

**SOUTH HADLEY CONSERVATION COMMISSION
VIRTUAL MEETING MINUTES
JANUARY 18, 2023**

Present: Neva Tolopko, Chair; April Doroski, Vice-Chair; Bill DeLuca, Member, Garth Schwellenbach, Member; Tom Dennis, Member; Kathy Davis, Member; Jess Schoendorf, Member; Louise Croll, Associate Member; Rebekah Cornell, Conservation Administrator; and Colleen Canning, Planning/Conservation Coordinator

Chair Tolopko called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM and reviewed the virtual meeting protocols.

Agenda Item #1 --- Open Public Forum

No members of the public spoke during the open forum.

Agenda Item #2 --- Reorganization of the Commission

As it was a new calendar year, Commissioners decided to reorganize membership with appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair.

Motion: Vice-Chair Deluca moved to re-appoint Chair Tolopko to another term as Conservation Commission Chair. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion. Seven (7) out of seven (7) commissioners voted in favor of the motion through roll call.

Motion: Vice-Chair Deluca moved to appoint Commissioner Doroski to position of Vice-Chair. Commissioner Schwellenbach seconded the motion. Seven (7) out of seven (7) commissioners voted in favor of the motion through roll call.

Agenda Item #3 --- Minutes

Draft minutes of the December 21, 2022 meeting were sent to the Commission for review.

Motion: Commissioner Davis moved to approve the December 21, 2022 meeting minutes. A quorum of commissioners could not vote in favor of the motion. Therefore, approval would be tabled until the next meeting.

Agenda Item #4 --- Public Hearing Continuance to consider a Notice of Intent filed by Val Shvets to secure an Order of Conditions permitting the applicant to install an elevated walkway extending to a floating dock on a cove of the CT River at 80 River Road (Parcel 22 Map 5)

The applicant had requested a continuation of the public hearing to a future meeting.

Motion: Vice-Chair Dorkoski moved to continue the hearing to February 15, 2023 at 6:05PM. Commissioner DeLuca seconded the motion. Four (4) out of four (4) commissioners present voted in favor of the motion through roll call.

Agenda Item #5 --- Request for Extension SHELD Order of Conditions #288-0462

Vice-Chair Doroski recused herself from the agenda item as she had a professional relationship with the applicant.

Mark Gilmore, SHELD, was present at the meeting and explained that, due to supply chain issues caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, materials needed to complete the work under the Order of Conditions had been unavailable. The purpose of the work was to create a connection between South Hadley's municipal electric supply to Holyoke's in the event of an emergency. It was anticipated that all materials needed would be delivered soon and the project would be completed within one year.

Motion: Commissioner Dennis moved to issue a one year extension to Order of Conditions #288-0462. Commissioner DeLuca voted in favor of the motion. Six (6) out of six (6) voting commissioners voted in favor of the motion through roll call.

Agenda Item #6 --- Growing Wild South Hadley

The Commission had ongoing discussions regarding initiating a local 'Growing Wild South Hadley' initiative. As envisioned, the initiative would include a series of events and programs that would encourage restoration of traditional residential landscaping into natural landscapes. Commissioners discussed the the following items: 1) seeking out speakers for public education; 2) supporting a pollinator garden at the Gaylord Memorial library; 3) reviewing local bylaws to ensure that pollinator meadows would not violate Board of Health requirements; 4) organizing an Earth Day event; 5) creating a book collection at the local library with educational materials relating to 'Growing Wild South Hadley' efforts; and 6) engagement with professional and local contacts for plant and seed donations.

Discussion on the implementation of the Growing South Hadley would be ongoing.

Agenda Item # 7--- Administrator's Report

Administrator Cornell detailed the following items:

- *Conservation Land Management Budget* - A draft budget was submitted to the Commission. Further consideration for the budget would be placed on a future agenda.
- *120 River Road* - The property owner expressed interest in donating the property, which was within the Riverfront Area of the Connecticut River, to the Commission. As Commissioners expressed interest, the property owners would be invited to a future meeting.
- *College Street Property* - The property owner expressed interest in donating their 12-acre property to the Commission. The Commission expressed interest but the current owners were not ready to make any formal decision at this time.

- *Public Land Brochure* - Administrator Cornell was working on developing a brochure and shared a draft with the Commission.
- *Carver-Newton-Jones Conservation Area* - The conservation area was under utilized and had a cumbersome name. Administrator Cornell asked if Commissioners were interested in opening a discussion on renaming the area. As Commissioners were agreeable, Administrator Cornell would do further research on the history of the Conservation Area.

Agenda Item #8 --- Other New Business

There was no new business to discuss.

Adjournment

Motion: Commissioner Davis moved to adjourn the meeting. Vice-Chair Doroksi seconded the motion. Seven (7) out of seven (7) commissioners voted in favor of the motion through roll call.

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Colleen Canning, Planning/Conservation Coordinator

Appendix

Document	Document Location
Hearing continuation request	Conservation Files
OOE Ext Request	Conservation Files
Draft FY24 Land budget	Conservation Files