

Conservation Commission

Thursday, August 24, 2023 at 7:30 PM

Town Campus, Room D

## MINUTES

### REGULAR MEETING

1. Call to Order / Attendance

Members attending: Crawford, Cushing, Uddin

Members absent: Bouchard

Also in attendance: Erin Mannix, Breanna Colonese-Dibello, Maryclaire Pantano

2. Approval of minutes from May 25, 2023 and June 22, 2023

Cushing made a motion to approve minutes as submitted; seconded by Crawford. Motion passed unanimously.

3. Citizen Comments.

none

4. Intern Project Updates

Maryclaire Pantano discussed her light pollution project. She has gone through the town zoning regulations and the school science curricula to see where light pollution education and/or regulations can be included and found many possibilities. She will work with Crawford to put together possible presentations for the Board of Ed and/or Board of Selectmen on including information on light pollution in appropriate sections of the curriculum and having Madison follow the example of the State of Connecticut's new regulation requiring all state buildings to turn off exterior lights after 11:00.

Breanna Colonese-DiBello discussed her work on drafting language for the Natural Resource Inventory. So far she has concentrated on the Geology and Agriculture sections. Draft materials are available for the commission to review on the shared drive. She has also completed a draft of an educational sign for the Eco Club pollinator garden at DHHS and may be preparing a similar sign for the Rockland pollinator garden/restoration area.

Crawford discussed the work of Maia Minto on compiling information for Madison's application to SustainableCT. Her efforts to collect data from various town agencies and websites has put us in a very good place to apply in March 2024. Unfortunately we were not able to complete the application in time for the August 15 deadline this year. The fourth intern, Aubri Barone, has compiled information on forest health and the impacts of disease, invasive species and climate change on trees in Madison and drafted a document with extensive references. Crawford will distribute the draft to commission members for comments.

Crawford also commented that she would like to have their high school-aged interns act as liaisons to the commission for the coming year as was done with past interns and there was general agreement that this would be beneficial for all.

5. Sustainable CT Submission: Status and Next Steps

As was discussed in the intern project updates, Maia Minto brought the Town much closer to being able to apply for recertification as a Sustainable Community. Crawford and Town Planner Mannix will continue to meet to complete the application before the March 2024 deadline, and with active participation from town agencies, Mannix would like to build sustainability into the town workings rather than making this an exercise in "checking boxes."

6. Plan of Conservation And Development: Built Environment section Comments and Suggestions

Town Planner Mannix reported that the PZC has had a public session on the Built Environment section of the Plan and received feedback from WPCA, MLCT, and the Coastal Resiliency Commission so far. Issues to be addressed were similar to those that emerged from the strategic plan sessions, including the need for residency, connectivity, housing, transportation and parks planning.

7. Bauer Park Festival Preparation and other fall outreach opportunities

Crawford pointed out that given the meeting schedule, there would only be one more meeting between now and the festival date, so she wanted to discuss what would be the focus of our table for 2023. She would like to highlight the intern projects as appropriate. After discussion, possible new materials/activities to be included were: a) light pollution: paint banner and make your own light shields; b) tree health: handouts of 10 most common tree problems to look for in Madison; c) pollinators: make poster from draft pollinator garden sign.

## REMARKS

8. Town Planner's Comments

Mannix reported that the BOS is looking to reorganize commissions in Madison and is considering adding sustainability to the Conservation Commission role. The goal is to reduce the number of commissions and allow them to work more effectively.

9. Chair's comments

Crawford's only comment was that she was incredibly proud of the work done by the interns this summer and that she looked forward to using the materials they produced to the benefit of the Town.

## ADJOURNMENT

Crawford moved to adjourn the meeting; Cushing seconded. Passed unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 8:06PM