



**Town of Sherman
Conservation Commission**

Monthly Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, June 8, 2022
Mallory Town Hall (and via ZOOM), 7:00 p.m.

Members Present: Bill McCann (Chair), Michele MacKinnon (Vice Chair), Rolf Martin, Colette Shulman

Members Absent: Michael LaVia, Lauren Weber, Anne Weisberg

Other Attendees: Christine Aruza (Clerk)

Call to Order: Chairman B. McCann called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

Approval of Minutes:

C Shulman made a motion to vote on approval of the May 11, 2022 minutes with revisions. R. Martin wished to state for the record his endorsement for the thoroughness of the minutes.

Seconded by: M. MacKinnon

Vote: Unanimous For

Correspondence:

No new correspondence.

General Discussion:

Commissioners congratulated Chair B. McCann on the recent celebration that was held in recognition of his dedicated service to the Candlewood Valley Regional Land Trust (CVRLT). B. McCann is retiring from the board of the CVRLT and was recently feted by the group for his 26 years of conservation leadership. B. McCann is a past president and founding member of the New Fairfield Land Trust and a CVRLT Board member since 2016's merger of NFLT and the Land Trust of Danbury. Together, he and the group, have preserved over 500 acres.

New Business:

Native Species Ordinance in Newtown Update

The commission reviewed the Newtown policy at length last month. Ideas and revisions for how it could be adapted for Sherman use were evaluated. During this meeting, B. McCann conducted a brief working session to assess/accept remaining modifications to the policy. Other accepted modifications included language to:

- a) Emphasize the importance of pollinators to humans as well as wildlife/insects. Pollinators not only pollinate food but also can increase farm crop production and yield.
- b) Include a reference link to CT invasive plants. The provided link will go the University of Connecticut's (UConn) web page dedicated to the Connecticut Invasive Plant Working Group (CIPWG) with all of its resource publications.
- c) Highlight emerging learning from the part of the landscape industry that is oriented toward the use of native plants and natural planting methods. These landscapers are changing to the use of ground cover plants instead of wood mulch. Planting with ground cover has beneficial attributes for pollinators. The living roots of ground cover also benefit the soil. Lastly, ground cover will not compete for nutrients and water from other plants/shrubs.

C. Shulman inquired if reference publications mentioned in the policy would be available at locations in town as printed materials for those that wish to have them as an in-hand guide. The commission concurred. B. McCann will submit UConn's '*Native Plant and Sustainable Landscaping Guide*' publication and their '*Alternative Plant Resources*' with this policy to Don Lowe next week.

B. McCann advised that thereafter the next step would be to go to the Sherman Planning and Zoning Commission with a draft suggestion of a native plant zoning ordinance for commercial regulation.

Weed Warriors Scheduled for June 18th

C. Shulman inquired about how many volunteers have signed up for Weed Warriors this year. B. McCann advised he has approximately six volunteers scheduled for the eighteenth at this juncture. He will send out a reminder email. M. MacKinnon advised she has not received any email responses for volunteers signing up for Weed Warriors or the pollinator garden. D. Lowe will put out an additional request for volunteers in his next column and on NIXLE.

B. McCann informed the commission that in the first section that they cut and covered the knotweed has come through and is approximately two and half feet high and fairly dense. In the other section that was done later with cardboard and a different type of fabric it has not grown back as much. He suggested adding that fabric on top of the mulch, placing additional mulch on top and repeat cut and coverings throughout the season to help retard additional growth. M.

MacKinnon proposed use of a commercial tractor to help with recuts. B. McCann will speak with the town's public works department to assess feasibility with their equipment.

Discussion then shifted to the potential of obtaining a water tank for the pollinator garden. The fire department fills the 500-gallon water tank located at the town's Community Garden. This would not be practicable at the pollinator garden located at Veteran's field due to the lack of accessibility for the fire department. D. Lowe made the suggestion that perhaps a battery-operated pump system could be installed and could serve as a practical solution.

Old Business:

New Email Address for the Commission

The dedicated email account for the Conservation Commission has been established. The email address is: scc@townofshermanct.org. M. MacKinnon will test it to ensure it is working properly.

P&Z Request to Provide Chapter for New POCD Update

B. McCann has not heard back yet from Jeannene Burruano or Christine Branson from the Sherman Planning and Zoning Commission on what they specifically need next from the Conservation Commission for the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) update. It is anticipated that work will most likely recommence in the fall.

C. Shulman provided an update on her conversation with Lori Finck of the Naromi Council of the Northwest Connecticut Land Conservancy (NCLC) in which she shared her thought about exploring the possibility of re-establishing the Sherman Land Acquisition Fund (SLAF) Advisory Board. The board has been inactive for several years and it is unclear how it might play a part on issues relating to land acquisition and on the costs of maintenance and of monitoring easements. L. Finck advised there is a scientific process that NCLC uses to determine what lands are acquired for conservation. Catherine Rawson is the Executive Director of the NCLC and it would need to be discussed with her and the Naromi Council members. The question remains how matters previously handled by the SLAF Advisory Board will be addressed in the future as well as discussed in the updated POCD.

Adjournment

M. MacKinnon made a motion to adjourn the meeting

Seconded by: C. Shulman

Vote: Unanimous For

B. McCann adjourned the meeting at 7:59 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Christine Aruza

Next meeting: Wednesday, July 20, 2022, @ 7:00 p.m., Mallory Town Hall