

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

REGULAR MEETING

SEPTEMBER 12, 2024 – 6:00PM (VIA ZOOM)

1. Call to Order. The meeting was called to order at 6:02pm.
2. Roll Call. Present: Lee Potter, Susan Rand, Steve Fitch (Alternate), Zach Sadow, Miles Todaro (Land Use Tech Specialist) and Georgia Petry (Recording Secretary). Absent: Tom Blagden, Maria Grace and Sarah Webb (Alternate).
3. **Approval of Minutes of August 8, 2024. So Moved** by L. Potter, seconded by Z. Sadow and unanimously **Approved**.
4. **Approval of Minutes of July 3, 2024. So Moved** by L. Potter, seconded by S. Rand and unanimously **Approved**.
5. Public Comment – None
6. Wood Turtle Correspondences Discussion – Michael Klemens
There was a lengthy discussion of a paper written for the Salisbury Land Use Office by Michael Klemens, PhD, regarding the locations of wood turtles, documented appearances, current impacts in listed zones and management recommendations for those areas. The Commission discussed the use of exclusion fences; getting more scientific evidence; getting State approval of the plan for the Pope property before it is brought to the public; and different periods for mowing and haying. It was suggested that Conservation could have an important role in education in the matter. It was also suggested that development can occur in ways that respect the wood turtle. Mr. Klemens commented that he may not be able to Chair the P&Z when that development is brought to them and suggested that this Commission become informed advocates of this approach. Mr. Klemens further suggested looking at the fragility of the Pope property for uses such as recreation and how to manage it in the future. More information needs to get compiled, such as documentation in GPS; sightings need to be reported, photographed and in their precise locations, as it affects land use. Turtles should not be moved or collected, just observed, and the exact locations should not be published. With regard to the proposed SWSA project, L. Potter will talk to Abby Conroy about the role of the Conservation Commission; there may be interest in having a site visit. It was pointed out that the only goal of the Conservation Commission is to conserve resources; they could write a letter to the IWWC asking for a finding of significant activity and a public hearing.

7. Natural Resources Inventory Update – L. Potter asked to Table discussion until October. Mr. Klemens asked to comment on it and mentioned that there are problems with it; it may have to be reformatted, with a focus on updates/changes that have occurred, current/emerging threats, accomplishments and challenges. Z. Sadow asked whether a new format is needed, as revisiting the original NRI and updating it, along with the actual inventory, was the charge to this Commission. Mr. Klemens suggested the new format for the NRI would be modelled after the POCD, to eliminate repetition, and asked that this Commission study it; comments will be received up to the public engagement meeting on September 30, 2024. Z. Sadow mentioned he could not commit to a review by that date.
8. Update from DEEP regarding the Lakeville Reservoir Block Management Plan
L. Potter noted that in response to their letter, they were informed that other things are taking place and it would be over a year until there is a timber harvest.
9. CACIWC 50th Anniversary Event – As a reminder, the event is all day on Saturday, November 16, 2024. Let M. Todaro know if you want to attend.
10. Draft Understory Article Review – L. Potter has it ready and will send it to the Lakeville Journal.
11. Discussion of Fall and Winter Goals – Possible attendance at the September 30th meeting, along with reviewing the POCD and the NRI draft. Possible site visit to the proposed SWSA project and urging the IWWC to have a Public Hearing on it. A future letter about development on the Pope property. A future article about Wood Turtles.

Adjournment. So Moved by L. Potter, seconded by S. Rand and unanimously **Approved**.