

**CONSERVATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
July 20, 2020, 7:30 P.M.
ZOOM MEETING ~ MADISON TOWN CAMPUS**

Subject to approval: Minutes of the Meeting of July 20, 2020 - 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; the meeting was recorded.

Members present: Chairman Heather Crawford, Vice Chairman Christine Bouchard and Commissioner Danielle Butsch.

Members absent: Secretary Alex Cushing and Commissioner Frank Guarascio.

Others present: Director of Planning and Economic Development David Anderson; Daniel Hand High School Environmental Club Student Commissioners Marinas Dixon and Elizabeth Ozimek; Student Intern Sarah Caso.

1. **Call the meeting to order:** Chairman Heather Crawford called the meeting to order at 7:33 p.m.
2. **Review and approve minutes for March 9, 2020 and June 8, 2020 meetings, as submitted.**
No minutes had been submitted for review and approval.
3. **Call for additional agenda items:** Chairman Crawford asked that the resignation of Commissioner Frank Guarascio be added to the agenda.

4. **Summer Intern Program ~**

a. Invasive Species education and collaboration with Madison Land Conservation Trust (MLCT): Chairman Crawford stated that MLCT Trail Stewardship Chairman Robert Owens had participated in a meeting of stewardship chairs, and invasive species is an issue with which he would like to become more familiar. Invasive species demonstrations could take place at a variety of trails—two sites are Summerhill Trail and Reddick Farm, according to Chairman Crawford. Plans are to send the interns off to look at additional sites for invasive species demonstrations, with Salt Meadow being the first to visit, according to Chairman Crawford. Once the demonstrations are under way, it will be important to determine what is the best management program for any invasive species that are identified. MLCT is in the process of updating its website, and MLCT would like to have some of the Conservation Commission’s information on it, Chairman Crawford stated.

b. Dark Skies education and presentation to P&Z: Interns Marinas Dixon, Elizabeth Ozimek and Sarah Caso created the dark skies presentation for the Planning and Zoning Commission. Sarah Caso, who had a previous biology lab commitment, may try to make it to the Conservation Commission meeting, after her course work, according to Chairman Crawford. Meanwhile Ms. Dixon and Ms. Ozimek were given permission to share the Zoom screen to show the presentation to the Conservation Commission, to review, prior to appearing before the Planning and Zoning Commission at a later date. Chairman Crawford stated that she would time the presentation. It was called *Dark Skies: The Effect of Light Pollution on Dark Skies*. The presentation had 50 slides and showed how artificial light creates light pollution in a variety of ways, negatively affecting the entire environment and all species, including land and sea creatures, human health, and plant life. It outlined the importance of the Circadian Rhythm and described how light disrupts the Circadian Rhythm. In addition, it showed the effect of light pollution on birds, fireflies, and the horseshoe crabs. It has been determined that light pollution causes disruptions to the human immune system, as well as depression. The loss of horseshoe crabs, which visit

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Madison's shores, would be devastating to the medical community, because the horseshoe crabs' blood is used in medicine to test whether medications geared toward being injected in humans is safe. Light pollution has a negative effect on plants and trees, causing trees to go into dormancy at a later time, and eventually killing those trees. Information was given on the "dos and don'ts" of lighting, the types of lights to use, as well as fact sheets which will be distributed, in advance of the presentation. The presentation lasted 18 minutes, which Director of Planning and Economic Development David Anderson stated is in the ballpark of the 15 to 20 minutes he had thought it should be. Mr. Anderson praised the format, called it very comprehensive, and stated that the interns should put their names on the title page and include an overview of what the presentation will cover, perhaps on the second slide. It is really important that the presentation asks whether residents' properties are dark sky friendly and dark sky compliant, according to Mr. Anderson. Once the presentation is completed, it could be suggested that work begin on a draft regulation to protect dark skies, and the interns and Conservation Commission could seek permission to work on that regulation, according to Mr. Anderson. Chairman Crawford stated that the presentation was great, and she asked Mr. Anderson if the Conservation Commission could add a couple of slides at the end and say what it would like to do next. Mr. Anderson stated that a couple-slide wrap up would be great, and he suggested everyone try to think a little like a regulator in creating a regulation for the Planning and Zoning Commission. Vice Chairman Christine Bouchard suggested the interns think about the key aspects of each organism, in describing how the light pollution affects them. Commissioner Danielle Butsch stated that the presentation was really well put together, but she would like the information about the horseshoe crab put in earlier, since its loss would be such devastation to human life and the medical community. Chairman Crawford stated that she would like to ask the Planning and Zoning Commission for a regulation that would eliminate light trespass; it is like water pollution. There are ways that it can be regulated, she stated, adding that an example of light pollution is giant light fixtures all along Horsepond Road. If the Planning and Zoning Commission were to adopt a regulation, all new construction would have to adhere to it, but current properties would not be exempt from it, according to Mr. Anderson. Current property owners could be given six months to a year to conform to the new regulations, he stated. For new construction, the town would have to require a lighting plan in association with the building permit, and provide property owners with a packet of, say, 12 recommended light fixtures that would meet the regulations, Mr. Anderson stated. Light pollution is the new water pollution, Chairman Crawford stated. The Dark Skies presentation will be given in a virtual meeting setting at 7 p.m. on Thursday, Aug. 6, 2020, before the planning meeting of the Planning and Zoning Commission, according to Mr. Anderson.

c. Natural Resources Inventory (NRI) data entry and summaries: Chairman Crawford wondered whether data collected last summer could be entered into the NRI; they may need to return to the town properties to collect additional data. At the end of summer, there may be more data to add into the GIS system, Chairman Crawford stated.

d. Stone walls: According to the Conservation Commission's charge, archeological and cultural resources are to be documented, Chairman Crawford stated, asking whether data on stone walls could be included, since work has already been done in this area. Vice Chairman Bouchard stated that it is really hard to tell the difference between a historical stone wall and a new stone wall. The stone walls in New England have more rock put into them than all the pyramids, Chairman Crawford stated. Plans are to move forward and start Epi collecting with the stone walls, according to Chairman Crawford.

e. Web site/social media opportunities: Website and social media opportunities include the Madison Land Conservation Trust website, the town of Madison website, and the Conservation Commission's website and Facebook page, according to Chairman Crawford. Any material that is given by the Conservation Commission to the Madison Land Conservation Trust website should also appear on the Conservation Commission website, according to Chairman Crawford. Intern Sarah Caso has been writing letters to the editor of *The Source*, but they have been rejected because they are not being seen as being about a "Madison specific issue," despite the fact that Ms. Caso has worked really hard at putting a local spin on the subject matters of horseshoe crabs and fireflies, according to Chairman Crawford. She

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asked for suggestions for having the letters printed, and Mr. Anderson suggested *The Shoreline Times* and *Madison Neighbor*.

5. **Update on status of active and pending applications:** Mr. Anderson stated that the Planning and Zoning Commission had five meetings before passing an application for health care at 503 Old Toll Road; there is an application for a new bank on Boston Post Road, and plans are to demolish the current building on the site—it is also before the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Agency for approval.

6. **Intern Arrival:** Intern Sarah Caso entered the Conservation Commission meeting at 8:34 p.m., and Chairman Crawford stated that the interns' Dark Skies presentation is excellent, and it will be moving forward to the Planning and Zoning Commission.

7. **Resignation of Commissioner Frank Guarascio:** Chairman Crawford stated that Commissioner Frank Guarascio has indicated to her that he plans to resign, which will bring the Conservation Commission down to four members. The commission discussed ways to inform the public that a new member is needed, and plans are to ask Commissioner Guarascio if he could post his opening on the Conservation Commission's Facebook page. Chairman Crawford stated that she will write a letter to the editor about the resignation. She also stated that Commissioner Guarascio needs to write a letter about his resignation to the Board of Selectmen.

8. **Adjournment.**

Commissioner Butsch made the motion to adjourn at 8:38 p.m.; it was seconded by Vice Chairman Bouchard and unanimously approved.

Vote to adjourn passed, 3-0-0.

IN FAVOR: Chairman Crawford, Vice Chairman Bouchard and Commissioner Butsch.

OPPOSED: None.

ABSTAINED: None.

Respectfully submitted,
Marlene H. Kennedy