

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

SPECIAL MEETING

FEBRUARY 1, 2024 – 6:00PM (VIA ZOOM)

1. Call to Order. The meeting was called to order at 6:01pm.
2. Roll Call: Lee Potter, Tom Blagden, Zach Sadow, Susan Rand, Maria Grace, Sarah Webb (Alternate), Steve Fitch (Alternate), Abby Conroy (Land Use Director), Miles Todaro (Tech Land Use Specialist) and Georgia Petry (Recording Secretary). Attending: Michael Klemens (Senior Land Use Consultant)
3. **Approval of Minutes 1/11/2024. So Moved** by L. Potter, seconded by S. Rand and **Approved**.
4. **Approval of Minutes 10/19/2023. So Moved** by L. Potter, seconded by M. Grace and **Approved**.
5. **Approval of Minutes 10/05/2023. So Moved** by L. Potter, seconded by M. Grace and **Approved**.
6. Public Comment – None
7. Discussion of Bylaws
There was a brief review of the draft of the Bylaws. The meeting days and time could change, after discussion of the 2024 meeting schedule. Regarding the Freedom of Information Act, L. Potter and A. Conroy pointed out that it is alright to email with “Reply All”, if they are about organizational things such as scheduling meetings; discussion of items of business are not allowed, except in meetings. Also mentioned was the CT Association of Conservation & Inland Wetlands Commissions (caciwc.org) which this Commission is a member of; reference materials and workshops are available.
8. Election of Officers. The position of Vice-Chair is available; members will be polled, regarding interest. Discussion was **tabled** to the next regular meeting.
9. Adoption of 2024 Meeting Schedule
Z. Sadow suggested that meetings not be held on the first Thursday of the month. A. Conroy noted that hybrid meetings are an option, not in-person only; it would be up to a Commission member to come to Town Hall and set things up for the meeting. A. Conroy suggested that in-person meeting work best for field work or outside activities. It was pointed out that it is more efficient for the staff to do remote meetings. The notice requirements are also an issue and

difficult to change, for example, if a meeting was noticed as hybrid, it would have to be set up at Town Hall, even if the weather was bad; the public has to be able to attend. M. Grace and L. Potter indicated they would be willing to set up the meetings at Town Hall, when needed. L. Potter suggested having a hybrid meeting in April. A. Conroy commented that the Commission could adopt the dates, amended to the second Thursday of the month. **A Motion to Have Monthly Conservation Commission meetings on the Second Thursday of the Month at 6:00PM**, was made by L. Potter, seconded by M. Grace and unanimously **Approved**.

10. Report on meeting with John Coston, Lakeville Journal Editor

L. Potter reported that she had a good meeting with John Coston; he is open to the Conservation Commission submitting something, perhaps on a quarterly basis. Possible topics will be discussed at the next meeting.

11. Vernal Pools Discussion

Michael Klemens led a long discussion about the project. He indicated that surveyors should either be on their own land or be members of one of the Town commissions, for insurance coverage. The project will be run out of the Land Use office; members of Conservation, Inland Wetlands/Watercourses and Planning & Zoning will be solicited to participate. M. Klemens and M. Todaro have worked on organizing the data and creating spreadsheets; they have come up with a numbering system for new pools, in addition to the original 150 vernal pools that were previously identified. There is a fact sheet for landowners and a template letter to vernal pool landowners, tailored to each one. The vernal pools datasheet is on the website also. M. Klemens pointed out that property access can be restricted; there is a landowner permission form which has to be returned to the Land Use office. Specific properties have been selected because they are important, with regard to specific species. M. Klemens noted that the ultimate goal is to create a map in GIS; colors will indicate the 3 tiers of priorities. The vernal pool study questions were reviewed; the remarks are really important. A list of species was reviewed. A. Conroy asked how to move forward, if there is a good resource to distribute and if there should be informal training at the next meeting in March. M. Klemens indicated it could be done as part of a Conservation Commission meeting or be done separately, as they are trying to recruit other Commission members. L. Potter asked how many vernal pools were investigated last year; M. Klemens mentioned about 5 that were complete and that it would be useful to re-visit some of the sites at night – people must work in pairs. M. Klemens asked when they want to have training sessions and pointed out that new people will need field training, also. Resource information will be sent to Commission members. M. Klemens is willing to do a field training session on a weekend, after there has been a “paper” training session for anyone who wants it, new people or people who want a refresher. Landowner consent forms are going out now, so that they can get them back early, hopefully to have a list by March 30th. L. Potter asked when to schedule the training sessions; M. Klemens suggested that he and M. Todaro will put together a PowerPoint presentation. M. Todaro is also working on a vernal pool webpage to add to the Conservation Commission webpage and could have a draft for the next meeting. M. Klemens

indicated that more volunteers are needed and to contact him directly with questions. There are questions about the insurance and liability issues which still need to be answered. The next Commission meeting will be on March 14, 2024.

Adjournment. So Moved by L. Potter, seconded by M. Grace and unanimously **Approved**.