

**CONSERVATION COMMISSION
MINUTES**

Regular Meeting of July 28, 2015 at 7:00 pm
Meeting Room #3, Municipal Center, 3 Primrose Street, Newtown, CT

These Minutes are Subject to Approval by the Conversation Commission

In Attendance: Bill Darrin, Mark Boland, Jim Ryan

Staff: Robert Sibley, Deputy Director of Planning & Land Use, Dawn Fried, Clerk

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

Correspondence

Mr. Darrin reviewed and signed a letter regarding the mowing at High and East Meadows. The letter will be submitted to the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Darrin made a motion to approve the letter. Mr. Ryan so moved. Mr. Boland seconded. All in favor.

Mr. Sibley distributed copies of a memorandum written by Mr. George Benson, Director of Planning dated 7/28/15 titled "High and East Meadows Open Space".

Approval of Minutes of 6/23/15:

Changes are as follows: Under High Meadows & Meadows delete "presented and", add "discussed"; delete "would like", add "need"; delete " letter", add "document"; delete "written", add "approved"; add "Mr. Boland will work with the Fairfield Hill Authority to get their support for the declaration". Mr. Darrin motioned to approve amended minutes, Mr. Boland so moved. All in favor.

Review of other Commissions

Mr. Boland attended the Newtown Forest Association seminar. He gave a brief overview of the seminar and will share more information with the Commissioners at the next Conservation meeting.

Ms. Sturmer was not in attendance but sent in notes regarding minutes from the Parks and Rec meeting on 7/14/15 and the Sandy Hook Permanent Memorial Commission meeting on 5/14/15.

Budget

Mr. Sibley discussed the approved budget. The projects listed below were the recommendations made last year by the Commission.

- Pond Brook parking area
- Kiosk at Grady (Stone Bridge)
- Marking of Trails
- Mow of Pond Brook Meadow

Mr. Sibley also suggested using the budget money for:

- Care and Custody of OS
- Informational Kiosks – Devise a template for future kiosks
- Surveying

Action Items

Equestrian Trail - Mr. Ryan spoke about the bridle trails.

OS Parcels – Mr. Ryan has done research on the open space and the markings of the trail system. Mr. Sibley displayed maps and described how open space is designated after a subdivision is completed. He discussed three OS parcels that have been approved; OS #08-02, OS #14-02, OS #15-01. Also, the transfer of OS #11-04 is underway.

An Eagle Scout is interested in a Conservation project which the Commission can discuss at the next meeting.

Executive Session

At 7:42 pm Mr. Darren made a motion to have an Executive session. Mr. Ryan so moved. All in favor. Mr. Darrin contacted Ms. Sturmer by cell phone. At 8:02 pm Mr. Darren adjourned Executive Session.

Mr. Darrin made a motion to vote on OS #15-02. Mr. Boland moved that the parcel OS #15-02 be approved and recommended to Planning and Zoning for a potential acquisition. Mr. Ryan seconded. All in favor.

Adjournment

Mr. Darren motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:04 p.m. Mr. Boland so moved. All in favor.

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George Benson
Director of Planning

TOWN OF NEWTOWN

Land Use Agency

MEMORANDUM

7/28/15

High and East Meadows Open Space

The High and East Meadows has been designated as open space at the request of the Planning and Zoning Commission. This designated open space at the Fairfield Hills Campus is unique when compared with other Town open space. It is not a separate parcel of land as it remains within the Fairfield Hills Campus and the Fairfield Hills Adaptive Reuse Zone.

The High and East Meadows Open Space contains trails maintained by the Newtown Parks and Recreation, structures maintained by Public Works and allows passive recreational uses as permitted by the Land Use Agency under Newtown Zoning Regulations 6.03.300 (27), (attached). The open space remains under the oversight of the Fairfield Hills Authority.

The designation of open space can include stipulations allowing uses requested by the donors of the land. The Town being the "donor" of the High and East Meadows open space has specified via the Zoning Regulations that the land be utilized for passive recreation as permitted by the Fairfield Hills Special Event Permit.

The Land Use Agency, specifically the Zoning Enforcement Officer has the final permit approval for Fairfield Hills Special Events under 6.03.300 (27). The final approval is based on comments from all pertinent agencies including the Police Department, Fire Marshal, Health District, Parks and Recreation, Land Use Agency, Fairfield Hills and the Conservation Commission.

The jurisdiction of the High and East Meadows Open Space has to be shared by all relevant Town agencies, departments and commissions. The purposes for Town Open Space are listed in Newtown Regulations, (attached).

To comply with the Newtown Zoning Regulations, to be in accordance with the Fairfield Hills Master Plan and facilitate the management of the open space, the following "Declaration Document Concerning the High and East Meadows" is submitted for approval:

July 28, '15
G.F.

Declaration Document Concerning the High and East Meadows

7-28-15

The Town of Newtown agrees to perpetually preserve, protect, limit, conserve and maintain the land hereinafter described in its natural condition. Any proposed uses of the Town Open Space shall be contingent upon receipt of a Fairfield Hills Special Event Permit with review and recommendations submitted by the Police Department, Fire Marshal, Health District, Parks and Recreation, Land Use Agency, Fairfield Hills and the Newtown Conservation Commission. Any such use shall in no way endanger the conservation of the High and East Meadows.

The areas referenced are designated as "The High and East Meadows" (hereinafter referred to as "the Meadows") containing 65.46 acres located on a certain map entitled "Limited Property survey Prepared for the Town of Newtown, Wasserman Way, Newtown, Connecticut" dated November 1, 2013 by Brautigam Land Surveyors, P.C. which was filed on the Newtown Land Records as Map 8194 on March 11, 2014.

It is the purpose of this Declaration to ensure that the Meadows remain in their present, natural and open condition, and to prevent any activity or use of the area that is inconsistent with that condition or that will significantly impair or interfere with the ecological, conservation or open space values of the area, notwithstanding normal passive recreational purposes.

1. The following is from Section 6.03.300, Newtown Zoning Regulations;

27) – (added effective August 13, 2012) A community activity such as a fair, concert or similar type event conducted by non-profit Town organizations or National charities with local affiliations, in off-street areas, with no permanent structures allowed.

The event can include, sporting events, amusements, non-profit sales of merchandise/ food and for-profit vendors that are affiliated with and donate all or a portion of the sale profits to the sponsoring non-profit organization. The donation can also be in the form of a space rental fee paid by the for-profit business to the sponsoring non-profit organization.

Said permit will not be issued until the applicant has made provision for adequate parking as determined by the Zoning Enforcement Officer, nor will such permit be issued until the approval of such Town Boards, Departments or Agencies as is required by other Town ordinances or regulations is obtained.

The application shall be submitted 21 working days, but not more than six months prior to the event. Said permit shall be effective for a period of not more than 10 days. (added effective August 13, 2012)

2. The following is the Town of Newtown description of Open Space;

4.05.230 The land to be reserved for open space purposes shall be prioritized as follows starting with the most important:

4.05.230.1 The conservation and protection of wildlife habitat areas, natural or scenic features and resources, historic or archeological features;

4.05.230.2 The meeting of neighboring and/or community-wide recreational needs;

4.05.230.3 The expansion of existing open space and recreational areas present on adjoining properties;

4.05.230.4 The preservation of agricultural lands and soils.

4.05.230.5 The preservation, relocation and/or enhancement of existing trails having public access rights;

4.05.230.6 Connecting parcels of open space with existing or proposed green way corridors for pedestrian, bicycle or bridle paths;