**The Conservation Commission – City of Milford**

**Special Meeting Tuesday, June 11, 2019– 6 p.m.**

**Parsons Conference Room C, Parson’s Government Center**

1. **Call to Order/Roll Call - The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.**

**Members Present:** Janet McAllister, Gayle Hoffman, Carolyn Alling, Howard Haberman, Gregg Hammond and Diana Bytell

**Absent**: Ryan Keeler, Rebecca Smith, and Keith Dunn,

**Staff Liaison –** SteveJohnson, Open Space & Natural Resource Agent.

**Public Comments –** none

1. **Minutes May 21, 2019 –** Motion to approve Gayle Hoffman and seconded by Carolyn Alling. Janet McAllister requested to mention Mondo Ponds as the parking lot location. Motion approved 6:0 as amended.
2. **New Business:**
	1. Open Space Funding –Jon Berchem, City Attorney. Janet McAllister outlined the discussion topics focusing on:
		1. How to reimburse Open Space Funds used for the acquisition of 701 North Street.
		2. Discuss the criteria for the use of open space funds with future acquisitions.
		3. Discuss mechanics of the role of the Conservation Commission, communications and the process within the City.
	2. Jon Berchem discussed previous meeting with Janet McAllister, Howard Haberman, & Steve Johnson. Jon updated the Commission on two properties acquired for tax foreclosure that will be sold. The proceeds less the 5% real estate broker fee will be used towards the repayment of open space funds that were used for the purchase of 701 North Street property. The properties located on Bridgeport Avenue and on Kings Highway are expected to generate over $450,000. Jon will discuss with the Finance Director what impact the past due taxes will have on the net funds to reimburse the open space account. Timeline of the closings will depend on details that the City’s Attorney’s office is working on.
	3. Jon is unsure of what other mechanisms are available to repay open space funds besides sale of properties. Discussion did question the opportunity for the 701 North Street property to generate revenue, a portion of which could be allocated towards repayment.
	4. Jon reviewed how several other communities’ Conservation Commissions have strengthened their role and have helped to avoid conflict within the decision processes. Ridgefield, Westport, Berlin towns were mentioned. Examples are creating a Natural Resource Inventory and integrating that within the Plan of Conservation and Development.
	5. Jon & Commission discussed steps to clarify our role within Milford. These steps will strengthen the Commission despite the City being exempt from its own zoning regulations.
		1. Defining our Commission’s Mission and rules to guide our advice and recommendations for all open space properties.
		2. Drafting a Resolution to be adopted by the Board of Aldermen. (short / intermediate term). Discussion on the best way to introduce this was discussed.
		3. Considering future Ordinance changes that reflect the role of the Commission and define how conflict resolution is managed. (longer term)
		4. Clarify open space fund accounts that are dedicated to the Open Space & Conservation uses.

After Jon Berchem left, the discussion continued on past efforts by the Mayor’s Open Space Advisory Committee and Environmental Concerns Coalition (ECC) that resonated with the public and provided a voice to the decision process.

Janet McAllister, Carolyn Alling, Howard Haberman and Steve Johnson will gather as a sub-committee reviewing the suggestions discussed tonight with Jon Berchem and other Commissioners. This group will meet before the next meeting and work on draft language for a resolution for the Commission to review and next meeting.

1. **Native Plant Guides for City Gardens –** Carolyn, Ryan and Rebecca are interested in assisting Johnson on organizing the information. A future date will be set to review and discuss. Johnson will reach out in a few weeks to arrange a discussion.
2. **Unfinished Business Updates**
	1. **Eisenhower / Foote Field** – no new updates. Planned grading and paving is being scheduled this summer.
	2. **701 North Street – No new update**
	3. **Eco-Collaboration-** Ryan Keeler was not able to attend tonight’s meeting. He will be asked if the survey has been sent.
	4. **Walnut Beach - Berm** – Johnson needs to update the proposed native plantings of over 200 trees and shrubs at Walnut Beach. Public Works vs. Contractor project responsibility needs to be determined for planting, mulching, watering and maintenance. Discussion about prioritizing phased planting along parking lot edge, specific trees then a larger planting in the fall along the berm. Johnson will work to update the list and check on pricing.
	5. **Recycling Task Force –** Dianna Bytell updated: Local Green Certified Catering Company offering local sourced food, compostable utensils, etc. Future Milford Arts Council, recyclable display and Ines Walther’s Farm Market educational project. Bryan Anderson provided information on final environmental bills passed. Curbside Textile Recycling will be implemented soon.
	6. **CT Trails Day –** Johnson thanked Carolyn Alling for her help at Mondo Ponds along with her daughter Alessandra. A total of 25 people attended hikes at Mondo Pond and the Solomon property.
	7. **Littering / Mondo Ponds follow-up -** Gayle Hoffmanasked about the signage requested from the last meeting. Johnson explained that laminated ordinances were posted at the two new refurbished Eagle Scout kiosks at Mondo Ponds. Johnson will draft up text for larger signs outlining hours, littering and other rules for the City Attorney to review, Milford Police and the Commission at the next meeting.
	8. **Liason reports were tabled.**
3. **Motion to adjourn** by Diana Bytell and at 7:43 p.m., Seconded by Gayle Hoffman. There was no discussion. Passed 6:0

Respectfully Submitted,

Steve Johnson

Open Space and Natural Resource Agent

These minutes have not been accepted or approved.