



**Town of Sherman  
Conservation Commission**

Monthly Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, July 20, 2022  
Mallory Town Hall @ 7:00 p.m.

**Members Present:** William (Bill) McCann (Chair), Michael LaVia, Rolf Martin, Colette Shulman, Lauren Weber, Anne Weisberg

**Members Absent:** Michele MacKinnon (Vice Chair)

Other Attendees: Christine Aruza (Clerk)

**Call to Order:** Chairman B. McCann called the meeting to order at 7:09 p.m.

**Approval of Minutes:**

**M. LaVia made a motion** to approve the minutes

**Seconded by:** R. Martin

**Vote:** Unanimous For

**Correspondence:**

No new correspondence.

**New Business:**

**Native Species Policy Recommendation**

B. McCann informed commission members that the draft of the native species policy crafted by the commission is in the hands of the Board of Selectman. The commission amended Newtown's policy for Sherman use. It was sent along with a cover letter, a copy of the Newtown policy, links to resources on invasive plants, and links on native plants in CT. B. McCann also sent the changes that Newtown had made to their commercial regulations. B. McCann asked first selectman Don Lowe if he wanted the commission's representation at the next board of

selectman (BOS) meeting when they go over the policy. D. Lowe seemed favorable regarding the policy and indicated he would advise in the near future if he needed the commission's attendance.

If the board of selectman approves the policy this commission will reach out to the chair of Sherman's Planning and Zoning Commission (P&Z) and see if a meeting can be scheduled to go over it. Per B. McCann it would be a good time to go over it with P&Z leading the upcoming update to the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD).

### **Weed Warrior Session Scheduled for July 30th**

B. McCann has heard from four previous volunteers plus a new volunteer about their participating in the next Weed Warrior session on July 30. The session will start at 0900 hrs. and will go for approximately three hours. There will be one more cutting session in the summer after July 30. There might be a fourth session for the spreading of wood chips.

B. McCann advised there is need of another load of wood chips at the pollinator garden to make the footprint larger (the depth). The request has been made to D. Lowe. R. Martin wanted to know if there is any wildlife – insects, turtles, toads, frogs – living in the wood chips near the pollinator garden. His concern is their displacement. M. LaVia said there are ducks in that area and frogs in the water itself, however, no nests were disturbed. B. McCann advised that the garden was not placed in the lawn area of the peninsula and not in rough habitat. R. Martin was concerned it might be too close to the lake. Per M. LaVia it is about 7-15 ft from the brook that leads into the lake.

R. Martin also inquired if there was an inspection to determine erosion levels in areas where that is more likely to occur. B. McCann shared that last year a portion of the half-mile trail was subject to a large washout by a storm. It was approximately one quarter of the track according to M. LaVia. B. McCann stated that the public works department re-armored the shore there afterwards. There has been no additional erosion since then.

A. Weisberg inquired if an article would be published to promote the upcoming Weed Warriors session. B. McCann has written one for the next publication date (next week). She also inquired if the native species policy would be communicated via an article in the paper. The commission concurred that it should be once the policy is approved. Discussion ensued about how to continue publishing content in the paper for the '*Conservation Corner*' and what would be suitable topics/timing. C. Shulman noted that M. MacKinnon had penned nice pieces in the spring. A. Weisberg agreed to be the dedicated writer for the column moving forward.

Discussion then shifted to the annual Farm Day at Happy Acres. Per C. Shulman a date has not been established yet for the autumn event. B. McCann will contact D. Lowe about what the next date will be for 2022.

As per the discussion regarding potential articles and upcoming events, the near-term cadence of articles will be:

- August: If adopted, article on native plant policy
- September: Happy Acres event article
- October: Oct 6<sup>th</sup> fall educational event with Dr. Tallamy article

## **General Discussion**

C. Shulman initiated discussion about the Sherman Land Acquisition Fund (SLAF) Advisory Board. C. Shulman raised the prospect of reviving the board with D. Lowe. It is not clear that he will do so. C. Shulman likes the idea of the towns that are in the Northwest Connecticut Land Conservancy (NCLC) having a commitment to being involved in land and easement preservation and even land acquisition in some way. There is a Sherman (Naromi) council of the NCLC after the Naromi Land Trust was subsumed.

Her thought that is if the SLAF AB is kept perhaps there could be a small appropriation from the town budget that could go towards the increasing expenses of maintenance, preservation and the monitoring and upkeep of easements. The town can't give budget to a non-governmental organization (NGO). NCLC is an NGO, therefore, Sherman could not give it budget for these purposes.

According to C. Shulman maintenance of preserved trails and land is handled via NCLC volunteers. There are not enough volunteers to meet demand. R. Martin asked if maintenance could be separated out of land acquisition completely and if the funds could then accrue if unused. He also inquired as to how much should be set aside. Per B. McCann previously it was half of a mil rate and it dropped down to a quarter.

Per group discussion the SLAF AB created the open space plan that was attached to the POCD along with a priority list of properties that should be looked at for future preservation should they come on the market. It should not be dissolved as development has ebbed in the town as it would be too hard to restart should that change. The board and its activities also created a sense of connection and commitment between town members and preservation needs. A. Weisberg suggested that perhaps the town needs a Sherman-specific body in light of changes that occurred with the Naromi Land Trust being subsumed by the NCLC and the breadth of its mission.

B. McCann asked for a vote from the commission to agree for him to send an official letter on their behalf to D. Lowe requesting that the continuance of the SLAF AB. He will send a draft to the commission for review prior to sending.

## **Vote: Unanimous For**

## **Old Business:**

### **P&Z Request to Provide Chapter for New POCD Update**

B. McCann advised he heard back from Christine Branson with respect to when P&Z will need the commission's assistance with updating the POCD. She advised they had been waiting to

receive the results of the survey they conducted. L. Weber stated individuals are working on each area of the survey's results and determining how it should be filtered back into the POCD. In the interim, the commission agreed to read through the existing POCD chapters in preparation for working on the update.

**Adjournment**

**L. Weber made a motion to adjourn the meeting**

**Seconded by: M. LaVia**

**Vote: Unanimous For**

**B. McCann adjourned the meeting at 8:15 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted by Christine Aruza  
Next meeting: Wednesday, August 10, 2022, @ 7:00 p.m., Mallory Town Hall