

CONSERVATION COMMISSION
MINUTES

Regular Meeting of May 26, 2015 at 7:00 PM
Meeting Room #3, Municipal Center, 3 Primrose Street, Newtown, CT

These Minutes are Subject to Approval by the Conservation Commission

In Attendance: Bill Darrin, Tom Philbrick, Mark Boland, Jim Ryan, Karlyn Sturmer
Also Present – Linda Zukauskas from CT Voices

Mr. Darrin opened the meeting at 7:00 pm.

Public Participation - None

Communications – A letter was received from KASL, LLC regarding property on Robin Hill which is 42.5 acres. There is no clear indication as to what the developer wants to do with it. Another concern is the open space that would be given would be unbuildable. In the past, a letter went to Inland Wetlands that said that they would not endorse the development. A walk of the property will take place on Wednesday, May 27 at 5:30.

Minutes – Mr. Boland moved to accept the minutes from the April 28, 2015 meeting as presented. Mr. Darin seconded, motion unanimously approved.

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

Review of other Commissions – Last year Joe Hovious, who was a long time member of the Commission, was involved in, open space and Al's trail. Al's trail has one problem area where you couldn't follow and had to go onto private property. He worked with the property owner and negotiated a deal that the town would trade property to satisfy the property owner and the town's needs. A concern is that the property transfer was never finalized and needs to be investigated. They are going to request Mr. Sibley to look into it and report back to the commission at the next meeting. Ms. Sturmer also suggested that the members monitor other boards and commissions agenda's and minutes for anything that would affect open space. At the next meeting, they will go through the list of and see what boards they should be looking and divide between members.

ACTION ITEMS

OS Parcels/Care and Custody of Open Space – Mr. Philbrick asked what "Care" means in care and custody of open space. There was conflicting information so it was decided that a workshop at the next meeting to work out the understanding and priorities of the Commission.

Equestrian Trail – Mr. Ryan has been in touch with Terry Hennessey who is interested in more trails. There is a property that she has requested that they look at with a potential access point. He will set up a meeting to walk it and invite other members.

Reduction of Invasive Species – Mr. Philbrick expressed concerned that this has been on the agenda but has not been discussed because it is too overwhelming. Ms. Sturmer replied that if the implication that they can get rid of invasive species that will not happen. They had the assistance of Park & Rec before 12/14 but their workload has increased and they are not able to assist.

Conservation Education – As a result of the Earth Day Booth, Mr. Philbrick was asked to speak with 6 high school classes about invasive species.

Monitor key natural resources – not discussed.

Staff Report – None

NEW BUESINEES

Trout Unlimited – A kiosk on Deep Brook was built by an eagle scout. Last year at the 6/24/14 meeting the Commission gave Trout Unlimited permission to add plexi-glass and information at their cost. They put up a nice display referencing Deep Brook and a possible danger of having developed up stream. This spring, those materials have been removed and a large map provided by Land Use put in its place. Mr. Darrin will meet with Mr. Sibley and try to find out what occurred.

High and West Meadows – Mary Wilson was the chair of the Commission when they sought to have all of the meadows part of FFH declared open space. They were successful with High and West Meadows but not the East. On June 13th, there is a race called the Mad Dash scheduled at the High Meadow. The question if it is appropriate to have it on open space property. There is an agreement with Mrs. Mangold, Director of Park & Rec that nothing would happen on open space without coming to the Conservation Commission. There is also a declaration that was voted on and unanimously accepted. For this to be in effect it needed to be sent to the Board of Selectmen. After researching minutes from the BOS it appears that this was never brought to them. Mr. Darrin will meet with Mr. Benson to find out the status.

Kiosk – There are 2 kiosks at either end of High Meadow and one on Pole Bridge. Mr. Sturmer would like to put information in them with maps and educational components. Mr. Philbrick will work with her to update them targeting High Meadow first because it gets the most use.

Having no further business the meeting was adjourned at 8:24pm

Respectfully submitted,
Arlene Miles, Clerk Pro-Tem