

Salisbury Conservation Commission

Regular Meeting

August 4, 2022- 6:00pm (Via Zoom)

1. Call to Order. The meeting was called to order at 6:03pm
2. Roll Call. Present: Maria Grace, Tom Blagden, Lee Potter, Susan Rand, Abby Conroy (Land Use Administrator and Georgia Petry (Recording Secretary). Zachery Sadow arrived at 6:06pm.
3. **Approval of Agenda. So Moved** by S. Rand, seconded by T. Blagden and unanimously **Approved.**
4. **Approval of Minutes of 6/30/2022. So Moved** by L. Potter, seconded by S. Rand and unanimously **Approved.**
5. **Approval of Minutes of 07/7/2022. So Moved** by L. Potter, seconded by S. Rand and unanimously **Approved.**
6. Public Comment – None
7. Presentation by John Landon, Salisbury Association Land Trust (SALT) Committee
Mr. Landon gave a brief history of the Land Trust. Lands include 1,072 acres owned and just less than 2,700 acres in easements. He listed the many various holdings that are included in open space designations; currently, approximately 10,400 acres have some type of protection – approximately 27% of the total acreage in the town. The SALT has 3 active projects now, including 2 easements which will add another 135 acres and another under contract for 50 acres. They try to prioritize, using a Housatonic Valley Association (HVA) analysis of properties 50 acres or greater; about 30 properties were identified. Another priority is State-designated critical habitats. He indicated that the goal of 30% of land being conserved is too low for Salisbury, given its' ecological diversity. He noted that most of the land on Mt. Riga is not protected. One pressure is the mounting property values. When property owners are approached, all of the options are presented; they are happy to do easements. There could be some tax benefits to a seller, if the SLT buys a property at below-market value. Some purchases are totally funded by grant money; the last fund-raising effort was for Tory Hill about 12 years ago. A. Conroy asked about the interest in open space that might be created during the subdivision process. Mr. Landon responded that, historically, that land had not been well-documented; he suggested that perhaps the Conservation Commission might be interested in compiling the open space lands from subdivisions. There was discussion about how the pieces could be identified and who would monitor those; it would not be the SLT, but maybe some

other towns have model mechanisms that could be followed. Mr. Landon talked about a map of conserved open space which is available on the SLT website:

<https://salisburyassociation.org/land-trust/>. There was brief discussion about advocating for steep slopes and ridgeline protection. Endangered wildlife is considered, if the SLT is looking at the purchase or easement on a property. L. Potter asked about any expense to the Town when land is donated. Mr. Landon responded that many of the properties pay very little in taxes, for reasons such as being under the 490 program designation, if the land is being maintained as forest or agricultural use. Mr. Landon concluded his presentation and will think about a role for this Commission to possibly work with the SLT in the future.

8. Conservation Commission Bylaws – Tabled.
9. Discussion of Presentation 7/7/2022 – T. Blagden mentioned that he would like to see data from other lakes, like Lakeville Lake. M. Grace will work on getting someone to talk about that.
10. Introduction to Sustainable CT – Tabled.
11. Develop Topics & Tasks
 - a. Natural Resource Inventory – M. Grace indicated that the work is in progress and she has asked John Landon to write the Introduction to the Open Space section. M. will send the completed sections to the Commission for review. The NRI draft can be found on the Town website: <https://www.salisburyct.us/conservation-commission/>.
12. Presentation September 1 Meeting by Northwest Conservation District – A. Conroy noted that Cynthia Rabinowitz, Soil Scientist and Director, will speak at the meeting. A. Conroy has also spoken to Christian Allyn, who is involved in invasive plant management and sits on the Housatonic River Commission. He will come in the off-season to talk about the knotweed problem. M. Grace noted that Tom Zetterstrom would also be available to talk about mapping the knotweed in the fall/winter. A. Conroy suggested another project could be vernal pool monitoring, in the spring.

Adjournment. So Moved by L. Potter, seconded by T. Blagden and unanimously **Approved**. The meeting adjourned at 7:10pm.