

## Subject to Approval

**CONSERVATION COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
Sept. 28, 2020, 7:30 P.M.  
ZOOM MEETING ~ MADISON TOWN CAMPUS**

Minutes of the Meeting of Sept. 28, 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 Danielle Butsch.

**Members absent:** Secretary Alex Cushing.

**Others present:** Director of Planning and Economic Development David Anderson and Daniel Hand High School Environmental Club Student Commissioners Marina Dixon and Elizabeth Ozimek.

1. **Call the meeting to order:** Chairman Heather Crawford called the meeting to order at 7:34 p.m.
2. **Review and approve minutes for Aug. 24, 2020:** Minutes were not available.
3. **Call for additional agenda items:** None.
4. **New Citizen-led Environmental Actions**

**a. Anti-idling Campaign:** Sharon Gold stated that she moved to Madison from Rhode Island in February, where she was part of the Citizens Climate Lobby, and she has just joined the Mystic group. Efforts are to create climate emergency resolutions enacted by area towns, after encouraging towns to talk about how they plan to reduce carbon emissions; she stated that she helped to pass the resolution in South Kingston, RI. To reduce carbon emissions, vehicular idling has to be reduced; while a law has been on the books for several years, it has not been enforced, according to Ms. Gold. Idle free zones could be created around schools, because anti-car idling goes nicely with climate emergency resolutions, according to Ms. Gold. A student she had mentored won a \$500 grant, which enabled the student to pursue raising public awareness on reducing carbon emissions by reducing car idling. The student achieved establishing idle free zones in five different high schools in Massachusetts, Ms. Gold stated. She created a pledge and encouraged elementary school children to become engaged with their parents to stop idling their vehicles. The student got herself on the sustainability commission, received a lot of coverage on this issue, raised awareness, and now she has gone onto college, Ms. Gold stated. It is important to first raise the level of awareness on the dangers of carbon emissions and how vehicles directly contribute to the problem through idling; once that is done, the next step would be how to get a law on the books that is enforced, according to Ms. Gold. Some communities have created fines to address the issue, she stated. There are a lot of ways to get people aware and engaged—climate change is not just about polar bears, Ms. Gold stated. It needs creative thinking to be accomplished; it's not just schools, it is parking lots, as well, places like the Surf Club and Chatfield Hollow, Ms. Gold stated. People idling their vehicles are not even aware it is creating a climate emergency, according to Ms. Gold. Technology is addressing the issue by reducing ambulance and police vehicle idling, she stated.

**b. Safemadisonct effort to halt 5G network installation:** Leslie and Keith Embersits discussed efforts to halt the 5G network installation. Leslie Embersits presented a series of slides on the topic and talked about the health risks, as well as the risks to the eco system. She stated that she has very major concerns about 5G being rolled out in Madison—contractors are putting the 5G casings on telephone poles in Madison, but no one is aware it is happening. Keith Embersits stated that he may be a lawyer,

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but he became involved, because property values go down when cell towers are nearby, and while the 5G installations are not cell towers, they are, however, being attached to telephone poles that are five to 10 to 20 feet away from local residences. The danger is cancer being caused by the radiation, according to Mr. Embersits, and that is why they went to the Board of Selectmen; Easton has already passed a resolution in support of this effort. Easton has blocked the installation, and 20 towns are working on resolutions to cease and desist, Ms. Embersits stated. The 5G network provides a threat to animals, plants and entire ecosystems; 5G is not sustainable and will accelerate climate change, she stated. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is being taken to court for failing to effectively review hundreds of documents related to health issues, according to Ms. Embersits, who stated that the town of Madison is being asked to pass a resolution to cease and desist the 5G rollout. Thermal affects are not the problem; it is the shortwave pulsing, she stated. The request is that the town of Madison halt the build-out of the 5G wireless infrastructure with the hazardous microwave technology until such technologies have been proven safe to both human health and the environment through independent research and testing, according to Ms. Embersits. Chairman Crawford stated that she wants to see the ecological impact papers, and Vice Chairman Christine Bouchard, as well as Commissioner Danielle Butsch also asked to see them; Ms. Embersits agreed to share the information. As an advisory commission, Chairman Crawford stated that the Conservation Commission could write letters to the Planning and Zoning Commission and the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Agency about the topic, once information on it has been reviewed.

## 5. **Summer Intern Program Debrief and Next Steps**

**a. Invasive Species Education and Collaboration with Madison Land Conservation Trust (MLCT):** Chairman Crawford stated that she will put information together on invasive species; the MLCT could also watch the invasive species video. Vice Chairman Bouchard stated that while the MLCT is not having any public events, it may be able to have a meeting to discuss invasive species.

**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. Chairman Crawford asked Director of Planning and Economic Development David Anderson if he and she could meet to discuss potential next steps, and he agreed to do so.

**c. Stone walls video/information:** Intern Sarah Caso put together an in-depth presentation on stone walls, so there is an educational baseline available to protect the town's archeological and cultural resources, according to Chairman Crawford.

**d. Compost Video:** Commissioner Butsch stated that she reviewed the compost video and it was excellent, in terms of the research. In addition, the information was kept simple and to the point, with key facts being presented. Since composting is going to be made part of the fifth grade curriculum, Chairman Crawford stated that she will get in touch with the science coordinator to see if the compost video could be used in the program.

**e. Storm damage to trees infographic:** Chairman Crawford stated that the infographic shows the damage done to trees, as a result of wind from the past two storms. Director of Planning and Economic Development David Anderson asked her to send the infographic to him, so he could review it.

## 6. **Commission Projects**

**a. Natural Resources Inventory (NRI) data collection and entry:** Chairman Crawford stated that she will schedule time to work on the NRI data collection and entry.

**b. Web site/social media opportunities:** No report.

7. **Update on status of active and pending applications:** Director of Planning and Economic Development David Anderson stated that there is not anything on the horizon for the next month or two.

Nine town employees are working with the energy efficiency committee to participate in 12 modules of municipal electric vehicle readiness; at the end of the 12-week session, there should be a plan to advance progress in this area, according to Mr. Anderson.

8. **Update from Student Liaisons:** Marina Dixon stated that there was an Environmental Club meeting last week, plans are to have a field trip to Bauer Park next Monday, and it is not yet known what will happen to plans for the pollinator garden. Chairman Crawford stated that she is still willing to donate soil and pots for the garden.

9. **Adjournment.**

**Vice Chairman Bouchard made the motion to adjourn at 8:40 p.m.; it was seconded by Commissioner Butsch and unanimously approved.**

Vote to adjourn at 8:39 p.m. passed, 3-0-0.

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

OPPOSED: None.

ABSTAINED: None.

Respectfully submitted,  
Marlene H. Kennedy