

**CONSERVATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Aug. 12, 2019, 7:30 P.M.
MEETING ROOM B MADISON TOWN CAMPUS**

Subject to approval: Minutes of the Meeting of Aug. 12, 2019 - 7:30 p.m. - Meeting Room B - Madison Town Campus.

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

Members absent: Secretary Alex Cushing, and Commissioners Rachel Blundon 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 July 8, 2019 meeting as submitted.** There were no minutes submitted for review, so the Conservation Commission tabled the July 8, 2019 minutes approval until the next meeting.
3. **Call for additional agenda items:** Chairman Brady wanted to add an item at the end of the agenda concerning taking a vote on a resolution regarding reusable bags.
4. **Community Composting Presentation (Sustainable CT category 7.7)—Lili Hussey (15 minutes):** Lili Hussey gave a presentation on volunteering to assist the Conservation Commission and the town in achieving the objectives of Sustainable Connecticut Category 7.7, Community Composting. It has been found that 45.4 percent of the waste consists of food and paper, and since 2010 food waste in Connecticut has increased by 65 percent, making Connecticut number nine in food waste in the United States, according to a 2016 study. Composting opportunities in Connecticut can be found in schools, restaurants, stores, local governments, hotels, small businesses, and in community composting. Ms. Hussey stated that a pilot composting project could start in a school; the state Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) has a robust handbook for launching school composting, based on the town of Mansfield's experience, which has a composting project that has been ongoing for 20 years. She suggested the pilot program in Madison could begin at Daniel Hand High School, with the administration and students working together to get it under way. There are many learning opportunities associated with composting, focusing on: United Nations Sustainability Goals; Nutrition, plant-based diet versus omnivorous diets; Green House Gases; Food Waste Management; Community Service; and Competitions. Director of Planning and Economic Development David Anderson stated that he would love to try to make community composting a bigger focus, rather than having it trickle up from a school-based pilot program, and he stated that he would get in touch with the Chamber of Commerce. In starting bigger with the program, three areas would be tapped—the schools, individual residents, and restaurants and stores, according to Mr. Anderson. He stated there are a lot of residents interested in composting. Ms. Hussey stated that she would be happy to be engaged in multiple routes toward achieving the composting goal, but first a survey has to be done to gauge interest, and it is also important to include in the survey questions that illuminate why some would not be interested on composting. There are many reasons residents may not want to compost, for instance, the fear of drawing wild animals to a compost area, however, experts do have answers to allay fears, according to Ms. Hussey; education is an important concept in the composting initiative. According to state law, organizations of a certain size are required to compost, so a large store, such as Stop & Shop, may already be involved in composting, according to Ms. Hussey. Mr. Anderson stated that it would be important to first obtain the
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support of the Board of Selectmen in the composting initiative, and it seems like a really good project to promote. Why people do not want to compost is what really needs to be known, and it is hoped the survey will draw this answer forward, according to Ms. Hussey. Mr. Anderson stated that he will talk to the first selectman, the Chamber of Commerce, municipal food service leaders, and town staff about composting idea and report back to the Conservation Commission. Chairman Brady stated that he will add the composting topic to his list for a meeting he will be having with school administrators. Ms. Hussey stated that she will investigate whether there are any other composting handbooks which may be of assistance to Madison's efforts.

5. **Project/Issue Updates (20 minutes)**

~ **Sustainable CT Silver Goal for Madison—Intern Project Updates:** Chairman Brady stated that the interns made a very good invasive species video, used the Epicollect5 data system and added 82 points on the Madison GIS map, and their third project is Watershed Education, which follows.

Watershed Education (Sustainable CT category 2.1): Elizabeth Ozimek and Marina Dixon rising juniors at Daniel Hand High School and co-presidents of the Environmental Club, discussed the Watershed Education project, which consists of a pamphlet they created, along with the possibility of developing signage to alert the public to the watershed areas. Conservation Commissioners reviewed the pamphlet, while Marina Dixon explained that one section of it discusses watersheds and how they all go into Long Island Sound, another section summarizes watershed related projects happening elsewhere in Connecticut, and a third portion of the pamphlet shows a map of Madison and its subregional basins, which are color coded. Elizabeth Ozimek stated that there is a section on *How to Protect Your Watershed*, giving examples of protection efforts that can be made at home, and other steps that can be taken to take to protect watersheds that people may live near. Conservation Commissioners and Director of Planning and Economic Development David Anderson suggested the pamphlet include areas specific to Madison, where watersheds have been protected, such as Salt Meadow Park and other local environmental features. Chairman Brady stated that Bauer Park and Hammonasset State Park and Beach are both organically managed to protect watersheds. Commissioner Crawford stated that the words “add a buffer zone” be used in the pamphlet, and that property owners be advised to try to keep water on their own sites, rather than letting it run off. Gardens and pervious driveways are important features, it was stated. Lawns are such a big issue, Mr. Anderson stated; people put so much into lawns to try to keep them perfect. Chairman Brady stated that the interns have been using the GIS maps to create some of the watershed boundaries, and now they are looking into posting signs, which is part of the Watershed Education initiative for Sustainable Connecticut; the East River and the Hammonasset River are two areas where watershed signs could be posted. Chairman Brady showed a sample of signs designating watersheds, such as near lakes. One sign posted at a lake advised the public to use care with fertilizer, salt, pet waste, yard waste, and car washing. Mr. Anderson suggested two businesses where quotes could be received for the signs. There will be a permitting process involved with posting signs near the Connecticut Department of Transportation (DOT) properties, so Mr. Anderson suggested working first with the town of Madison and its public works department to post watershed education signs. Watershed monitoring, which is also one of the Sustainable Connecticut watershed education goals, may already be taking place through the efforts of the assistant town engineer, which the Conservation Commission could look into, according to Mr. Anderson. Chairman Brady stated that he will be showing the interns' invasive species video to the Board of Selectmen at its Aug. 26, 2019 meeting, which starts at 7 p.m.

Natural Resource Inventory (Sustainable CT category 2.5)—Commissioners Bouchard & Cushing: Work is continuing.

Invasive Species Education and Management (Sustainable CT category 2.10), Commissioners Crawford and Blundon: Work is continuing.

Innovation Action (Sustainable CT category 10.1), Create Sustainability Curriculum for the Madison school district—Vice Chairman Bouchard & Chairman Brady. Chairman Brady plans to meet with school officials in the near future.

~ **Bauer Park Festival, October 19th: First thoughts on commission's approach—All:** Bauer Park Festival is Oct. 19, 2019, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Conservation Commissioners had several ideas for this year's festival, such as inviting the Daniel Hand High School Environmental Club to attend the festival with the Conservation Commission, and the students could give invasive species tours, show the work they have done on the Natural Resources Inventory, and display the students' videos on a loop for the public to enjoy. Commissioner Crawford will get in touch with Bauer Park Festival leaders to request that the Conservation Commission booth be moved to another location.

6. **Natural Resources Inventory (15 minutes)**

~ **Finalize Coastal Resources narrative—Commissioner Crawford to lead and advise on next steps.** Commissioner Crawford stated that she and Chairman Brady met and worked together on finalizing the Coastal Resources narrative; it was a very productive process.

~ **Call for a new approach to address the writing of the narratives by replacing the 2nd meeting of the month with a voluntary session to write each section—one at a time—Chairman Brady: Vote required.** It was agreed that the first meeting of the month would be the Conservation Commission's regular meeting, but the second meeting of the month would become a work session, so that the Natural Resources Inventory narratives could be written one by one, until the project is completed. Those sessions would be voluntary, but Conservation Commissioners would be encouraged to attend so each section could be completed.

Commissioner Crawford made the motion that the second Conservation Commission meeting of each month be active writing sessions on the sections; it was seconded by Vice Chairman Bouchard and unanimously approved.

Vote to make the second meeting active writing sessions passed, 3-0-0.

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

OPPOSED: None.

ABSTAINED: None.

~ **3rd party support update—Chairman Brady.** Chairman Brady received information from three prospective candidates who could give support to the completion of the Natural Resources Inventory; thus far, one price was \$8,000. Director of Planning and Economic Development David Anderson stated that it is possible prices could be more than \$8,000 for the work, and funds for the support may have to come through a special appropriation from the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Anderson suggested the Conservation Commission discuss this with the Board of Selectmen.

7. **Board of Selectmen August 26th meeting – Conservation Commission Update (5 minutes):**

Chairman Brady showed the Conservation Commission the presentation he plans to give to the Board of Selectmen, when he appears as a guest on the board's agenda, Aug. 26, 2019. That meeting starts at 7 p.m. Several suggestions were made for revisions, and Chairman Brady stated that he would make the changes and forward the finished product to Mr. Anderson for review, prior to the meeting.

8. **Resolution regarding reusable bags.** Chairman Brady passed out a document entitled *Resolution on Reusable Checkout Bags*, which he stated has been reviewed by the town attorney. This resolution would become a town ordinance, specific to Madison, but similar resolutions have already been approved by at least 10 other Connecticut towns and seven states. If the ordinance is approved by the Board of Selectmen, a ban on plastic single-use checkout bags would go into effect after a three-month transition period, and a nominal fee would be placed on all paper checkout bags, and that fee would stay with the retailer, in order to partially recoup the costs needed to provide customers with the more expensive paper option. This ordinance is viewed as being more stringent than the current state law, which does not place

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a fee on paper bags nor ban plastic bags until July 1, 2021, the resolution states. Conservation Commissioners reviewed the resolution and proposed grammar changes. Director of Planning and Economic Development David Anderson asked about the enforcement mechanisms and whether there would be fines applied for noncompliance; once enforcement mechanisms are available, he asked that they be submitted to the town attorney for review. No vote was taken on the resolution, due to pending changes.

9. **Adjournment**

Commissioner Crawford made the motion to adjourn at 9:20 p.m.; it was seconded by Vice Chairman Bouchard and unanimously approved.

Vote to adjourn at 9:20 p.m. passed, 3-0-0.

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

OPPOSED: None.

ABSTAINED: None.

Respectfully submitted,
Marlene H. Kennedy