

**TOWN OF TRUMBULL
CONNECTICUT**



Trumbull Conservation Commission Meeting
Tuesday, December 18, 2013
Helen Plumb Building
7-9 pm

Present: Conservation Commissioners: Kate Bruzinski, Scot Kerr, Dale Parsons, Don Watson, Joanne Parsons, Jim Sullivan. Other Attendees: Jamie Bratt, Richard White, John Lauria, Lars Jorgensen, Linda Thomas, Pam Georgas, Kevin Malone, Rich Deecken, Michael Chan, Elaine Wang

Absent: Conservation Commissioner Mary Ellen LeMay

The meeting was called to order at 7:04pm by the Acting Chairman, Scot Kerr. A moment of silence was observed for the victims, families and first responders of the Newtown tragedy.

Past Minutes: It was moved by Don Watson, seconded by Jim Sullivan, to approve the minutes of November 14, 2012. Unanimous.

Don Watson opened the meeting by indicating that the Conservation Commission's focus is the Natural Resource Inventory. The Conservation Commission is a science-based advisory commission that oversees the protection and supervision of natural resources in Trumbull. It acts in an advisory capacity to the town's regulatory land use boards, as well as makes recommendations regarding open-space, watershed plans, and natural resource preservation. He noted that the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) is being updated by Jamie Bratt, Planning & Zoning Director.

The proposed draft steps to undertaking the NRI were presented. Question posed to the group was "What does the Conservation Commission want to say to the town" with regard to this topic. Don noted the goal is to advise, inform and disseminate information and to promote and support conservation initiatives.

A content outline was presented which included geology of the town, farmland and wetlands, fresh water basins, flood plains, public ground water protection, the dark night sky, natural scenic resources, open space, significant natural resource areas and retrofitting suburbia. A brief summary of the Fuss & O'Neil report was given with regard to watershed base plans and the Pequonnock watershed. Don noted the DEEP has funded a study of the Rooster River watershed which involves the towns of Trumbull, Fairfield and Bridgeport.

Don noted the second phase of the meeting would include brief presentations by members of the Conservation Commission and ideas will be discussed regarding concerns and solutions to various topics.

Richard White reviewed the mapping capabilities of the GIS system that is currently utilized by various town departments, commissions and committees. He noted most of the information prior to 2009 when the current GIS system was started, relied on maps from 1964 and the system was totally manual. When more information was required, the GIS system was activated in the town in 2011. He reviewed training documents and stated he is willing to help with the training process for those who want to navigate the system. Data layers have been created and taken from state and federal sites but additional layers need to be developed. They include land use and use code data, integration with building permits, NRI for geologic features, habitat, plant and animal species and historical sites. We do have other levels available but require additional training. These include overlay analysis, routing and allocation.

His vision for the future would be having data sets available at meetings such as Inland Wetlands, Planning and Zoning and any other commission or board so that relevant and current information can be shared with the members to enhance the discussions.

Round table discussions were held on the following topics. Members of the Conservation Commission gave brief overviews as noted. Ideas were submitted by participants and included as part of a “mind map” workshop. A summary of ideas will be compiled and emailed to all attendees.

Watershed and Flooding – Don Watson

Park and Rec/Bike Trail – Don Watson (bike trail, great parks, increased real estate values)

Recycling and Composting – Scot Kerr (composting initiatives, striving for zero waste)

Trees and Landscape – Jim Sullivan (water quality, pesticides, health related problems, where waste water goes); Joanne Parsons (native plants and their benefits, tree ordinance, tree coverage providing protection)

Culture/Nature – John Lauria (history of Trumbull and how the area has turned from farming to residential/commercial)

Species Wildlife – Kate Bruzinski (flora and fauna in town, NRI, identifiable awareness of species in town)

Don Watson raised the question as to what ideas created in these discussions should the Conservation Commission pursue and what would be most helpful to Jamie Bratt in her POCD. Attendees indicated what areas were of most importance to them.

Discussion of key issues was held noting there is a common thread between several areas, one being more education of the public. Natural resources and cultural resources are very important. Discussion was also held regarding increased density applications to the town. Don Watson noted the summary must have sound recommendation to adopt. Rich Deecken from Planning & Zoning noted that the P&Z needs a document that has very concise recommendations for

conservation issues. The Conservation Commission can do what the P&Z can't do and give it due diligence. Public education is very important.

Jamie Bratt noted that the NRI should be a stand alone initiative and not dependent on the POCD. The POCD is not a regulatory document. However, it could possibly be the basis of zoning amendments as well as an important guideline and reference document.

Don Watson concluded with "next steps:" to produce a draft of the Natural Resource Inventory with each of the above topics to be elaborated by Commission members and with progress reports to be presented at the Conservation Commission meetings of January and February—so that significant recommendations can be presented to in forma and advise the P&Z Plan of Conservation and Development.

Adjournment

There being no further business, motion was made by Dale Parsons, seconded by Joanne Parsons, to adjourn the meeting at 9:05pm. Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Crandall
Clerk