

## CONSERVATION COMMISSION

### REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Mar. 9, 2020, 7:30 P.M.

### MEETING ROOM B MADISON TOWN CAMPUS

**Subject to approval:** Minutes of the Meeting of Mar. 9, 2020 - 7:30 p.m. - Meeting Room B - Madison Town Campus.

**Members present:** Chairman Heather Crawford, Secretary Alex Cushing, and Commissioners Danielle Butsch, and Frank Guarascio.

**Members absent:** Vice Chairman Christine Bouchard.

**Others present:** Daniel Hand High School Environmental Club Student Commissioners Marina Dixon and Elizabeth Ozimek.

1. **Call the meeting to order:** Chairman Heather Crawford called the meeting to order at 7:31 p.m.
2. **Review and approve minutes for Feb. 10, 2020 meeting, as submitted.**

**Commissioner Danielle Butsch made the motion to approve the Feb. 10, 2020 minutes, as submitted; it was seconded by Secretary Alex Cushing and unanimously approved.**

Vote to approve the Feb. 10, 2020 minutes as amended passed, 4-0-0.

IN FAVOR: Chairman Crawford, Secretary Cushing, and Commissioners Butsch and Frank Guarascio.

OPPOSED: None.

ABSTAINED: None.

3. **Call for additional agenda items:** None.

4. **Project/Issue Updates**

~ **Watershed Education Project.** Chairman Crawford stated that she has received many compliments on the watershed signs that have been posted, and other towns liked the idea so much that they are hoping to do the same.

~ **Invasive Species.** Chairman Crawford stated that she has been reading the student commissioners' work on invasive species, and she encouraged everyone to attend the April 18, 2020 *Wild and Scenic Film* Festival, which is a joint project of the Clinton and Madison Land Trusts. The Conservation Commission will have an "eating your invasives" table at the event, which would feature jam made from invasive species. The film festival is a land trust fundraiser, and last year Madison and Clinton had the film festival and the movies were amazing, Chairman Crawford stated.

~ **Madison Schools Sustainability Curriculum.** Chairman Crawford stated that talks are to continue this spring with the principal for the fifth graders, and Commissioner Butsch volunteered to assist in trying to move the sustainability curriculum along. It is hoped there will be a program on sustainability with the fifth graders, either in the classroom or out in the field, according to Chairman Crawford.

~ **International Dark Skies Week.** Chairman Crawford stated that the International Dark Skies week is April 19, 2020 to April 25, 2020. A reservation has been made to put up the International Dark Skies Week banner over Route 1, in about two weeks. It will have the dark skies event on one side, and the other side of the banner will be more generic, since the banner will be flying a little bit in advance of the actual International Dark Skies Week. Chairman Crawford stated that it would be great to also put the banner up in the summer, during firefly season, to remind residents to turn off all the outdoor summer

lights, to give darkness to the fireflies.

~ **Web Site/Social Media.** Commissioner Guarascio stated that he would post the environmental calendar of events that Chairman Crawford has created. In addition, it is hoped an article will be posted on the town website.

~ **Update on the Status of Active and Pending Applications.** In the absence of Director of Planning and Economic Development David Anderson, Chairman Crawford summarized the status of 4 Boston Post Road, where a marina is planned, and the General's Residence, which involves cluster housing. The marina application public hearing has been, again, continued, because the applicants presented new materials to the Planning and Zoning Commission, and the commissioners needed additional time to review the documents, according to Chairman Crawford. In terms of the General's Residence, Chairman Crawford stated that she was in favor of moving the proposed housing closer to Boston Post Road, but the application was met with residence from the public. Coming up is property at the corner of New Road and the Hammonasset Connector—someone is designing something for that area, Chairman Crawford stated, adding that this should be interesting, since the land is composed of a very overgrown field, which has 20-foot tall cedars and is a natural habitat for creatures. Furthermore, the site is in the aquifer recharge zone, she stated. It is expected to be heard before the Planning and Zoning Commission on April 16, 2020, and Chairman Crawford stated that the Conservation Commission will probably hear the application as a pre-application review.

5. **Summer Intern Program for 2020.** Commissioner Crawford stated that the Conservation Commission had three wonderful interns, last summer, and all three have expressed an interest in returning for this summer. There is enough funding to have all three return, she stated, adding that perhaps there could even be a fourth intern this summer.

**Commissioner Butsch made the motion to have interns this summer, and to allow the three interns from last year to return to serve as interns this year; it was seconded by Secretary Cushing and unanimously approved.**

Vote to have interns in the summer of 2020, allowing the return of last year's three interns, passed 4-0-0. IN FAVOR: Chairman Crawford, Secretary Cushing, and Commissioners Butsch and Guarascio.

OPPOSED: None.

ABSTAINED: None.

6. **Natural Resources Inventory (NRI).** Chairman Crawford stated that the last NRI session was very productive, with 40 to 50 properties added; she will be completing the dark skies write up.

7. **Earth Day 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Discuss Commission Support and Activities.** Former Conservation Commission Chairman Francis Brady has secured permission from the church to place a table on the green, and the Conservation Commission will have a table, as well, according to Chairman Crawford. MAD for the Earth and the Earth Expo will take place on April 25, 2020. In the Conservation Commission's April meeting, final plans should be made for what should be placed on the table, according to Chairman Crawford.

8. **Update from Daniel Hand High School Student Commissioners.** The pollinator garden will be circular, around the Daniel Hand High School flag pole. A plot plan has been created, and plants have already been chosen for the garden. Plans are to plant the garden before school ends in June, possibly in mid-May.

9. **Adjournment.**

**Commissioner Butsch made the motion to adjourn at 8:07 p.m.; it was seconded by Secretary Cushing and unanimously approved.**

Vote to adjourn at 8:07 p.m. passed, 4-0-0.

IN FAVOR: Chairman Crawford, Secretary Cushing, and Commissioners Butsch and Guarascio.

OPPOSED: None.

ABSTAINED: None.

Respectfully submitted,  
Marlene H. Kennedy