



**CITY OF TORRINGTON
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Regular Meeting Minutes
August 31, 2023 Regular Meeting**

1. Call to Order:

Meeting called to order at 6:40 pm

Members present in person in Room 218 of Torrington City Hall unless otherwise noted.

Roll Call & Announcements: Members present: Steve Ivain, Erin Stelma, Karen Svetz, and Christine Altman (Chair).
Via ZOOM: Michael Kaneb
Members Absent: Dan McGuinness
Staff: Nate Nardi-Cyrus – Assistant City Planner
Members of the public: Julia Rogers, Housatonic Valley Association

2. Minutes:

a. July 27, 2023 Regular Meeting

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Mr. Ivain, seconded by Ms. Svetz. All commissioners voted aye.

3. New Business:

a. Presentation by Julia Rogers, Senior Land Protection Manager – Housatonic Valley Association Staff Meeting with HVA

Ms. Rogers presented on HVA's 'Follow the Forest Initiative,' and how the Conservation Commission can help support their efforts. One interesting project involved ground truthing wildlife/road crossings in several locations in Torrington. Discussion ensued. The Commission agreed to find a time to schedule a field training so they could participate.

b. Chicken Regulations in Torrington

The Commission discussed the current issues regarding chickens in Torrington, including the regulation that does not allow the keeping of any farm animals in the City (including chickens) on lots smaller than 3 acres. The Commission expressed their support for sensible regulations that allow residents to keep a small number of chickens without causing public health issues (e.g., rats, waste management, etc.) Mr. Nardi-Cyrus recommended the Commission comment on any potential regulation amendment application, lending their support to common sense code updates and making suggestions for potential alternatives. Mr. Nardi-Cyrus will refer such an application to the Conservation Commission for their review and comment.

4. Old Business

a. World Clean-up Day Planning

The group discussed last minute logistics for the upcoming event, scheduled for September 16th at 9am in the Ocean State Job Lot plaza. The 20-yard roll away dumpster has been ordered for delivery. Staff will direct volunteers to park in appropriate designated locations. For food donations, Ms. Altman agreed to follow-up with BJs, Mr. Nardi-Cyrus agreed to follow-up with Stop and Shop, and Ms. Svetz will follow-up with Big Y. All the food donations will aim to feed lunch to ~50 participants. Torrington Trails network will be encouraged to take a lot of pictures, as will Commission members. Everyone should show up the day of the event around 8am, ready to help!

a. Food Forest Planning update

Mr. Nardi-Cyrus showed the commission a variety of small city-owned, non-park lots as potential food forest sites. The Commission agreed to follow-up on one Palmer Bridge Street Lot, next to the Naugatuck River Greenway, which seems promising. They will include that visit during the monthly open space inspections. Nardi-Cyrus will continue to make efforts to communicate with the Parks director for future projects.

b. Red Mountain Trail Update

The internal working group kick-off meeting is scheduled for September 28th.

c. General Solar Discussion

After a review of the Siting Council documents, the group agreed that there are no other reasonable actions that the Commission can take regarding the Silicon Ranch development. It was agreed that Land Use staff and Conservation/Inland Wetlands Commissioners will instead focus on monitoring third-party enforcement efforts to assure the project is being built to spec without issue.

d. Open Space Inventory

Next visit will be Weds September 13th at 9am, with commissioners to meet at Sullivan Senior Center. Would like to move this item up the agenda to discuss enforcement at the next meeting.

e. Natural Resources Inventory

Nothing new to report.

5. Adjournment:

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Ivain, seconded by Ms. Stelma. All commissioners voted aye.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Nate Nardi-Cyrus

Nate Nardi-Cyrus, Assistant City Planner
Staff to Conservation Commission