting to discuss trails work off Eden Hill Road. Mr. Ryan heard that some property owners are blocking horses from their property. The commission discussed the commitment by the developers of the subdivision (the Vona's) to provide access to open space. Mr. Ryan will gather information. Mr. Sibley will review the permits. Ms. Astarita said for future reference that an access point to open space must be provided by developers.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Mr. Darrin motioned to approve the minutes of 6/24/14. Ms. Sturmer seconded the motion. The minutes were approved as written.

Mr. Darrin motioned to approve the minutes of 7/22/14. Ms. Sturmer seconded the motion. The following changes were made: Under OS Parcels, 2<sup>nd</sup> sentence should read "*Candlewood Valley Trout Unlimited (CVTU) donated materials ....*" 3<sup>rd</sup> sentence should read "*The commission appreciates the help of Bill Bennett and Bill Dunn from CVTU.*"; Under Reduction of Invasive Species, the paragraph should read: "*Ms. Sturmer discussed the report of extensive Mile-a-Minute (MAM) infestation on Valley View Road that coincided with a MAM pulling effort in nearby Dickinson Park. Ms. Astarita reported that Weevils were released at a property adjacent to Dickinson Park a few years back and that although the weevils are working, MAM is continuing to spread. Ms. Sturmer said that residents were concerned about it spreading onto their properties and were seeking help with removal. She will contact Donna Ellis of CIPWG for advice and will suggest that the resident address the matter with Dr. Draper, who is aware of the invasive on his neighboring property.*" After discussion all were in favor and the minutes were approved as amended.

#### **ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS**

Review of Other Commissions: Mr. Sibley said the reorganization of Land Use will not affect the commission and that he will keep attending the meetings once per month.

An Open Space Conservation Subdivision on Robin Hill Road will be heard at the Inland Wetlands Commission meeting. Ms. Astarita distributed a draft document (Attachment B) for discussion that is to be submitted to the IW commission. The Conservation Commission will have an opportunity to comment on the subdivision when brought before P & Z. After discussion, Ms. Sturmer motioned to approve the comments for the Inland Wetlands Commission. Mr. Darrin seconded the motion and all were in favor.

Ms. Astarita distributed the draft of the Annual Report for 2014 for the commission's review.

Budget: Ms. Astarita opened discussion regarding the budget. Since the request for CIP did not hit the threshold, the commissioners discussed other avenues for funding work that needs to be done on open space, including the use of existing open space accounts. Ms. Astarita asked the commissioners to work on a wish list of work they'd like to see completed on open space parcels. She shared concerns about money being spent out of the budget while the commissioners are trying to get funding to remove invasives.

The commissioners discussed the difficulties with finding markings on the properties as well as the amount of work there is to do in marking and maintaining open space.

Website: Ms. Sturmer said the website is being worked on. She emphasized the importance of building awareness and highlighting some of the open space parcels. The website will be informative.

#### **ACTION ITEMS**

OS Parcels: Mr. Sibley discussed the recent purchase of a parcel on Chestnut Hill Road for open space.

Reduction of Invasive Species: No Update.

Conservation Education / Outreach: The commissioners discussed two articles in the Bee regarding the high meadow and Deep Brook. All agreed it was good press.

Monitor Key Natural Resources: Mr. Sibley discussed the hazard mitigation plan for the Town and that he is the Recovery Coordinator. Mr. Sibley discussed a regional plan in process; Sherman and New Milford have completed this already. He explained that hazards are naturally occurring events or impacts, such as tornados or hurricanes. The natural resources inventory and the POCD are documents used in the Hazard Mitigation Plan in order to find the most impacted points in town.

**STAFF REPORT** – Mr. Sibley noted that he would like to discuss transfers at the next meeting. St. Rose is dedicating the opening of the first sustainable learning center.

Mr. Darrin gave kudos to Ann Astarita for an article in The Bee and bringing awareness about the commission. Ms. Astarita said the entire commission has worked very hard as a team.

Mr. Darrin motioned to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Ms. Astarita. The motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 9:05 pm.

Respectfully Submitted by Tammy Hazen