



**Town of Sherman
Conservation Commission**

Monthly Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, January 11, 2023
Mallory Town Hall @ 7:00 p.m.

Members Present: William (Bill) McCann (Chair), Michele MacKinnon (Vice Chair), Colette Shulman, Lauren Weber

Members Absent: Anne Weisberg

Other Attendees: Christine Aruza (Clerk)

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

Approval of Minutes:

C. Shulman made a motion to approve the minutes

Seconded by: L. Weber

Vote: Unanimous For

Correspondence:

No new correspondence.

New Business:

2023-2024 Budget Discussion

Per B. McCann the annual budget is \$1900. This has been the case for the past five or six years. If there is a need to increase the budget, then B. McCann will go in front of the board of selectman (BOS) and present a case. Discussion ensued about utilization of the 2022-2023 budget. There is still \$1128 remaining from the FirstLight grant. B. McCann will clarify with Liz LaVia (Business Manager) the remaining balance from the standard budget. Any grant or budget money that remains can be utilized until June 30, 2023 – the end of the fiscal year.

With respect to needs for this year, M. MacKinnon believes they would need to allocate funds to purchase perennials and additional fencing for the proposed pollinator garden. M. MacKinnon will reach out to L. LaVia about obtaining the town's tax ID code for purchases made at nurseries who will then waive the tax for the commission. The commission agreed that the \$1900 budget would be sufficient for all 2023-2024 project needs inclusive of the pollinator garden. B. McCann will submit the request.

POCD Chapter Update

B. McCann spoke with Jeannene Burruano (Vice Chair, Planning & Zoning Commission) regarding the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) chapter update provided by the commission to Planning and Zoning (P&Z). She indicated they were very pleased with the material provided and requested only two minor edits. One edit with respect to certain wording that town residents may find confusing. The other edit focused on amending slope percentages that need to be protected. L. Weber will let P&Z know that the commission has accepted these change requests. C. Shulman queried if the matter of clean energy was addressed in the POCD. C. Shulman and B. McCann will go to the next BOS meeting to see what is presented by Golden Bridges concerning bringing clean energy to residential homes in the Sherman area.

Discussion then moved to Sherman's Land Acquisition Fund Advisory Board (LAFAB) and the "30x30" goals set out by the Biden Administration to preserve 30% of the nation's land by 2030.

2023 Projects Discussion

The commission then reviewed the recommendations from the existing [Natural Resources Inventory](#) (NRI) to determine which would represent 2023 priorities, projects and/or action items that fall within the commission's purview. The following are highlights of that discussion in addition to ongoing commission business. M. MacKinnon will pen an article for the local papers to communicate which of the below will become actual project plans for 2023.

- I. **Commission Vacancies.** There are three vacancies on the commission that will need to be filled.
- II. **Invasives Removal.** B. McCann walked the Veteran's field area with Kris Fazzone (Public Works Supervisor), Mike LaVia (Public Works) and Don Lowe (First Selectman) to go over Weed Warrior Program focus areas for 2023 and the mowing schedule for Munch Meadow. L. Weber suggested also a webinar series on invasives to be offered via adult programming through the library.
- III. **Hazards of Chemical Pesticides/Fertilizers.** Commission will continue this effort to inform the public regarding the hazards of non-organic materials through the creation of articles, pamphlets and other educational materials.

- IV. **Septic Setbacks.** C. Shulman will draft a pamphlet for homeowners on this issue and the ecological importance. Will have ready for next month's meeting for commission review.
- V. **Agricultural Resources.** M. MacKinnon to forward information on the Connecticut Northeast Organic Farm Association (CT NOFA) conference in March to B. McCann to share with David Jellen. The conference focuses on carbon sequestration, building soil quality, no-till farming, etc.
- VI. **Mapping.** B. McCann will work off of CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) and other environmental resources to create a map for the town which identifies: core forested areas, wildlife corridors, endangered species, vernal pools, and archeological/historic sites for use in decision-making.
- VII. **Notable Trees.** Continue identifying mature and notable trees in town to facilitate knowledge of and preservation. B. McCann will send the existing list to commission members.
- VIII. **Open Space Review.** Specify open space for land conservation prioritization based on existing LAFAB information, which can be updated and then provided to P&Z for land use decisions.
- IX. **Stewardship Plan.** Create a 10-page report per each town-owned, preserved parcel to document preservation decisions and guide ongoing maintenance. Could also include native plant populations in preserves.
- X. **Northwest Connecticut Land Conservancy (NCLC) Collaboration.** Set a calendar date to discuss various areas of co-interest and partnership.
- XI. **Western Connecticut Clean Air Action (WCCAA)/Cricket Valley** will not be a repeat project and the monitors will need to be returned. B. McCann will speak with Mike Benjamin on how to return.
- XII. **Public Information Accessibility.** In order to make conservation information more widely accessible to the community, C. Shulman proposed to create a dedicated, "Conservation Corner" at the Sherman library. This to be in addition to the materials that are available already at Mallory Town Hall.
- XIII. **Spring Earth Day Fair.** The commission agreed to pursue hosting an Earth Day event to continue to enhance partnering relationships with local conservation groups and to educate the public regarding conservation issues (e.g., the decline of bee populations). This to be one of many co-sponsored programs – similar to the [Doug Tallamy online discussion of 2022](#) – on which the groups partner to make available to the community throughout the year. Planning on the event to start at the next meeting.

Old Business:

Archiving SCC Articles on the Web

C. Aruza will contact the town web master to discuss the potential of archiving the commission's articles on the town website.

Adjournment

C. Shulman made a motion to adjourn the meeting

Seconded by: M. MacKinnon

Vote: Unanimous For

B. McCann adjourned the meeting at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Christine Aruza

Next meeting: Wednesday, February 8, 2023, @ 7:00 p.m., Mallory Town Hall