

Conservation Commission



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Legal Basis of Authority

The Connecticut General Statutes (CGS) allow municipalities to establish Conservation Commissions, if they so desire, in Chapter 97 Section 7-131a.

Any municipality may establish a Conservation Commission by vote of its legislative body, for the development, conservation, supervision and regulation of natural resources, including water resources, within its territorial limits.

Membership

The Conservation Commission shall consist of not fewer than 3, nor more than 11 members and not more than 3 alternates. Alternate members, when seated, shall have all the powers and duties of a commission member.

Appointments and Removal

Members and alternates are appointed by the chief executive officer of the municipality. The chief executive officer may remove any member or alternate only for cause and has the power to fill any vacancy.

Terms of Office

The legislative body establishing the commission shall designate terms of office.

Powers and Duties

Conservation Commissions Shall:

1. Conduct research into the utilization and possible utilization of land areas of the municipality;
2. 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;

3. Keep records of its meetings and activities and make an annual report to the municipality in the manner required of other municipal agencies.

Conservation Commissions May:

1. Make recommendations to Zoning Commissions, Planning Commissions, Inland Wetlands Agencies and other municipal agencies on proposed land use changes;
2. 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 all open areas;
3. Exchange information with the Commissioner of Environmental Protection and said Commissioner may, on request, assign technical personnel to the commission for assistance in planning its overall program and for coordinating state and local conservation activities;
4. Coordinate the activities of unofficial bodies organized for the purpose of conducting land use research;
5. Advertise, prepare and distribute books, maps, charts, plans and pamphlets necessary for its purposes;
6. Propose a greenways plan for inclusion in the Plan of Conservation and Development prepared by the local Planning Commission;
7. Inventory natural resources;
8. Formulate watershed management plans consistent with water supply management plans prepared under Section 25-32d of the General Statutes (plans prepared by water companies and submitted to the Commissioner of Health Services);

**Bracketed numbers reference sections of the Connecticut General Statutes, visit cga.ct.gov/2009/pub/title7.htm*



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Conservation Commissions *May*:

9. Formulate drought management plans;
10. With the approval of such legislative body, acquire land and easements in the name of the municipality;
11. Promulgate rules and regulations, such as the establishment of reasonable charges for the use of lands and easements for any of its purposes;
12. Receive gifts on behalf of the municipality for any of its purposes and administer the gifts for those purposes, subject to the terms of the gift;
13. Approve, prior to submission, state grant applications for programs to preserve or restrict the use of open space land to conservation or recreation purposes.
14. Apply, if the municipality so designates, for state grants to preserve or restrict to conservation or recreation purposes, the use of open space;
15. Supervise and manage municipally owned open space or park property when the agency normally responsible for such duties delegates that power;

CHECK OUT THESE ONLINE TOOLS AND RESOURCES

- *CT Association of Conservation and Inland Wetland Commissions* - provides resources for Inland Wetland and Conservation commissioners. Visit caciwc.org
- *Online Academy* - provides online resources for those who want a quick refresher or are unable to attend a training. Visit clear.uconn.edu/lua/online
- *Community Resource Inventory Online* - provides organized maps, tutorials and case examples that assist you in developing a basic inventory of your towns natural and cultural resources.
- *Connecticut's Changing Landscape* - provides data about how CT 's landscape has changed since 1985. Local Land Use officials can use this resource to evaluate the environmental, social and economic impacts of development that guide their decision making.

For more information

Call: 860-345-4511

Email: clear@uconn.edu

Disclaimer: The materials contained in this fact sheet are a general, lay summary of the roles and responsibilities of local land use commissioners. They should not be relied on as a valid legal opinion or position. As such, these materials should not be used in place of consulting an attorney about the roles and responsibilities of a local land use commissioner.