

**CONSERVATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Mar. 11, 2019, 7:30 P.M.
MEETING ROOM B MADISON TOWN CAMPUS**

Subject to approval: Minutes of the Meeting of Mar. 11, 2019 - 7:30 p.m. - Meeting Room B - Madison Town Campus

Members present: Chairman Francis Brady, Vice Chairman Christine Bouchard, Secretary Alex Cushing, and Commissioner Heather Crawford.

Members absent: Rachel Klein and Richard Gedney.

Others present: Director of Planning and Economic Development David Anderson.

1. **Call meeting to order:** Chairman Francis Brady called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.
2. **Review and approve minutes for February 11, 2019 meeting as submitted.**

Vice Chairman Christine Bouchard made the motion to approve the Feb. 11, 2019 minutes, as amended, as follows: In Item 5, change "... could advertise any of its efforts over Route 1 on a large banner..." to read, "... could advertise any of its efforts over Route 79 on a large banner..."; in Item 8, change "... The Conservation Commission will also have educational materials on how to protect the species and plastics..." to read, "... The Conservation Commission will also have educational materials on how to protect the species and the impact of Single Use plastics, such as grocery bags ..." Commissioner Heather Crawford seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

Vote to approve the Feb. 11, 2019 minutes, as amended, passed, 4-0-0.

IN FAVOR: Chairmen Brady, Vice Chairman Bouchard, Secretary Alex Cushing, and Commissioner Crawford.

OPPOSED: None.

ABSTAINED: None.

3. **Call for additional agenda items:** Chairman Brady asked that the following items be added to the agenda: Update on Sustainable Connecticut; quick view of website that has been updated; legislative update from Hartford. Chairman Brady stated that he had just returned from the state legislature in Hartford, where he was able to sit in on 17 environmental bills; statewide students in fifth and eighth grades spoke in favor of various bills, and he stated that he had the opportunity to meet the woman from Westport who began the Single Use Plastic bag initiative. Chairman Brady thanked the Conservation Commission for its knowledge and support and stated that the Conservation Commission is able to do a good job, as long as everyone has a passion for the environment and loves the town of Madison.

Regarding Sustainable Connecticut, Madison has earned the bronze certificate and now wants to earn the silver, according to Director of Planning and Economic Development David Anderson; items remain to be completed, and the silver is attainable, but additional assistance is needed. There is currently a small number of residents willing to serve on a committee to continue Madison's Sustainable Connecticut initiative, but representation is also needed from the Conservation Commission and the planning and zoning side, which Mr. Anderson stated could be a member of the Planning and Zoning Commission, or perhaps, himself, as a member of the land use department. Items that are accomplished would earn points toward the silver, according to Mr. Anderson. The Sustainable Connecticut website is pretty robust, and it gives explanations of the types of actions that have to be completed, as well as

suggestions on how to complete them, Mr. Anderson stated. It is a nice program, because it is an overall definition of sustainability, and whoever is part of Madison's Sustainable Connecticut team would be able to log into the Sustainable Connecticut website, Mr. Anderson stated. He asked whether anyone on the Conservation Commission is interested in serving on the committee. Chairman Brady stated that the answer is, "Yes," however, the Conservation Commission has to agree on how to serve on the panel. Commissioner Crawford asked if the deadline for the silver certificate is August to September, and Mr. Anderson stated that it is, and he hopes to have the core committee together within the next two weeks. Vice Chairman Bouchard asked what is left to be done to earn the silver, and Mr. Anderson stated that he will send that information to the commissioners.

It was noted that the updated website is already on the agenda.

4. Natural Resources Inventory (NRI) ~ Discuss the upcoming NRI walk on March 16th. Need confirmation of attendance, software training and desired output: Vice Chairman Bouchard stated that to complete the NRI, the Conservation Commission has to go out into the field to observe; the University of Connecticut has a data collection tool that may be used, and the app MadisonCTCCNRI may be accessed on the phone. Even members of the public are able to assist in the process, and Vice Chairman Bouchard stated that perhaps Daniel Hand High School students could observe the high school grounds for natural resources. Local residents may even complete the project within their own backyards, according to Commissioner Crawford. Invasive species are not a natural resource, Vice Chairman Bouchard stated. Once in the field observing, the app asks questions that need to be answered, such as: What kind of feature have you found? Then, the app records the location, giving latitude and longitude, and a photo needs to be taken, according to Vice Chairman Bouchard. Mr. Anderson stated that the town has a GIS vendor who could incorporate the NRI, and some of the NRI data will be general and may be generated from information available from the state Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP). Vice Chairman Bouchard asked Mr. Anderson how he envisions the Natural Resources Inventory to be composed, once the work is completed. The Conservation Commission had divided the town's natural resources, such as coastal and forestry resources, among its members, giving each commissioner deadlines to complete narratives and incorporate links, and the narratives and links were saved into Google docs in 2016. Vice Chairman Bouchard showed Mr. Anderson the Conservation Commission's Google docs work. Mr. Anderson stated that he is envisioning the Natural Resources Inventory to be a set of maps or a document that he, a commissioner, or a town official could reference, were someone to propose, for instance, purchasing a parcel of land for construction; the Natural Resources Inventory could show why that parcel should be preserved. Vice Chairman Bouchard stated that the NRI could go on the town's website. Chairman Brady stated that a "heat map" could be created—the hotter a parcel of the land gets, the more it needs to be preserved. Six parcels have been selected for Conservation Commission observation, as follows: Mercy Center, 11:30 a.m., March 16; Ox Pasture, April 20; Salt Meadow, June 15; Surf Club, July 22; and Rettich Preserve, Aug. 17. A protected properties list also needs to be included in the Natural Resources Inventory, and not the one from the state, but the one from Madison, according to Commissioner Crawford. Vice Chairman Bouchard stated that protected properties include the Nature Conservatory, state properties, managed open space, water company properties, and town parcels. Camp Laurelwood is considered privately managed open space, and Commissioner Crawford stated that she would consider it managed, because its owners could sell it off. Mr. Anderson stated that, for him, the Natural Resources Inventory would be a map-heavy document, with a description of the resource and why it is desired for preservation. Mr. Anderson stated that his idea is to keep the Natural Resources Inventory succinct, put it on the map, and update the maps—first, identify the natural resources, second, give a description of the value of the resource, and third, explain why it is worthy of protecting. Once that is done, the commission could have a link at the end for more information, he stated.

5. **Project/Issue Updates:**

~ **Earth Day 2019: Planning discussion & resource needs.** Earth Day Festival is Saturday, April 27, 2019, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., and the town's Green Up Clean Up event is the same day, from 9 a.m. to 12 noon, according to Commissioner Crawford. In the past two years, the Conservation Commission helped at Salt Meadow for Green Up Clean Up, and three years ago, the commission worked at the booth at Robert's, handing out gloves and bags; the town supplies the resources. The Conservation Commission reviewed four posters that could be used at the Earth Day Festival: The Power of Pollinators; Plastic is not Fantastic; Light Pollution; and Pesticides. Chairman Brady stated that Madison's Bring Your Own (BYO) reusable grocery bag team will also be participating. It was suggested that Chairman Brady have a separate table for Single Use Plastics and BYO, during the April 27th events. Secretary Cushing suggested that there be sign-up sheets at the Conservation Commission's event tables, so visitors may sign-up to receive links to various environmental education websites, rather than distributing handouts that may eventually get thrown away. Vice Chairman Bouchard stated that a link to the Conservation Commission's website should also be distributed.

~ **Discussion on potential commission involvement in BYO Madison efforts through the formation of a subcommittee:** Madison's Bring Your Own (BYO) reusable grocery bags and Single Use Plastics team is forming, and Chairman Brady stated that to use the senior center without paying \$10, the Conservation Commission needs to have a subcommittee designated for the BYO effort. Vice Chairman Bouchard stated that the charge of the Conservation Commission is to complete the Natural Resources Inventory (NRI), and it has now taken on the Sustainable Connecticut work as a charge. Commissioner Crawford stated that educational outreach is also a charge of the Conservation Commission, with the BYO initiative being a part of the educational outreach. Chairman Brady stated that six people have joined the BYO effort, and the kick-off meeting is March 20, 2019, from 8:30 a.m. to 10 a.m. Commissioner Crawford stated that if the Conservation Commission forms a subcommittee for BYO, the commission will have to post agendas and minutes of each meeting; Vice Chairman Bouchard suggested the BYO team visit the Conservation Commission. Chairman Brady stated that he would like to keep the Conservation Commission updated on the BYO team's work.

~ **Conservation Commission's Web Site enhancement update:** Chairman Brady stated that the Conservation Commission's website has been enhanced and updated to provide more environmental information to the public; he showed the website to the commissioners with the changes that have been made to it. So far, there are four major categories in which environmental information may be obtained, and they do include links to other websites. Chairman Brady would like to engage the public with a photo contest, the prize being placement of the photos on the website. Mr. Anderson stated there are two questions the Conservation Commission should answer, in creating the website: "Why do you have this website?" and, "What do you hope people do?" Vice Chairman Bouchard stated that the Conservation Commission has the website as educational outreach, and the commission hopes people learn something from it and take action, because of that knowledge. Mr. Anderson stated that he could see the website as driving behavior more, educating the public as to what it can do as homeowners or as townspeople—the goal would be to drive behavior. Chairman Brady stated he has website entries that could achieve Mr. Anderson's suggested goal, but that information has not yet been put on the website. Commissioner Crawford suggested that Chairman Brady's information be put up before April, since that is when people will need the information to start buying products for gardening and the spring season. There would be a page called Homeowner Help, Chairman Brady stated, which includes information on such topics as dead trees, soil testing, and the transfer station, among others, and Vice Chairman Bouchard suggested that it be called Sustainable Homeowner. Mr. Anderson stated that the homeowner page should be organized around, "What can I do?" and Commissioner Crawford stated that it could answer: "What can I do on my own parcel?" and "What can I do around town?" Vice Chairman Bouchard asked that the website include a link to the Land Conservation Trust, because of the trails available to the public. Mr. Anderson stated that he definitely likes the idea of having all the resources in one spot.

~ **Membership update:** Chairman Brady met with the Republican Town Committee and stated that he informed the committee that the Conservation Commission needs two members; there is, so far, one person who is interested in becoming a conservation commissioner.

~ **Summer Intern support: Update possible sources of talent.** No report, other than that funds might be needed to pay an intern. Mr. Anderson stated there is money in the budget for that, if needed.

6. **Adjournment**

Commissioner Crawford made the motion to adjourn at 8:49 p.m.; it was seconded by Vice Chairman Bouchard and unanimously approved.

Vote to adjourn at 8:49 p.m. passed, 4-0-0.

IN FAVOR: Chairmen Brady, Vice Chairman Bouchard, Secretary Cushing, and Commissioner Crawford.

OPPOSED: None.

ABSTAINED: None.

Respectfully submitted,
Marlene H. Kennedy, clerk