



**CITY OF TORRINGTON
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes
February 27, 2024 Regular Meeting**

1. Call to Order:

Meeting called to order at 6:31 pm

Members present in person in Room 215 of Torrington City Hall unless otherwise noted.

Roll Call & Announcements:

Members Present in Person: *Erin Stelma (Secretary), Karen Svetz, and Jeremy Spitz*

Members Present Via Teams: *Christine Altman (Chair)*

Members Absent: *Dan McGuinness (Vice-Chair), George Craig, and Michael Kaneb*

Staff: *Nate Nardi-Cyrus – Assistant City Planner*

Members from the Public (Via Teams): *Christine O'Neill (NVCOG)*

2. Minutes:

a. January 23, 2024 Regular Meeting

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

3. New Business:

a. NVCOG Presentation – Local Food Recycling Strategies

Ms. O'Neill from the Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments (NVCOG) presented the results of a waste reduction pilot project funded by CT DEEP. Participating municipalities included Middlebury (transfer station), Woodbury (transfer station), Ansonia (curbside pickup), and Seymour (curbside pickup). This project tested both 'pay as you throw' and food scrap composting using a colored bag system. The Commission asked questions of the presenter and discussed the pros and cons of Torrington's current system, with Mr. Nardi-Cyrus offering to reach out to Linda Orr, the City's Recycling Coordinator, to get a better understanding of the issues facing Public Works in managing trash removal.

b. Local Conservation Group Roundtable

Discussion deferred to next meeting

c. Northwest CT Land Conservancy – Request for Letter of Support

Mr. Nardi-Cyrus described a request from the NCLC for a letter of support for their application to the 2024 round of the CT DEEP Recreational Trails Grant Program. The land conservancy is proposing a comprehensive trails master plan for all their properties, including newly acquired land in Torrington off Town Farm Road. All members supported this idea and asked Mr. Nardi-Cyrus to write a letter of support for this grant application

d. Earth Day Clean-up Planning

This year's Earth Day cleanup event will be from 9-1pm on 4/20/24 at Coe Memorial Park. As usual, Mr. Nardi-Cyrus will reserve a dumpster, coordinate use of Coe Park, post signage, and distribute flyer/press release. Dunkin Donuts will provide breakfast and Christine's business will donate lunch from Café Sol. Mr. Nardi-Cyrus will follow-up with Steve Ivain to see if we can use his truck for trash pickup on the day of the event. As far as the printed maps go, Nate will try to find a cell phone we can use, otherwise maps will be revised to show Christine's number for participants to call. Commissioners should identify garbage hotspots in the City for clean-up for next meeting (the last meeting before event).

4. Old Business

a. Eastside Flooding Issues

Pamphlet and cover letter have been finalized, with commissioners stuffing ~100 envelopes during the meeting for mailing.

b. Staff updates:

- i. HVA wildlife crossing assessment training – scheduled for April 6th, 2024 at 9am. Mr. Nardi-Cyrus will plan details of the event and circulate a flyer and press release. Will discuss final details with Commission during next meeting, the last before the event.
- ii. Review 2023 Report to Council – Council approved report at last regular meeting.
- iii. Food Forest Planning – Parks and Recreation agreed to allow us to use the site at Bannon Street Park for a food forest. Mr. Nardi-Cyrus met with Cynthia and other NWCD staff on site to discuss project feasibility, which will include 2-3 fruit trees and a handful of shrubs for the first phase. The group brainstormed outreach opportunities, including 'Farm 2X', the master gardeners, and local citizens. Mr. Nardi-Cyrus will draft a letter to the neighborhood to be reviewed by the Commission prior to sending.
- iv. Red Mountain Trail – Consultant SLR has been retained and is in the process of drafting a new site plan. They are now working on re-mapping extensive wetlands on site.
- v. Urban Forest Management Plan – Mr. Nardi-Cyrus discussed this funding opportunity, which the City intends on applying for to complete some combination of Street Tree Inventory and Forest Management Plan. Mr. Nardi-Cyrus is in the process of getting quotes from consultants to help scope the project.
- vi. Open Space Inventory –The new visits will not be scheduled until late spring 2024.
- vii. Natural Resources Inventory - Nothing new to report.

5. Adjournment:

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

Meeting adjourned at 8 pm.

Nate Nardi-Cyrus

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