

CONSERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES
Regular Meeting of September 27, 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: Robert Sibley, Deputy Director of Planning & Land Use, Dawn Fried, Clerk

Mr. Ryan opened the meeting at 7:02 pm.

CORRESPONDENCE

Mr. Sibley received a letter from Gager, Emerson, Rickart, Bower and Scalzo, LLP, dated September 23, 2016, regarding "Declaration of Conservation Restrictions from Julia B. Wasserman". Atty. Scalzo will attend the CC meeting on October 25, 2016 to discuss the matters in the letter.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR September 12, 2016

Under "High Meadow" change "Goal: to achieve native wildlife" to "Goal: to increase native wildlife". Under "Stone Bridge" change "Ms. Sturmer forwarded" to "Mr. Ryan forwarded". Under "New Business" add "inventory" after "O.S.". Mr. Ryan requested a motion. Mr. Philbrick moved to accept the minutes as amended. Ms. Joyce seconded. All in favor. The minutes from September 12, 2016 were approved.

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

Parks and Rec - Ms. Sturmer reiterated the importance of the CC being involved with Parks and Rec. She would like the CC to be apprised of the decisions Parks and Rec make concerning the town's Open Space. Mr. Ryan will reach out to Parks and Rec before the next CC meeting.

Inland Wetlands - Mr. Philbrick spoke about Jeremy Clark's presentation regarding the Stone Bridge Forestry Management Plan. He stated that the IW commissioners will schedule site walks to see property. The CC is hoping the IWC will vote at the next IW meeting on September 28, 2016. Mr. Sibley stated that 75% of the property is staked out and the surveyor should be completed by the end of November.

Sandy Hook Permanent Memorial Commission – Mr. Ryan stated that the SHPMC is now considering the SAC Field as a potential opportunity for the memorial site. It is a privately owned, 8-acre parcel.

Planning and Zoning – Ms. Joyce did not have any concerns.

Board of Selectmen – Mr. Smith mentioned that the BOS discussed accepting the portion of Lakeview Drive as a public highway.

ACTION ITEMS

Stone Bridge – The Commission had a discussion on the upcoming presentation on September 29, 2016 on the Stone Bridge Forestry Management Plan. Mr. Sibley spoke about correspondence he had with the abutters. Some of the abutters will be away and will not be able to attend the meeting. The Commission discussed other ways to inform and communicate with the abutters. The Commission would like to include the abutters in the process. Some suggestions were site walks, individualized meetings and communications through emails and phone calls. Mr. Sibley will forward the abutters' emails to Mr. Ryan so he can address their concerns.

At meeting close Mr. Ryan showed the Commission the maps he created of the Stone Bridge property. These maps will be displayed on easels at the Stone Bridge meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Joyce spoke about Newtown's Open Space inventory and the O.S. spreadsheet. Ms. Joyce and Mr. Smith will be meeting with Mr. Hovious, a former Conservation Commissioner, to get a better understanding of the O.S. properties. The CC had a lengthy discussion on the O.S. information and how to manage it going forward.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Web page – The Commission discussed having various sections on the web page that would include High Meadow and Stone Bridge updates, O.S. Information and educational components.

High Meadow – The Commission questioned the reporting process by the High Meadow Study Group. Ms. Wilson stated at the last meeting she will submit reports to the Commission regarding the High Meadow property. Mr. Ryan will touch base with Ms. Wilson to confirm if the reports will be sent quarterly or monthly.

Kiosks – Mr. Sibley spoke about four kiosks; Pole Bridge, Oak Ridge, Rt 34 to the Halfway River, and Stone Bridge. The only kiosk not completed is the kiosk on Rt 34 to the Halfway River. The Commission agreed the information in the kiosks should be consistent with each other and should have the name of preserve, one general map, map with trails and other pertinent information about the area. Mr. Ryan will create maps and will bring them for the Commission to review at the next CC meeting. Mr. Sibley used a laptop to project the image of Pole Bridge on the wall by using the GIS program. He showed the CC the location of the kiosk, the meadow area, the property boundaries and he also explained the recent history of the property and the habitat.

Native Plant Policy – Mr. Sibley showed the Commission 15 different plant specimens that he had dried, pressed, matted, framed and labeled. The Commission can use the framed plant specimens for display at various fairs and also for display at the town hall.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Ryan requested a motion to adjourn the CC meeting. Mr. Philbrick so moved. Mr. Smith seconded. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 8:34 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Dawn Fried, Clerk