

**CONSERVATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Aug. 24, 2020, 7:30 P.M.
ZOOM MEETING ~ MADISON TOWN CAMPUS**

Subject to approval: Minutes of the Meeting of Aug. 24, 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.

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

Members absent: None.

Others present: Daniel Hand High School Environmental Club Student Commissioners Marina Dixon and Elizabeth Ozimek; Student Intern Sarah Caso is continuing her education out of state.

1. **Call the meeting to order:** Chairman Heather Crawford called the meeting to order at 7:39 p.m.
2. **Review and approve minutes for March 9, 2020, June 8, 2020, and July 20, 2020 meetings:**

Secretary Alex Cushing made the motion to approve the March 9, 2020 minutes with the amendment to change the wording to “resistance from the public,” under the agenda item entitled *Updates on Applications*; it was seconded by Vice Chairman Christine Bouchard and unanimously approved.

Vote to approve the March 9, 2020 minutes as amended, passed 3-0-0.

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

OPPOSED: None.

ABSTAINED: None.

Vice Chairman Bouchard made the motion to approve the June 8, 2020 minutes, as submitted; it was seconded by Secretary Cushing and unanimously approved.

Vote to approve the June 8, 2020 minutes as submitted passed 3-0-0.

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

OPPOSED: None.

ABSTAINED: None.

Secretary Cushing made the motion to approve the July 20, 2020 minutes, as submitted; it was seconded by Vice Chairman Bouchard and unanimously approved.

Vote to approve the July 20, 2020 minutes as submitted, passed 3-0-0.

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

OPPOSED: None.

ABSTAINED: None.

3. **Call for additional agenda items:** Chairman Crawford asked that the approval of the minutes of March 9, June 8, and July 20, 2020 be added to the agenda—see Item 2, above.

4. **Summer Intern Program ~**

a. Invasive Species education and collaboration with Madison Land Conservation Trust (MLCT): Chairman Crawford stated that the Conservation Commission and its interns were gearing up to do a coordinated campaign with the Madison Land Conservation Trust (MLCT) to educate its trail stewardship on invasive species, but due to the Coronavirus restrictions, that is being suspended. There cannot be anything officially sanctioned by the MLCT, under the current conditions, according to Chairman Crawford. Vice Chairman Bouchard stated that she will speak to the MLCT about this, because it is worthwhile for the stewards to be updated on invasive species to maintain the biodiversity. Being able to identify and remove invasive species will allow the MLCT to keep its trailheads and maintain access to those trails, according to Chairman Crawford.

b. Dark Skies education and presentation to P&Z: Interns Marina Dixon, Elizabeth Ozimek and Sarah Caso created the dark skies presentation for the Planning and Zoning Commission and presented it at the Aug. 20, 2020 meeting. Entitled, *Dark Skies: The Effect of Light Pollution on Dark Skies*, it was recorded for future viewing. Chairman Crawford stated that the presentation went very well, and the Conservation Commission and interns have been charged with sending a draft ordinance to the Planning and Zoning Commission to regulate the issue of light spilling onto adjacent properties and negatively affecting the environment, human and wildlife health, and various plant and insect species. Though it was mentioned by the Planning and Zoning Commissioners that it will be difficult to regulate the lighting issue downtown, because properties are located so close to each other, Chairman Crawford stated that she reminded the commissioners that shields could be placed on lights to prevent the problem. Vice Chairman Bouchard stated that she would get in touch with Daniel Hand High School to see whether its 3-D equipment and laboratory could create shields, in concert with the automotive laboratory.

c. Natural Resources Inventory (NRI) data entry and summaries: No report.

d. Stone walls: No report.

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. Any material that is given by the Conservation Commission to the Madison Land Conservation Trust website will also appear on the Conservation Commission website. Intern Sarah Caso wrote letters to the editor, while serving in her internship.

f. Summary of internship accomplishments and activities: Chairman Crawford asked Interns Marina Dixon and Elizabeth Ozimek to summarize their accomplishments and activities throughout the internship. The following accomplishments have either been completed or are in progress: Dark Skies presentation created, shown to the Planning and Zoning Commission, and recorded for public viewing; there was a lot of field work completed on invasive species; interns completed work on all of the Madison Land Conservation Trust trails and all of the Madison trails; the stone walls video was completed; an info graphic on the effects of storm damage on the trees was completed; Sarah Caso wrote the letters to the editors, tailoring those letters with local angles; an invasive workshop was conducted; and Conservation Commission materials were put directly onto the Madison Land Conservation Trust website. It is unknown whether the Daniel Hand High School pollinator garden will be continued, according to Ms. Dixon, due to the fact that the Coronavirus is still taking place. Vice Chairman Bouchard stated that she would be happy to donate, on behalf of the Jonathan Law High School, pollinator seeds that she has collected, to contribute to the Daniel Hand High School pollinator garden. Chairman Crawford stated that she would donate pots and seed starter, so the seeds could be planted in the winter and then placed in the high school's pollinator garden; care must be taken to ensure the seedlings, once planted, are not mowed down by the lawn mowers.

g. Visitor, regarding the Dark Skies presentation: Chairman Crawford invited Sanna Stanley, who saw the Dark Skies presentation at the Planning and Zoning Commission meeting, to speak, and she praised the interns for the presentation and their work. From her point of view, Ms. Stanley stated that

she believes there needs to be a lot of education on the dark skies topic in town, and she would love to see an educational dark skies brochure go out to builders and contractors, as well as real estate agents and agencies, because they turn the properties over in town and in the neighborhoods—education becomes a cultural effort. It has been said that someone needs to hear something seven times, before it begins to register, so education is important, according to Ms. Stanley. The dark skies presentation can be seen on the Town of Madison You Tube Channel, and Vice Chairman Bouchard asked whether there is a way audio could be added to it. The library is another place the dark skies presentation could be given, since the library is now doing virtual programming, according to Vice Chairman Bouchard. Light pollution creates problems in the winter, as well, since snow, ice, and rain is very reflective, according to Ms. Stanley, who stated that birds crash into ice covered parking lots, perceiving them to be lake surfaces. It affects the whole universe, Ms. Stanley stated, comparing it to second hand smoke, where at one time no one could do anything about second hand smoke in restaurants, other than stay home and not eat out. Chairman Crawford compared light pollution to the way society used to think about water pollution.

5. **Update on status of active and pending applications:** On Aug. 20, 2020, the Planning and Zoning Commission approved Chase Bank on Boston Post Road, in the downtown district. Chase Bank will be putting in a buffer near the stream behind the facility, and the impervious will be increased, Chairman Crawford stated. In addition, a green space is being made along the edge of the stream, and an infiltration system is being installed, according to Chairman Crawford.

6. **Adjournment.**

Vice Chairman Bouchard made the motion to adjourn at 8:16 p.m.; it was seconded by Secretary Cushing and unanimously approved.

Vote to adjourn at 8:16 p.m. passed, 3-0-0.

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

OPPOSED: None.

ABSTAINED: None.

Respectfully submitted,
Marlene H. Kennedy