Conservation Commission

Meeting Minutes
November 21, 2019

In attendance: Jason Morrill (Chairman), Frank Deleo, Traci Cipriano, Sharon de Kadt, and Susan Dieterlen. Absent: Leland Torrance

1. The meeting notes for the Conservation Commission meeting of October 19, 2019 were approved. Jason Morrill made the motion to approve and Frank Deleo seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

2. There was no public comment.

3. Proposed Woodbridge Conservation Commission meetings for 2020 were presented. The meetings will be on the third Thursday of every month from January through December. Jason Morrill made the motion to approve, Sharon de Kadt seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

4. The 2020-2021 budget for the Conservation Commission for the Town of Woodbridge was proposed by Jason Morrill for $9,700. Discussion occurred. The proposed budget was a) $8,000 for professional fees, b) $600 for printing, c) $500 for professional development, d) $400 for publications, and e) $200 for office materials. In previous years the Conservation Commission has had a significantly lower budget as approved but the Town of Woodbridge. In the past the Town of Woodbridge has been very accommodating for specific needs that the Conservation Commission has requested.

5. Planning a presentation for low impact development: Information was provided by Frank Deleo from UConn about best practices for land use development. Frank Deleo is willing to contact a professional who could educate the Conservation Commission about best practices. Discussion occurred and the Conservation Commission will pursue an idea to have all the other Woodbridge commissions participate in attending such an educational event. Frank Deleo will get in touch with the speaker Michael Dietz and ask him about his availability. It might be best to coordinate the session with a usually scheduled Conservation Commission meeting on the third Thursday of the month in the near future.

6. An update on the Woodbridge Country Club property: The date of the town meeting for information to be provided on the referendum has been postponed. As Commissioners we discussed the proposal that had been presented at last month’s Conservation Commission meeting and we all agreed that it lacked detail and specificity for such an important undertaking. The developer’s proposal left many questions unanswered, including storm and sewer management, what would happen if bedrock was discovered, and the considerable amount of latitude the developer allowed themselves to change the plan after Town approval.

7. Update on The Thomas Darling House: The Thomas Darling House and its associated land is owned by the Town of Woodbridge. According to rules recently adopted by the Town of Woodbridge the Conservation Commission has been given jurisdiction over farms in the Woodbridge community, and part of that jurisdiction is to deal with any conflict management that may arise relating to farms in Woodbridge. Jason Morrill wanted to keep the Conservation Commission apprised of recent concerns expressed by the Historical Society about the caretaker of the house, who performs upkeep of the
house and runs a one-and-a-half-acre farm on the property. In a recent meeting with the Woodbridge Board of Selectmen the Darling House caretaker has been allowed to remain as a tenant in the Darling House. According to the report the Historical Society is considering removing its items from the Darling House. No action is required of the Conservation Commission at this time.

8. **Open Space Plan and revisions:** There are a few portions of the proposed Open Space Plan that need work before the document is published. Jason Morrill reviewed the Town Charter and ordinances and found sections pertinent to the Conservation Commission. These included a) Section 4.8 which involves the purchase and sale of town property, b) Section 208 that involves matters relating to drainage, c) Section 264 relating to historical property, d) Section 370 relating to stormwater management, e) Section 375, Article 2 relating to scenic roads, and f) PA 490 which is designed to help landowners with tax relief if they maintain open space. Other areas of the Open Space Plan which will receive further review is the natural resource inventory, which is a lengthy portion of the document. It has been proposed and agreed upon to make this portion an appendix with a smaller paragraph in the main body of the Plan describing the gist of the inventory. It was also decided that methods of protection and acquisition should remain a short portion of the Plan that can be fleshed out in later revisions.

9. **Chairman’s report:** A proposed single family house construction plan was brought before the Conservation Commission by the Inland Wetlands Commission as a matter for the Conservation Commission to be aware of, with no action required at the present time.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m. Jason Morrill made the motion and Traci Caprio seconded. The vote was unanimous.