

CONSERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES
Regular Meeting of September 12, 2016 at 7:00 pm
Meeting Room #3, Municipal Center, 3 Primrose Street, Newtown, CT

These Minutes are Subject to Approval by the Conservation Commission

Present: Jim Ryan, Karlyn Sturmer, Cindy Joyce, Chris Smith, Tom Philbrick

Absent: Mark Boland

Staff: Dawn Fried, Clerk

Also Present: Jeremy Clark, Clark Forestry Services and Mary Wilson, Newtown resident

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

Mr. Ryan requested a motion to add Jeremy Clark to the agenda. Mr. Philbrick so moved.
All in favor.

CORRESPONDENCE

Mr. Ryan read a letter for the record from Robert Sibley, Deputy Director of Planning, Land Use and Emergency Management, Titled: Preliminary Notification, Project 96-202 Newtown Pedestrian Improvements, RTE 25/South Main Street, Dated: September 6, 2016. (Attached)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR August 23, 2016

Under "Kiosks" add "Mr. Sibley spoke about an Eagle Scout building a kiosk on the Stonebridge property. The suggested location was the area across from the parking area. The Commission agreed this was acceptable. The Commission stated they would maintain control of the contents." Mr. Ryan requested a motion. Mr. Smith moved to accept the minutes as amended. Ms. Sturmer seconded. All in favor. The minutes from August 23, 2016 were approved.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

High Meadow

Ms. Sturmer gave a brief update of the High Meadow discussions. Ms. Sturmer stated to Mr. Ryan for the record that we are sorry for the loss of your father. She went on to explain that in Mr. Ryan's absence she contacted the individuals who were mentioned in the High Meadow management plan. Ms. Sturmer stated that Holly Kocet, Dotty Evans, Mary Wilson and herself are interested in being part of the High Meadow management team. Ms. Sturmer stated she would like to discuss their roles in the management plan and would like to see how the management team goes forward with its relationship with the Conservation Commission.

Ms. Sturmer turned the floor over to Ms. Wilson who then talked about her visit to High Meadow. Ms. Wilson passed out an evaluation of the High Meadow titled "Observations by Mary Wilson and Holly Kocet of 5-acre parcel at High Meadow, walked on September 11, 2016". (Attached) The evaluation identified wild plants, flowers and insects. The evaluation also mentioned that some invasive plants were not observed. Ms. Wilson stated the High Meadow property is a pollinator habitat and if not mowed for a few years the wild flowers will have a chance to spread.

The Commission agreed on the name "High Meadow Study Group" and Ms. Wilson volunteered to chair the group.

The Commission and Ms. Wilson had a lengthy discussion of the responsibilities of the study group and how to get started. Some suggestions:

- Set short and long term goals
- Consult with a botanist regarding species
- Submitting quarterly or monthly observation reports
- Determine how to observe and manage property
- Invite the Audubon Society, DEEP and Newtown Forest Association to look at the property and ask for guidance
- Survey the entire High Meadow property
- Establish area as an IBA (Important Bird Area)
- Three year outline – what are the objectives?
- Possibly use funds from Stone Bridge project
- Public awareness of project; newsletter, signs, informational kiosks
- Keep the First Selectman apprise of the management study
- Establish a list of priorities
- Goal: to achieve native wildlife

Mr. Ryan would like to send a letter to the First Selectman's office stating that the "High Meadow Study Group" has been established, the process has begun and quarterly reports will be submitted to the First Selectman's office.

Mr. Ryan will reach out to Rob Sibley regarding resources and to survey the property.

Stone Bridge

Jeremy Clark, Clark Forestry Services, spoke about the Stone Bridge project. Mr. Clark passed out the "Forest Operation Plan" dated August 23, 2016. This plan covers updated information about the harvest. Mr. Clark reviewed the landing, air bridge and wetlands on the property. Mr. Clark would like to do a lighter thinning on the wetland area which will enhance the diversity and understory and improve forest stocking.

Mr. Clark will be presenting the project in front of the Inland Wetland Commission on September 14, 2016. Mr. Ryan will join him at the meeting.

Mr. Clark stated he was waiting on feedback (comments or concerns) from the Commission. The Commission concluded that Mr. Boland was waiting for each Commissioner's response before sending them to Mr. Clark. Ms. Sturmer forwarded Mr. Boland's email to Mr. Clark.

Ms. Joyce had concerns about a "request for review" that needed to be submitted to the Natural Diversity Database (NDD) regarding the species on the property. Mr. Clark will submit this request.

The Commission discussed the Stone Bridge presentation September 29, 2016. Mr. Clark and Ms. Wahle will be presenting. Ms. Sturmer stated the letter to the abutters went out this past Friday. Approximately 30 letters went out. A formal press release will be sent out to the public after the abutter's meeting. Ms. Sturmer suggested setting up snacks and beverages for the meeting. Mr. Ryan will be in charge of the maps.

There were questions about the markers and stakes on the O.S. property. The Commission would like to ask Mr. Sibley to survey the property and have it properly staked.

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

Parks and Rec – Ms. Sturmer questioned the “steep hill part of the trail” referenced in the Parks and Rec minutes. She suggested the CC read the Fairfield Hills Master Plan to understand how the High Meadow is discussed. Ms. Sturmer feels the CC should have a discussion with Parks and Rec and Mr. Ryan suggested speaking with the Chair to discuss commonalities and goals. The next CC agenda will have “Discussion of FFH Master Plan and Trails” under “High Meadow”.

Sandy Hook Permanent Memorial Commission – Rejected the current location.

Board of Selectmen – Mr. Smith will report on the BOS going forward.

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Joyce mentioned that she met with Rob Sibley. Ms. Joyce had questions regarding the responsibilities of the Conservation Commission and had questions regarding the town’s O.S. The Commission had a brief discussion to answer Ms. Joyce’s questions.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Ryan requested a motion to adjourn the CC meeting. Ms. Sturmer so moved. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 8:55 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Dawn Fried, Clerk

Robert Sibley
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Fax: 203-270-4278
rob.sibley@newtown-ct.gov



Deputy Director
Planning, Land Use
And Emergency Mgmt.

TOWN OF NEWTOWN
PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION

September 6, 2016

To: James Ryan - Chairman
Conservation Commission
3 Primrose Street
Newtown, CT 06470

Subject: Project 96-202, Newtown Pedestrian Improvements, RTE 25/South Main Street

Dear: Mr. James Ryan

The preliminary design has been completed for the Town of Newtown's plan to install new sidewalks along South Main Street, Wasserman Way and Trades Lane. The project covers a distance of approximately 5,900 feet and consists of sidewalk installation, pedestrian ramp improvements, pedestrian re-signalization, and minor drainage improvements.

Based upon preliminary assessment, the construction cost will be approximately \$672,000. The Federal Highway Administration will provide 80% of the construction cost with the Town providing 20%.

It is the Town's and the State's policy to keep persons informed and involved when such projects are undertaken. It is important that the community share its concerns with us to assist in the project's development.

The Town will conduct an informational meeting on September 21, 2016 at 7:00PM in the Reed Intermediate School Library. Deaf and hearing impaired persons wishing to attend this meeting and requiring an interpreter may make arrangements by contacting Rob Sibley of Planning and Land Use at (203) 270-4276 at least five working days prior to the meeting.

Anyone interested in obtaining further information, providing input or requiring language assistance may do so by contacting Rob Sibley, Deputy Director of Planning and Land Use at rob.sibley@newtown-ct.gov or (203) 270-4276. Draft Plans are available for viewing during office hours at the Newtown Municipal Center, 3 Primrose Street, Newtown, CT at the Land Use Dept.

Sincerely,

Robert Sibley
Deputy Director of Planning, Land Use and Emergency Management
Town of Newtown

cc: Hugh H. Hayward, P.E., Principal Engineer - Highway Design, ConnDOT
Robert W, Ike, Supervisor - Office of Rights of Way, ConnDOT

Observations by Mary Wilson and Holly Kocet of 5-acre parcel at High Meadow, walked on September 11, 2016

Wild plants and flowers observed:

- Golden Rod
- Milk Weed
- Vetches
- Mountain Mint
- Boneset
- Queen Ann's Lace
- White Aster
- Bed Straw
- Mullein
- Red Clover
- St. Johns Wort
- Butter and Eggs
- Night Shade – on CT Invasives Species List, toxicity concerns

Insects Observed

- Many butterflies
- Bees
- Dragon Flies

Plants we did NOT observe there:

- Bittersweet
- Multi-flora Rose
- Mugwort
- Knot weed
- Purple Loosestrife
- Russian Olive

Also, we are attempting to gather historic documented info about bob-o-link sightings/nestings and/or meadowlark activity.

CC mtg
9-12-14
A7