

Subject to Approval

**CONSERVATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
May 10, 2021, 7:30 P.M.
ZOOM MEETING ~ MADISON TOWN CAMPUS**

Minutes of the Meeting of May 10, 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—recorded on YouTube.com.

Members present: Chairman Heather Crawford, Secretary Alex Cushing, Danielle Butsch, Sufia Uddin, and Shannon Lewis.

Members absent: Vice Chairman Christine Bouchard.

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

1. **Call the meeting to order:** Chairman Heather Crawford called the meeting to order at 7:31 p.m.
2. **Review and approve minutes for April 12, 2021 meeting as submitted.** Minutes were not available; action postponed until next meeting.
3. **Call for additional agenda items:** None.
4. **Update on applications for 856 Boston Post Road relative to Inland Wetlands Agency and Planning and Zoning Commission.** Chairman Crawford stated that the application was heard for two and a half hours before the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Agency and now will go before the agency in a special meeting on May 17, 2021, hopefully for a decision. Director of Planning and Economic Development David Anderson stated that the Planning and Zoning Commission will have a public hearing on the application on May 20, 2021, and he anticipates it will be a long presentation, since it will be the first time the application is heard before that panel. Chairman Crawford stated that she will send a Conservation Commission letter, with accompanying information, to the Planning and Zoning Commission. She stated that she has half of a draft of the letter completed and welcomes additional comments from the commissioners; Chairman Crawford will send the draft to the Conservation Commission over the next day or two, for its feedback.
5. **Review and discuss presentations by Quinnipiac Law School students regarding Natural Resource Inventories and Tidal Marsh protection.** The presentation was educational; one student discussed how to put together Natural Resources Inventories and the other student discussed how to protect the Tidal Marsh. It's been suggested that the Plan of Conservation and Development process be used to come up with a final Natural Resources Inventory; this make a manageable timeline in completing the inventory, since it will take 18 months to two years to finish the update to the Plan of Conservation and Development, according to Mr. Anderson. The Tidal Marsh protection study detailed a number of ways Madison could protect the marsh, accounting for sea level rise over the next 30 years. Chairman Crawford stated that Attorney Marjorie F. Shansky's statement was interesting, in that the science backs protection efforts, and that science can be used in the town's planning efforts. Both students are at the Vermont Law School, and its environmental law program is very good, according to Chairman Crawford. Madison's Natural Resources Inventory is 75 percent

completed, and Chairman Crawford stated that she hopes linking it with the Plan of Conservation and Development will move it along further. The Planning and Zoning Commission's follow-up to the students' reports was more geared toward Tidal Marsh protection, because zoning can be revised to protect it, according to Mr. Anderson. Chairman Crawford expects to update the Planning and Zoning Commission on what has thus far been done on the Natural Resources Inventory.

6. **Discuss documents on Madison's recertification review and Accessible Actions from the Sustainable CT staff and plan for recertification activities/documentation, as related to ongoing projects and plans for 2021.** Chairman Crawford stated that she is going to combine all of the commission's projects with the Sustainable Connecticut program. She suggested that she and Mr. Anderson have a meeting to determine who would be approached to be coordinators or project leaders, as noted in *Item i*, "Identify coordinators/project leads." Mr. Anderson agreed to have the meeting.

a. **Watershed management and education** ~ This could include the Neck River, since it is fully in the town of Madison, and this could be ready in three months, according to Chairman Crawford.

b. **Dark Skies education and regulation** ~ The commissioners have a pretty good start on the Dark Skies education and regulation, she stated.

c. **Improve air quality: anti-idling campaign** ~ In progress.

d. **Invasive species** ~ Chairman Crawford stated that there are volunteers from the church who could assist in this area.

e. **Pollinator Pathways** ~ There was a photograph in the newspaper showing the pollinator pathway in front of the library.

f. **Woodlands and Urban forest management** ~ Chairman Crawford is hopeful former Conservation Commissioner Francis Brady will be willing to start work on woodlands and urban forest management, and this could also easily be completed before the Sustainable Connecticut August deadline. A completed Route 1 tree inventory is also available to include in Sustainable Connecticut, she stated.

g. **Community outreach, engagement and education** ~ Chairman Crawford stated that she wonders if there is some way that Madison Public Access could be more visible to the community, and whether Sustainable Connecticut items could be put on it, as well as updated on the town website.

h. **SMART (Save Money and Reduce Trash) program** ~ This topic includes composting. Mr. Anderson stated that he has reached out to Blue Earth Composting to see if Madison could assist in advertising the curbside food scrap pick-up program; one idea is to have a competition between the towns of Madison and Guilford, to see which town would give more. Blue Earth has offered to give marketing assistance, Mr. Anderson stated. Food scraps are collected in a five-gallon square bucket.

i. **Identify coordinators/project leads** ~ Mr. Anderson, Chairman Crawford, and Commissioner Sufia Uddin will meet on May 13, 2021 at 11 a.m., to brainstorm on this topic.

j. **Others** ~ There are plenty of opportunities to educate municipal employees and residents regarding invasive species—whether it is clean up or protecting pollinator areas, according to Chairman Crawford; perhaps there could be a one hour meeting with municipal crews to inform them of the types of invasive species that should be removed. That would be appropriate, Mr. Anderson stated. Crews who work along the roads, under the power lines, have been seen removing Mountain Laurel, and leaving the invasive species Autumn Olive behind, according to Chairman Crawford. Guilford has someone who has been hired to remove invasive species, she stated; this would be awesome if the landscaping people could do the same in Madison, when they do not have to get on

a lawnmower. There is also a creative arts aspect to Sustainable Connecticut; Chairman Crawford stated that she saw on the news that West Hartford earned a grant from Sustainable Connecticut, so that murals could be painted on the Jersey barriers at Blue Back Square. She wondered whether the Conservation Commission could approach the Madison Arts Barn about a creative arts project, or perhaps the school system. Mr. Anderson stated that the Arts Barn and also the Shoreline Alliance for the Arts could be approached about this. A creative arts action item could be identified and then presented to one of the agencies, according to Mr. Anderson. Community based science could be supported by conducting a longitudinal salt marsh study of Garvin Marsh or Fence Creek, with the focus on vegetation and animals, according to Chairman Crawford.

7. **Update from student representatives.** Daniel Hand High School Environmental Club Student Commissioner Elizabeth Ozimek stated that they have time for one more project, before the end of the year and graduation. The club is having a raffle for A Place Called Hope, in order to adopt a bird. Chairman Crawford suggested the Environmental Club put election of officers on its next meeting agenda.

8. **Adjourn**

Commissioner Uddin made the motion to adjourn at 8:14 p.m.; it was seconded by Secretary Alex Cushing and unanimously approved.

Vote to adjourn at 8:14 p.m. passed, 5-0-0.

IN FAVOR: Chairman Crawford, Secretary Cushing, and Commissioners Uddin, Danielle Butsch, and Shannon Lewis.

OPPOSED: None.

ABSTAINED: None.

Respectfully submitted,
Marlene H. Kennedy