

Town of Montville
Conservation Commission

Special Meeting Minutes

May 7, 2019, 7:15 PM

Montville Town Hall, Room 102

Call to Order

- The Montville Conservation Commission Special Meeting was called to order at 7:16 PM on May 7, 2019.

Roll Call

- Commissioners: Chase, DiNoto, Emilyyta, and LeClair were present.
- Montville Councilman McNally was present.

Approval of Agenda

- Commissioner Emilyyta made a motion to approve the agenda for the May 7, 2019 Special Meeting. Commissioner DiNoto seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Comments from the Public on Agenda Items

- Chair Jessica LeClair asked three times if there were any comments from the public on agenda items. There were none.

Approval of Special Meeting Minutes from February 26, 2019

- Commissioner Chase made a motion to approve the minutes from the April 2, 2019 Special Meeting. Commissioner Emilyyta seconded. Motion passed unanimously.
- Commissioner Chase made a motion to approve the minutes from the April 19, 2019 Special Meeting. Commissioner DiNoto seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Correspondence

- The Commission received correspondence from the Planning Department with a big copy of the Town map. All members were happy to see a big map that is easier to read. Chair LeClair suggested requesting for more copies of the big map for all members and all agreed.
Discussion: Commissioners discussed the table on the map and what the marked areas represented.
- Received an email from a representative from CT DEEP regarding the Young Forrest Initiative.
- Chair LeClair mentioned the Google drive link that she sent to all members. Commissioners Emilyyta and DiNoto confirmed they received the email. Chair LeClair explained all Conservation Commission documents were saved there and could be accessed by all members.

Old Business

- Discussion relative to the Montville Conservation Center (operations and maintenance) Rotary Club would like to fix up the sign with the map; they would like to make a new

Welcome Sign for the Center which would have an updated map on it and make it more welcoming. Additionally, moving the sign so it can easily be seen. Councilman McNally said he would either get the Town to remove the old sign when the new one is ready or would do it himself if need be. Councilor Emilyta said he would look into getting someone, or do it himself, painting the back side of the current sign so that it could be seen more easily.

Commissioner DiNoto mentioned the Eagle Scout who asked to do his project at the Center and Chair LeClair said he would be working on the parking lot; however, it's been delayed due Devin's car accident.

Councilman McNally said he has confirmed that he can get millings delivered for the Scouts to repair the parking lot.

Commissioners discussed putting up reflectors/solar lights and expanding the Center hours.

Commissioners also discussed marking the trail. Commissioner DiNoto suggested using paint to mark and then updating the sign to coincide with the colors on the trails. Chair LeClair said she received recommendations from people at UCONN for Apps that could be used to help mark trails – recommended were: TrackKit; WikiLock; Rambler. Public commented that Camp Oakdale and the Bird Sanctuary needed marking as well. It was suggested that another special meeting be held to do some actual marking of the trails. Councilman McNally said he could get paint if the Commission needed it. The day picked to start marking trails was 5/18 at 8am.

Chair LeClair talked about flooding on the trails and she would like to look into putting up some type of boardwalk. The Planning Department indicated that approval would probably be needed from Inland/Wetland Department. Commissioners discussed putting up something simple; some logs with rocks that just makes it easier to walk the trails.

Public talked about being really careful to not fill in “vernal pools” or any natural watering holes. She wanted to be sure that the Eagle Scouts were aware of this as well. She also talked about not necessarily putting up a picnic table at the Center because she felt it would encourage people to eat and it could cause debris problems (i.e. plastic bags). Chair LeClair suggested a picnic table maybe in the parking lot area. It was finally agreed the no picnic table was probably a better idea. Public said the Center should be more for bird observing and other educational-type activities. Commissions welcomed the Public comments and encouraged her to provide input, ideas. In summer months it could be used for walking and hiking; in the winter for cross-county skiing, snow shoeing, snowmobile riding, ice-skating on the pond, bonfires, etc. She believed the Center should be focused on nature and not so much on making it “comfortable.” Chairman McNally said getting the Center plowed in the winter was possible. He and the Commissions invited Public to join the Commission as they felt she would be an asset.

It was discussed to add bird houses bat houses, etc. in the Center. Chairman McNally said there used to be a State program that allowed Towns to obtain wood and other materials to clean up/spruce Conservations areas; however, he was not sure if the program was still in existence.

- Mostoway Property

\$20k has been added to Public Works budget for site survey. Chair LeClair asked that Mr. Bushway keep the Commission updated on any developments regarding said property. She also stated this topic could be removed from future agendas for the time being.

- Open Space Inventory (including Mostoway property) –

Big map copies would be requested for the next meeting. She said she would ask for comments from the Planning Department on areas they would recommend be looked at re: open space. What was and was not open space was discussed; Chairman McNally talked about an old rule that required builders to donate land to Town but that the rule had been reversed because the land donated was never enough to do anything with. He suggested that the Commission maybe reach out to Parks and Recreation in attempt to “get on the same page” regarding land in the Town. He also agreed to help broker the joint meeting with P&R and other Town departments that have an interest in the Mostoway property.

New Business

- 2019 Meeting Schedule

Motion made by Commissioner Chase and seconded by Commissioner DiNoto.
Motion passed unanimously.

- 15 Benway Court –

Land owned by Town. Commissioners agreed to table the issue and each stop by to take a look at it and consider what the Commission should recommend.

- Councilman McNally talked about other Town-owned property across from the Mostoway property.

- Councilman McNally suggested the Commission reach out to P&Z regarding this property as well. P&Z does 824 reviews to determine whether land has any use to the Town (i.e. water protection, etc.) prior to land being placed for sale by the Town.

- Creation of Conservation Commission email address to be put on the Town website. mtvctconservation@gmail.com is available. Chair LeClair will share log in information with all members so everyone can check it.

- Young Forrest Initiative

Chair LeClair sent a link to all members with newsletter and other information.

DEEP forwarded information on projects worked on. Commissioner Chase discussed his own property as well as some projects worked on by the Young Forrest Initiative. He said these projects are federally funded. He just finished one on his land and said there are only two other pieces of land in Montville eligible for this program. He said it includes cutting down trees to conserve and benefit species.

Chair LeClair asked if there was an “acreage requirement” to make land eligible for

this program. He said he believed it just has to be continuous shrub land and thought it might make sense to target those with more than one acre to see if there was any interest by other land owners.

Chair LeClair asked if the Conservation Commission could host an educational event and whether it would be beneficial to do it at Commissioner Chase's property. Chairman McNally said he believed that if such an event were held it would be the land owner's liability. Commissioner Chase said he could contact people he knew at the Young Forrest Initiative about holding some type of educational/informational event to check what their availability is.

Farmer's Market Committee:

- Councilor McNally said the first Farmer's Market is slated for 6/2/19. He said they're just still looking for vendors.

· *Comments from the Public*

There were no additional comments from the Public. Chair LeClair again encouraged her to come to meeting and maybe apply for Commission membership.

· *Comments from Municipal Liaison*

Councilor McNally said he received two books from Ellen Hillman (former Town Councilor); he said he believed one was maybe called "The Birds of Montville" and thought the other had something to do with the history of the Conservation Center. He said he would try to remember to bring the books to the next meeting.

· *Comments from Commissioners -- None*

Adjourn

- Commissioner DiNoto made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Emilyta seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 8:44PM.