

# CONSERVATION COMMISSION

## REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Feb. 10, 2020, 7:30 P.M.

### MEETING ROOM B MADISON TOWN CAMPUS

**Subject to approval:** Minutes of the Meeting of Feb. 10, 2020 - 7:30 p.m. - Meeting Room B - Madison Town Campus.

**Members present:** Chairman Heather Crawford, Secretary Alex Cushing, and Commissioner Danielle Butsch.

**Members absent:** Vice Chairman Christine Bouchard and Commissioner Frank Guarascio.

**Others present:** Director of Planning and Economic Development David Anderson and Daniel Hand High School Environmental Club student commissioners Marina Dixon and Elizabeth Ozimek.

1. **Call the meeting to order:** Vice Chairman Christine Bouchard called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

2. **Review and approve minutes for Jan. 13, 2020 meeting as submitted.**

Secretary Alex Cushing made the motion to accept the Jan. 13, 2020 minutes, as amended, to change *Review and approve minutes for Dec. 9, 2020*, to read as follows, *Review and approve minutes for Dec. 9, 2019*; it was seconded by Commissioner Danielle Butsch and unanimously approved.

Vote to accept the Jan. 13, 2020 minutes as amended passed, 3-0-0.

IN FAVOR: Chairman Crawford, Secretary Cushing and Commissioner Butsch.

OPPOSED: None.

ABSTAINED: None.

3. **Call for additional agenda items:** Chairman Crawford stated that there are two openings on the Conservation Commission, and she would like to add to the agenda a brief discussion on ideas for appointing more members. In addition, efforts on composting would be added to the agenda.

4. **Project/Issue Updates**

~ **Watershed Education Project.** Director of Planning and Economic Development David Anderson stated that the installation is still in progress for the watershed signs posting. Former Conservation Commission Chairman Fran Brady stated that as of the morning of Feb. 10, 2020, he took pictures of six watershed signs that had been posted throughout town, including on Copse Road, Bradley Corners Road and Warpas Road. In addition, a watershed sign was also seen on Winter Hill.

~ **Invasive Species.** Chairman Crawford stated that she has seen bamboo growing on Race Hill Road; she plans to compile a list of addresses where it is growing and write letters to the property owners to inform them that bamboo needs to be 40 feet from property lines, and there are financial ramifications for any damages created by the bamboo, which can insert itself into concrete foundations. There is a Connecticut invasive plants law and a list of about 75 plants, which are banned in Connecticut; that list includes definite invaders and possible invaders that should not be sold or planted in Connecticut. There is a separate state statute for bamboo, which has two species on it, the running bamboo and golden bamboo, according to Chairman Crawford.

~ **Madison Schools Sustainability Curriculum.** Commissioner Butsch stated that the composting project advanced with a group taking a tour of Bauer Park, which may be a composting site for the Madison schools sustainability curriculum. The South Central Regional Council of Governments

(SCROG) has decided to apply for a grant to fund 20 schools interested in food waste diversion programs, according to Mr. Anderson. In addition, the Center for EcoTechnology (CET) hopes to make it a fun project for students, Mr. Anderson stated. Jeffrey Elementary School will be involved in the food waste diversion program, and it is hoped there will be a cost savings in trash, as well as a decrease in the weight of trash, Commissioner Butsch stated. Once the compost facility is set up at Bauer Park, the compost may have to be hauled away, by contract, and then it could transition to being compacted on the site, rather than hauled away; it is hoped Madison will receive the grant funding for two years, according to Mr. Anderson. He encouraged the student commissioners to present any ideas they may have for sustainability projects to the elementary schools, because they seem to be open to working on sustainability efforts.

~ **International Dark Skies Week.** Chairman Crawford stated that the International Dark Skies week is March 29, 2020 to April 5, 2020. Plans are to make an effort to advertise the week through a banner at the Bauer Park Festival, according to Chairman Crawford. She also suggested that the Conservation Commission put an environmental calendar on its website to make people aware of all of the events, such as the Dark Skies Week and Earth Day. One of the events is the Dark Night, wherein people are asked to turn off all of their lights for one hour, Chairman Crawford stated, adding that turning all of the lights off for one night would be even better.

~ **Web Site/Social Media.** The town of Madison's website director could assist in placing the environmental calendar on the town website, according to Mr. Anderson. The Daniel Hand High School Eco Club has an Instagram account, which students view and use regularly. Chairman Crawford stated that by the next meeting, she will have a date list ready for the environmental calendar, so it may be put on the town of Madison website. It can also be put on Facebook, according to Chairman Crawford.

5. **Natural Resources Inventory (NRI).** Commissioner Crawford stated that she and Commissioner Butsch worked for about an hour and a half putting 30 to 40 properties into categories; they are looking at properties over five acres to identify their features, such as wetlands, and to categorize them. There are 700 parcels over five acres, she stated. In addition, an inability to connect with the Internet in the town campus has been fixed, allowing work on the Natural Resources Inventory to progress, according to Chairman Crawford.

6. **Earth Day 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.** Former Conservation Commission Chairman Fran Brady sent an email to Chairman Crawford, making her aware of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Earth Day and encouraging the town of Madison to take part in the celebration. Earth Day is April 25, 2020. Mr. Brady stated that the theme is Climate Action and the goal for Madison is "Take it up a notch!" In 1970, Earth Day was the most populated and participated event of all time, Mr. Brady stated. The town of Madison has been wonderful with Green Up Clean Up, he stated, but plans are to add onto that project by increasing youth participation, which will include an Expo on the green, according to Mr. Brady. Green Up Clean Up will take place in the morning, with the Expo to follow in the afternoon, he stated. Events will focus on everything that has to be done to save the earth from this climate emergency and to make Earth Day every day, according to Mr. Brady, who stated that he would like the town's motto to be, "Let's be MAD for the Earth." Madison has already been enrolled in the Earth Day 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and appears on the [www.earthday.org](http://www.earthday.org) website, he stated, adding that he would like the Conservation Commission involved. Chairman Crawford stated that the Conservation Commission has a modest budget that could assist in supporting the commission's involvement in the event for the town of Madison. Conservation Commission funds could go toward making an Earth Day banner that would be put up on Route 79 by Route 1; it could include a pocket, so the numbers of the date of Earth Day could be changed each year, she stated. The North Madison Church is planning a mini festival of arts and ideas or lessons and carols, with photography—a multi media program—that would take place at the church on Wednesday, April 22

to celebrate Earth Day's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, according to Chairman Crawford. Mr. Anderson stated that he would like to post a list of all of the sustainability projects and programs the town of Madison has undertaken throughout the years. That list could be known as 50 years of conservation in Madison, Chairman Crawford stated. Youth based participation could include the Daniel Hand High School Eco Club, the Country School, church youth groups, the Girls and Boys Scouts, with the following activities being presented: Madison Pollinator Pathway Projects; Electric Vehicle Show with 15 cars and their owners; Coastal Resiliency; Shoreline Vegan, featuring plant based information; Shoreline Composting; and Green Up Clean Up. Information tables at the expo on the green could include a beekeeper, the Conservation Commission, the Garden Club of Madison, and Connecticut Home Energy Solutions.

7. **Update from Daniel Hand High School Student Commissioners.** Work is continuing on the Daniel Hand High School pollinator pathway project; potential plants have been chosen, and the path will go around the flagpole at the front of the school.

8. **Discussion on ideas on where to find two new commissioners.** Commissioner Butsch stated that she is a member of the Newcomers Club, and she could make a posting on its Facebook group to find potential members. Mr. Anderson suggested it also be posted on the Conservation Commission Facebook page, and Chairman Crawford stated she will check with Vice Chairman Christine Bouchard to see if it has yet been posted. Since 40 percent of the voters in Madison are registered as unaffiliated, Mr. Anderson suggested the commission interview candidates and then make its own recommendation to the Board of Selectmen for appointment. Chairman Crawford stated that this is an option allowed through the Town Charter. It is also important to post what the Conservation Commission does, when seeking new commissioners, according to Mr. Anderson.

9. **Adjournment.**

**Commissioner Butsch made the motion to adjourn at 8:38 p.m.; it was seconded by Secretary Cushing and unanimously approved.**

Vote to adjourn at 8:38 p.m. passed, 3-0-0.

IN FAVOR: Chairman Crawford, Secretary Cushing and Commissioner Butsch.

OPPOSED: None.

ABSTAINED: None.

Respectfully submitted,  
Marlene H. Kennedy