

Sec. 7-131a. Conservation commissions. (a) Any town, city or borough, by vote of its legislative body, may establish a conservation commission for the development, conservation, supervision and regulation of natural resources, including water resources, within its territorial limits. The commission shall consist of not fewer than three nor more than eleven members and not more than three alternates, to be appointed by the chief executive officer of the municipality, to serve for terms to be designated by the legislative body establishing the commission. Such alternate members shall, when seated, have all the powers and duties of a member of the commission. The chief executive officer may remove any member or alternate for cause and may fill any vacancy.

(b) A conservation commission shall conduct research into the utilization and possible utilization of land areas of the municipality and may coordinate the activities of unofficial bodies organized for similar purposes, and may advertise, prepare and distribute books, maps, charts, plans and pamphlets as necessary for its purposes. It may propose a greenways plan for inclusion in the plan of conservation and development of the municipality prepared pursuant to section 8-23. It may inventory natural resources and formulate watershed management and drought management plans. Such plans shall be consistent with water supply management plans prepared pursuant to section 25-32d. It shall keep an index of all open areas, publicly or privately owned, including open marshlands, swamps and other wetlands, for the purpose of obtaining information on the proper use of such areas, and may from time to time recommend to the planning commission or, if none, to the chief executive officer or the legislative body plans and programs for the development and use of such areas. It may make recommendations to zoning commissions, planning commissions, inland wetlands agencies and other municipal agencies on proposed land use changes. It may, with the approval of such legislative body, acquire land and easements in the name of the municipality and promulgate rules and regulations, including but not limited to the establishment of reasonable charges for the use of land and easements, for any of its purposes as set out in this section. It may supervise and manage municipally-owned open space or park property upon delegation of such authority by the entity which has supervisory or management responsibilities for such space or property. It shall keep records of its meetings and activities and shall make an annual report to the municipality in the manner required of other agencies of the respective municipalities. The commission may receive gifts in the name of the municipality for any of its purposes and shall administer the same for such purposes subject to the terms of the gift.

(c) A commission may exchange information with the Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection, and said commissioner may, on request, assign technical personnel to a commission for assistance in planning its overall program and for coordinating state and local conservation activities.

(d) Any town, city or borough may appropriate funds to such commission.

(1961, P.A. 310; 1963, P.A. 490, S. 7; 1969, P.A. 284, S. 1; 1971, P.A. 872, S. 403; P.A. 73-293; P.A. 79-84; P.A. 93-270; P.A. 95-335, S. 10, 26; P.A. 11-80, S. 1.)

History: 1963 act amended Subsec. (b) to provide for making recommendations to the planning commission only, if one exists, rather than to the chief executive, legislative body or planning commission; 1969 act included supervision and regulation of resources in duties of conservation commission, required approval of legislative body for acquisition of land and easements and gave power to make regulations, including charges for use of land and easements; 1971 act substituted commissioner of environmental protection for commissioner of agriculture and natural resources in Subsec. (c); P.A. 73-293 changed maximum number of commission members from seven to eleven in Subsec. (a); P.A. 79-84 added provisions for alternate members in Subsec. (a); P.A. 93-270 amended Subsec. (b) to add provisions authorizing commissions to inventory natural resources, formulate watershed management and drought management plans and to make recommendations on proposed land use changes and to supervise and manage municipal open space or park property; P.A. 95-335 amended Subsec. (b) to authorize the commission to propose a greenways plan to be included in the municipal plan of conservation and development, effective July 1, 1995; pursuant to P.A. 11-80, “Commissioner of Environmental Protection” was changed editorially by the Revisors to “Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection” in Subsec. (c), effective July 1, 2011.

Cited. 160 C. 71.

Cited. 35 CA 594.