

## Subject to Approval

**CONSERVATION COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
Jan. 11, 2021, 7:30 P.M.  
ZOOM MEETING ~ MADISON TOWN CAMPUS**

Minutes of the Meeting of Jan. 11, 2021, 7:30 p.m. – Zoom Public Participation Meeting with publicly posted information giving the webinar link password, telephone call in number and webinar identification number.

**Members present:** Chairman Heather Crawford, Vice Chairman Christine Bouchard, Secretary Alex Cushing, Danielle Butsch, and Shannon Lewis.

**Members absent:** None.

**Others present:** Director of Planning and Economic Development David Anderson and Daniel Hand High School Environmental Club Student Commissioners Marina Dixon and Elizabeth Ozimek.

1. **Call the meeting to order:** Chairman Heather Crawford called the meeting to order at 7:33 p.m.
  2. **Welcome new member Shannon Lewis:** Chairman Crawford and the commissioners welcomed new Commissioner Shannon Lewis.
  3. **Review and approve minutes for Dec. 14, 2020 meeting as submitted:** Tabled.
  4. **Call for additional agenda items:** Sustainable Connecticut initiative was suggested for an additional agenda item to discuss.
  5. **Continue discussion on subdivision application 20-16+CSP following site walk:** Director of Planning and Economic Development David Anderson explained the process involved in the Longshore Lane subdivision application that is pending before the Planning and Zoning Commission and the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Agency. The Planning and Zoning Commission has not approved the application, yet, and it is awaiting the report from the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Agency. Several issues have surfaced: The data in the environmental report is old, gathered between 2005 to 2006; there are procedural questions regarding whether the correct application was filed; and there are pending legal questions that need answering. Some options available include: The Planning and Zoning Commission could open the public hearing on the item and then continue it; it could have the public hearing on the application and deny the application; or the applicant could decide to withdraw the application and then resubmit an application. Chairman Crawford explained that it is a 22-acre parcel by the Surf Club, which the applicant is trying to subdivide, in order to construct houses, and the Conservation Commission did attend the site walk on the property. She sought comments from the commissioners about the application. Secretary Alex Cushing stated that he saw a lot of areas that look like they could flood, easily, and, possibly, during construction, land could be moved around to stop water from flooding into wetlands. Vice Chairman Christine Bouchard stated that there is a lot of coastal forest that will have to be cut down to build the houses; commissioners saw pitch pine, which is unique to coastal forests. She also stated that she has a hard time believing that the septic would not be leaching into inland wetlands or coastal wetlands. Commissioner Danielle Butsch stated that they will have to clear coastal forest to build the houses, and that the general area with the marsh seems to be already struggling, therefore, it does not need the introduction of septic. The construction will have to be really close to the road, and Commissioner Butsch stated that there is a concern about runoff onto Longshore Lane. Storm water runoff is one of the Conservation Commission's purviews, and the parcels are within
- Page 1. Conservation Commission, Jan. 11, 2021*

the 100-foot setback, Chairman Crawford stated. The proposed subdivision calls for Lots 1 and 2 to be accessed off Longshore Lane, and in the past, there was a proposal to widen Longshore Lane 15 feet, but the applicant is not requesting that in this application, according to Mr. Anderson. Easements over privately owned property are now being sought for access to proposed houses on Longshore Lane and Shorelands, but those property owners are indicating they are not in favor of granting the easements, according to Mr. Anderson. Other concerns contributed by the Conservation Commissioners include: a worry that fresh water wells will not stay fresh; two of the three parcels on the east side would be serviced by wells, leading to fresh water flowing through the septic systems at a rate that would not be natural; a concern for increased foot traffic through the marsh; and the lack of public access that the state Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) had said was required in 2013. Chairman Crawford stated that her feeling is that there are so many issues, in terms of the environment, and there are better ways to do this that would be safe for the residents and the ecosystem; simply raising the houses 14 feet is not the solution. Chairman Crawford asked Mr. Anderson if the Conservation Commission should send a letter, this month, to the Planning and Zoning Commission, and Mr. Anderson stated that sending that letter would be appropriate, and he asked that it be sent in advance of the meeting.

**Commissioner Butsch made the motion to allow Chairman Crawford to write the letter, concerning those issues, and to send it to the Planning and Zoning Commission; it was seconded by Secretary Cushing, and unanimously approved.**

Vote to send the letter passed, 5-0-0.

IN FAVOR: Chairman Crawford, Vice Chairman Bouchard, Secretary Cushing and Commissioners Butsch and Lewis.

OPPOSED: None.

ABSTAINED: None.

6. **Discuss ongoing projects/issues:**

**a. Dark Skies education and regulation** ~ Chairman Crawford stated that Dark Skies Week is April 11 to April 17, 2021, and she hopes to have the Dark Skies banner up for the first half of April; possibly there will be two banners, with a different theme on the second one. The Conservation Commission has to figure out the message to send to the media, and it also needs to go before the Planning and Zoning Commission, as it requested, with some follow-up suggestions for lighting, lighting shields, and dark skies recommendations, according to Chairman Crawford.

**b. Anti-idling campaign** ~ **Chairman** Crawford stated that she has asked for permission to post anti-idling signs at East Wharf and West Wharf and is awaiting the answer.

**c. Invasive species** ~ Trees being shredded by the woodpecker and information on the emerald ash borer need to be publicized in local newspapers, it was stated. Mr. Anderson stated that a grant is available for aquatic invasives, and possible areas for which to apply for the grant include Tuxis Pond, Bauer Park and Fence Creek—ideas on this are forthcoming. If the state will give permission, phragmite invasives are present in three of the four corners of the Hammonasset Connector, according to Chairman Crawford.

**d. Composting** ~ Commissioner Butsch stated that composting at the Jeffrey School has been delayed by the Covid pandemic, and she does not expect to be able to get it under way, again, until the fall of 2021. Blue Earth Compost actually has Madison listed as a town that could participate, according to Chairman Crawford, and Mr. Anderson stated that 100 residents have to be willing to sign up for it. Commissioner Butsch stated she will reach out to Blue Earth for the exact number of Madison participants needed.

7. **Discuss commissioner membership needs:** With the addition of Commissioner Lewis, the Conservation Commission now has five members and is chartered for seven commissioners, according to Chairman Crawford. Members are needed from south of Green Hill Road, south of Route 1, and the Republican Party, she stated.

8. **Sustainability Connecticut Initiative:** Mr. Anderson stated that Madison was one of 16 to 18 communities that were certified sustainable by the state of Connecticut; certifications last three years, and Madison's has expired. Mr. Anderson stated that he has been trying for over a year, now, to receive direction from the Board of Selectmen as to what committees or commissions could work together on the Sustainable Connecticut initiative, so the town could apply for a new certification. It is possible the Conservation Commission and the Energy Efficiency Committee could join to constitute a group working on this, according to Mr. Anderson. If a Sustainable Madison Committee is formed, Mr. Anderson stated that they will have no trouble getting people interested in participating. He suggested those interested visit the Sustainable Connecticut website to see the communities participating and the action items. He shared with the Conservation Commission some of the information available on the website: *What's New in Sustainable Connecticut for 2021?* with action items including, "promote dark skies...enhance pollinator pathways...coordinated municipal service to address homelessness." In addition, Mr. Anderson has suggested to a University of Connecticut law professor and forestry professor the possibility of having university students interested in natural resources assist with the commission's Natural Resources Inventory.

9. **Update from student representatives:** Elizabeth Ozimek stated that one of the groups of the Daniel Hand High School Eco Club is trying to find a way to recycle disposal masks; thus far one company has been found, and participants receive a box to fill and to return to the company. She stated that the boxes hold hundreds of masks. Marina Dixon stated that the group in which she is working is trying to get compostable utensils in the cafeteria, again; it has been done successfully in the Woodbridge school system, so they participated in a Google Meet, together, for information. Inviting the Center for Eco Technology, located in Massachusetts, is one option to pursue for further information, according to Ms. Dixon.

10. **Update on current and upcoming applications by town planner:** Director of Planning and Economic Development David Anderson summarized an application near the laundromat, which is upcoming.

11. **Additional item regarding Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA):** Chairman Crawford stated that the Water Pollution Control Authority has received some publicity for its work. Mr. Anderson stated that the WPCA has asked for funding to do its wastewater study, which has not been done for a number of years. Up to \$200,000 is needed for the study, according to Mr. Anderson, with 60 percent reimbursed by the state of Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP); the WPCA is very clear in finding solutions away from the installation of sewers to address the wastewater concerns.

12. **Adjournment**

**Commissioner Butsch made the motion to adjourn at 8:20 p.m.; it was seconded by Vice Chairman Bouchard, and unanimously approved.**

Vote to adjourn at 8:20 p.m. passed, 5-0-0.

IN FAVOR: Chairman Crawford, Vice Chairman Bouchard, Secretary Cushing and Commissioners Butsch and Lewis.

OPPOSED: None.

ABSTAINED: None.

Respectfully submitted,  
Marlene H. Kennedy