

Subject to Approval

**CONSERVATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
April 12, 2021, 7:30 P.M.
ZOOM MEETING ~ MADISON TOWN CAMPUS**

Minutes of the Meeting of April 12, 2021, 7:30 p.m. – Zoom Public Participation Meeting with publicly posted information giving the webinar link password, telephone call in number and webinar identification number.

Members present: Chairman Heather Crawford, Secretary Alex Cushing, Danielle Butsch, Sufia Uddin, and Shannon Lewis.

Members absent: Vice Chairman Christine Bouchard.

Others present: Director of Planning and Economic Development David Anderson, Sarah Caso, and Daniel Hand High School Environmental Club Student Commissioner Marina Dixon.

1. **Call the meeting to order:** Chairman Heather Crawford called the meeting to order at 7:32 p.m.
2. **Review and approve minutes for March 8, 2021 meeting as submitted:**

Commissioner Danielle Butsch made the motion to approve the March 8, 2021 minutes as submitted; it was seconded by Secretary Alex Cushing and unanimously approved.

Vote to approve the March 8, 2021 minutes as submitted passed, 5-0-0.

IN FAVOR: Chairman Crawford, Secretary Cushing, and Commissioners Butsch, Shannon Lewis, and Sufia Uddin.

OPPOSED: None.

ABSTAINED: None.

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

4. **Application Review: 110&114 Bradley Road:** Director of Planning and Economic Development David Anderson stated that it is a 30-unit apartment building with 19 two-bedroom and 11 one-bedroom units; it received Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Agency approval in March, and it is going before the Planning and Zoning Commission for a special exception permit this coming Thursday. The local health department has reviewed it, but due to the volume, it also had to be sent to the state for approval, which has not yet been received. The Planning and Zoning Commission could decide to continue the hearing until receipt of the state decision, or it could approve the application, with the condition that the state has to approve it, according to Mr. Anderson. Chairman Crawford stated that she thinks it is a good place for infill; there is some landscaping, and with screening, she does not think there will be much of an impact; the site is near to wetland and forest wetland, which has migratory birds. The site is near Tuxis Pond. The town was awarded a grant for sidewalk infrastructure on Bradley Road, which has been completed, but finances were not achieved for affordable housing, according to Mr. Anderson. While this particular project did not work out for affordable housing, the town will continue to look for affordable housing opportunities, according to Mr. Anderson. Chairman Crawford stated that she would be able to write and send out an email stating that, overall, the Conservation Commission does not see any issues, other than the buffering of the inland wetlands.

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Commissioner Butsch made the motion to have Chairman Crawford write an email to the Planning and Zoning Commission; it was seconded by Commissioner Uddin and unanimously approved.

Vote to have the chairman write to the Planning and Zoning Commission passed, 5-0-0.

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

OPPOSED: None.

ABSTAINED: None.

5. **Update on applications for 856 Boston Post Road relative to Inland Wetlands Agency and Planning and Zoning Commission:** Chairman Crawford stated that someone who has lived near the site for 15 years informed her that they could definitely see the difference in the wetlands in the decade and a half since they have been there. Mr. Anderson stated that this application will go before the Inland Wetlands Agency on May 3, 2021 and to the Planning and Zoning Commission on May 20, 2021. Chairman Crawford stated that she has been looking at the aerial photographs, and the Bradley Road project has less impact on the resources than the 856 Boston Post Road application. It is expected the Conservation Commission will draft something before the Inland Wetlands Agency's May 3rd meeting.

6. **Actions from the Sustainable CT staff and plan for recertification activities:** Chairman Crawford stated that there are a lot of opportunities for the town; she and Mr. Anderson had a Zoom meeting with one of the Sustainable Connecticut staff members, and the staff member is eager to be of support. Chairman Crawford stated that Madison does not have too far to go, in points, in order to reach the bronze certification. The pollinator pathways, the watershed initiative, and light pollution are several areas on which to build, according to Chairman Crawford. The Conservation Commission reviewed the activities available and discussed plans to move forward; there were a number of categories that Mr. Anderson stated he could update and then upload onto the website. Commissioner Uddin expressed interest in supporting local businesses. The Chamber of Commerce and the Economic Development Commission could be involved in the inventory of local businesses, according to Chairman Crawford. Mr. Anderson stated that he'll make a note to see if he can get someone to work on that, or he will update it, himself. Sarah Caso stated that she works in a bee laboratory, so she could easily put together an educational event on pollinators. Chairman Crawford expressed an interest in the invasive species activities. Mr. Anderson invited attendee Francis Brady to speak, and he stated that he and Kelly Brady are willing to help with the pollinator pathway effort. In addition, Mr. Brady stated that he is trying to get support from the town to plant trees for the 200th anniversary of the town in 2026—it could be plant 200 trees or plant 2000 trees. To commemorate the 195th anniversary of the town, Kelly Brady is planting a tree at the library; it will be the first tree of the pollinator pathway, Mr. Brady stated. A charity will be needed to raise the money for the trees, and someone, like the Madison Land Trust, would have the knowledge to say where the native trees should be planted, according to Mr. Brady. That could be an innovative project, Chairman Crawford stated. After speaking to Mr. Brady, Chairman Crawford turned back to the Sustainable Connecticut activities and stated that she is thinking along the lines of each of the Conservation Commissioners taking one of the activities and doing the overall coordination of each activity. One section is on equity, and that section would be for the town to do, according to Chairman Crawford. Mr. Anderson stated that he would like to work with the housing group on the equity initiative. Sustainable Connecticut activities include: promoting local retail options; sustainable purchasing; develop, implement and maintain a buy-local campaign; watershed education; watershed management plan; host a program for residents and businesses on the value of the watershed; invasive species education and management; educate municipal grounds keeping on invasive species; promote dark skies; adopt a policy to reduce municipal lighting; integrate sustainability into the Plan of Conservation and Development; and climate resiliency. One of the activities is to achieve Certified

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Local Government status, which Madison has achieved, under Carol Snow, and this has resulted in the town receiving funding to do a historic inventory of buildings in town, according to Mr. Anderson. Solar related activities could be handled by the Energy and Efficiency Committee, and coastal resiliency activities could be done by the Coastal Resiliency Commission, according to Mr. Anderson. Sustainable Connecticut activities that require an event, wherein participants' and attendees' numbers are tracked, might be difficult between now and August, but Mr. Anderson suggested that the Conservation Commission consider doing an event on Zoom, because it is much easier to organize. Waste reduction, recycle additional materials, and composting, along with develop a food scraps recovery plan, are areas in which Commissioner Butsch has begun work, some of which was stalled by Covid. She stated that it looks like there are a lot of doable projects, such as recycling clothing and textiles, and Blue Earth Composting could put a bin in town, if there is enough interest. Mr. Anderson stated that he honestly wants to do activities that make a difference in the town, such as recycling textiles. Probably the beginning of the Sustainable Connecticut work is going to take more time, Mr. Anderson stated, adding that the Conservation Commission should take on manageable actions but try to get other people to take on the action of these items. Mr. Anderson stated that he has a longer term project; as part of the Plan of Conservation and Development, he would like to figure out a way to incorporate a Climate Action Plan. That plan would state what could be done as a town, local, relevant to Madison climate actions, and also what people could do, in their personal lives, such as buy an electric vehicle or reduce the size of their lawns, and then encourage people to take a Climate Action pledge, according to Mr. Anderson. Chairman Crawford stated that she has a copy of a Climate Action Plan, with a pledge, and she will make it available.

7. **Discuss ongoing projects/issues; plans for 2021:**

- a. **Dark Skies education and regulation** ~ A Dark Skies banner will be going up from April 11, 2021 to April 17, 2021.
- b. **Anti-idling campaign** ~ Chairman Crawford plans to continue conversations in this area, by getting in touch with Sharon Gold.
- c. **Invasive species** ~ This is a continuing project; a video would be helpful, because it would show pictures of invasive species.
- d. **Community outreach** ~ All of the above is community outreach.
- e. **Others** ~ Green Up Clean Up is April 24, 2021, and the Conservation Commission will staff the North Madison booth to hand out supplies, such as gloves, plastic bags, and safety vests for children.

8. **Update from student representatives:** The Environmental Club put up posters for Dark Skies Week and posted facts every day on Instagram; for Earth Day, two banners will go up, and the club will take a walk to Bauer Park, according to Daniel Hand High School Student Commissioner Marina Dixon.

9. **Adjourn**

Commissioner Lewis made the motion to adjourn at 8:45 p.m.; it was seconded by Commissioner Butsch and unanimously approved.

Vote to adjourn at 8:45 p.m. passed, 5-0-0.

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

OPPOSED: None.

ABSTAINED: None.

Respectfully submitted,
Marlene H. Kennedy