

Subject to Approval

**CONSERVATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
June 14, 2021, 7:30 P.M.
ZOOM MEETING ~ MADISON TOWN CAMPUS**

Minutes of the Meeting of June 14, 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: Sarah Caso and Daniel Hand High School Environmental Club Student
Commissioners Elizabeth Ozimek and Marina Dixon.

1. **Call the meeting to order:** Chairman Heather Crawford called the meeting to order at 7:36 p.m.
2. **Review and approve minutes for May 10, 2021 meeting as submitted.**

Secretary Alex Cushing made the motion to approve the May 10, 2021 minutes as submitted; it was seconded by Commissioner Sufia Uddin, and unanimously approved.

Vote to approve the May 10, 2021 minutes as submitted passed, 5-0-0.

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

OPPOSED: None.

ABSTAINED: None.

3. **Call for additional agenda items:** None.
4. **Update on application for 856 Boston Post Road before the Planning and Zoning Commission.** Chairman Crawford stated that there was another two and a half hour public hearing session before the Planning and Zoning Commission, with the opposition speaking, questions asked by the Planning and Zoning Commission, and the public hearing was closed. The Planning and Zoning Commission will be deliberating at its next meeting; the application has been neither approved nor denied. The Conservation Commission did submit a letter regarding the application, according to Chairman Crawford.
5. **Discuss Madison’s Sustainable CT recertification effort and Accessible Actions from the Sustainable CT staff and plan for recertification activities/documentation as related to ongoing projects and plans for 2021:**
 - a. **Watershed management and education** ~ Chairman Crawford stated that she and Commissioner Lewis are working on this; they can earn five points for posting the watershed education signs.
 - b. **Dark Skies education and regulation** ~ This is in progress.
 - c. **Improve air quality, anti-idling campaign: Sufia Uddin** ~ The United States Department

of Energy has a link to a number of idling campaign ideas, according to Commissioner Uddin. For education, the plan is to get signs posted throughout town; there is a law in Connecticut that no one can idle their cars for more than three minutes, according to Commissioner Uddin. People idle their cars in the summer for air conditioning and to charge their phones, and they do so in the winter, for the heat, according to Commissioner Uddin. Signs should be posted at beaches, schools, and parks where there sporting events. Commissioner Uddin stated that she spoke to Zoning Enforcement Officer John De Laura and was told because the Conservation Commission is non profit, a form needs to be completed that would state where the signs are going and for how long. Information needs to be obtained from the schools to ascertain where those signs could be placed, according to Commissioner Uddin. Idling affects breathing and is bad for the environment, she stated. Chairman Crawford stated the signs could go at the entrance into East Wharf and at the Surf Club. Signs at beaches could be reminders, stating, "Don't destroy the environment, while you're enjoying the view. Turn off your car," Chairman Crawford stated, adding that at the schools, the signs could say, "Save your children's lungs. Turn off your car." Commissioner Danielle Butsch stated that she saw one on the Internet that stated, "Spare the air." Chairman Crawford stated that the commission should send out a newspaper article that explains the program. She also stated that there are a couple of local sign companies from whom quotes for the signs should be received. Chairman Crawford stated that she would like the signs posted at the beaches by July 4, 2021.

d. **Invasive species: Heather Crawford** ~ Chairman Crawford stated that the Conservation Commission had an educational table on invasive species at the North Madison Congregational Church Garden Tour and Plant Sale, and there is photo documentation from Commissioner Uddin. Chairman Crawford plans to take the poster she made and the educational materials to the library to see if the library will put them on display over the summer. In addition, Chairman Crawford stated that perhaps the commission could get a couple of high school students to assist with controlling invasive species plants throughout town; they could earn credit toward their high school community service projects. There is another project other towns are doing, such as New Haven; it is known as the DeVining project, wherein volunteers go to local parks and tear down the invasive species Bittersweet, according to Chairman Crawford, who has a video and an online reference list, which could be used to train volunteers to find invasive plants and remove them.

e. **Pollinator Pathways: Kelly Brady, Sarah Caso** ~ Chairman Crawford stated that Sarah Caso has been working with Kelly Brady on the pollinator pathways project; they will be doing a talk at the library.

f. **Woodlands and Urban forest management: Fran Brady** ~ Chairman Crawford stated that Fran Brady is very interested in starting the woodlands and urban forest management project; he has 120 trees to plant, and he would like to see if the town's landscaping committee could be changed to woodlands and urban forest management.

g. **Community outreach, engagement and education** ~ Chairman Crawford asked Commissioner Shannon Lewis if she could assist in this effort by looking at the Sustainable CT section on community outreach, engagement and education to find out what it is seeking in this area, and then write a letter to the community to invite community members to participate. Commissioner Lewis agreed to do so.

h. **SMART (Save Money and Reduce Trash) program: Danielle Butsch** ~ Director of Planning and Economic Development David Anderson has suggested that plans to recycle clothing be followed up with Selectwoman Peggy Lyons, Commissioner Danielle Butsch stated. Regarding the Blue Earth Composting project, Commissioner Butsch stated that she needs to figure out how to distribute the information to the public. She has already posted information on the town Facebook page, she stated, and it could also be posted on the town website. Chairman Crawford suggested

Zip06 and *The Patch* as two places to post that are also free; commissioners need to decide whether they would want to pay for a quarter page advertisement in *The Source*.

i. **Recertification documentation process** ~ Chairman Crawford stated that even if the Conservation Commission cannot reach the August deadline, she would like to make the March deadline for recertification in Sustainable CT. Madison has all of these items fulfilled; it only needs to be documented on the Sustainable CT forms. Chairman Crawford stated that she plans to get in touch with Sustainable CT staff to ask them to walk her through the documentation process for recertification.

j. **Other** ~ No report.

6. **Discuss commission member/intern summer schedules** ~ The Conservation Commission has 100 hours in its budget for the intern summer schedules, according to Chairman Crawford, and she stated that the interns really need to be planning what they would like to do, throughout the summer; Vice Chairman Christine Bouchard will also meet with the interns. Subject areas to consider include: Dark Skies, the Pollinator Pathways, mapping community resources, outreach related to light pollution. Chairman Crawford stated that the Dark Skies presentation that they made last summer could be turned into a short video and put on the town website, as well as Madison Community Television. A potential evening hours' task could be going around town and recording town properties which have lights on; in addition the Planning and Zoning Regulations could be reviewed to discover where lights are regulated around town, according to Chairman Crawford. There are planning and zoning regulations for lighting in commercial districts, but Chairman Crawford stated that she does not know if there are regulations for residential properties. Chairman Crawford and the interns agreed to meet this Thursday morning for further discussion.

7. **Other matters** ~ Chairman Crawford stated that she and Commissioner Lewis will meet to confirm what information is available for the Natural Resources Inventory. In addition, Director of Planning and Economic Development David Anderson will be leaving in July, and Chairman Crawford stated that he has indicated that an environmental planner is in the budget; the new town planner may arrive in September, and the environmental planner could be hired in the late fall. Both would be arriving after the August Sustainable CT deadline, she stated. Land use applications include one that will be going before the Zoning Board of Appeals, where someone wants to build a house 25 feet from wetlands, according to Chairman Crawford.

8. **Adjourn**

Commissioner Uddin made the motion to adjourn at 8:18 p.m.; it was seconded by Commissioner Lewis and unanimously approved.

Vote to adjourn at 8:18 p.m. passed, 5-0-0.

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

OPPOSED: None.

ABSTAINED: None.

Respectfully submitted,
Marlene H. Kennedy