

**CONSERVATION COMMISSION  
PLAINVILLE, CONNECTICUT  
MINUTES**

**February 8, 2023**

**REGULAR MEETING 7:30 PM**

**ROOM 302 - MUNICIPAL CENTER**

**I. ROLL CALL**

**PRESENT:** M. Burris, J. Sepko, L. Lozier, D. Tyrrell, R. Paz, L. Noble

**ABSENT:** E. Ayala

**STAFF:** Mark Devoe, Town Planner  
Michael Paulhus, Town Manager

There was a quorum and the meeting convened at 7:31 PM.

**II. GUEST PRESENTATIONS**

Michael Paulhus, Town Manager was present to discuss the Commission's December 15, 2022 letter to him regarding their concerns over the placement of the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail (trail) through Tomasso Nature Park (park) (copy attached).

Staff asked the Commission to reiterate their position and explain their concerns to the Town Manager so that he could develop a better understanding of their concerns.

Chairperson Burris began by indicating that the Commission was surprised by the Town Council's decision to endorse the trail through the park. They were not informed and would have liked to have had some input into that decision making process. Chair Burris feels that the potential trail traffic will adversely impact the park, which was meant more as a nature preserve and not envisioned as a place for pets bicycles and crowds of people. She didn't want to see the wildlife in the park disrupted.

Manager Paulhus asked if the Commission saw the park more as a sanctuary. They responded affirmatively.

Commissioner Lozier commented that much thought went into naming the park and the word "nature" was chosen to represent what it was meant to be.

Manager Paulhus asked for clarification regarding dogs in the park and was informed that they were not permitted. Fishing is also prohibited but there have been violations noted in the past.

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Park maintenance was discussed and the Commission members pointed out issues with regards to frequency of mowing in the summer months and the much needed cutting back of invasive plant species, including some non-invasive species that grow aggressively requiring trimming and/or removal on occasion.

The mowing is seen as a deterrent to ticks and the invasive plant removal was seen as necessary so the ponds are not totally obscured from view.

The Commission and staff went through the December 15<sup>th</sup> letter to explain and review the two options they selected.

Option One: The Commission strongly supported option one despite its potential to meet resistance from Perron Road residents. This option would require sealing off all access from the trail to the park and moving the main entrance and its associated parking area by the roadway garage to the hammerhead at the end of Perron Road. One reason this was seen as a viable alternative is because the chain link fence at the end of Perron Road has been breached (cut) and this seems to be an area where people enter the park anyway. In this scenario, the figure eight trail would be modified to a three-leg dead end. The Commission feels this segregation of facilities will provide the highest level of protection for the wildlife that call the park their home.

Option Two: Option two involves closing off only the middle and southern most connections to the proposed trail resulting in the same dead end path system within the park, but leaves the existing gate open as the primary entrance. A chicane style gate is envisioned here to deter pets, cyclists, and other mechanical modes of transportation from entering the park.

Manager Paulhus understood the request fully and informed the Commission that he would take the matter to the Chair and Vice Chair of the Town Council for further consideration.

Manager Paulhus left the meeting.

**III. MAIL AND COMMUNICATIONS**

None.

**IV. MINUTES**

**A motion was made by:** L. Lozier to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of December 14, 2022 as written.

**Seconded by:** R. Paz    **All in Favor 6 to 0    Motion Passes    Minutes Accepted**

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**V. OLD BUSINESS**

**a. Tomasso Nature Park**

Manager Paulhus will elevate the matter as stated.

**b. Paderewski Park Pond**

Staff suggested that the Park and Recreation Advisory Board would be considering the matter of the Conservation Commission referral dated December 15, 2022 at a future meeting. As February 9, 2023 is their next meeting, staff stated they would contact the Recreation Director and remind her of the Commission's desire to have this matter addressed.

**VI. NEW BUSINESS**

**a. Invasive Plant Species**

Staff indicated a need to update the zoning regulations when time permits to include more detailed information on what plants can and cannot be used in landscaping design for future development plans. It was conceded that non-native species such as arborvitae would likely still be permitted, invasive species such as barberry and burning bush would be prohibited. It was noted that any amendment to the zoning regulations can be approved only via majority vote of the Planning and Zoning commission.

**A motion was made by:** L. Lozier to recommend the PZC affirmatively consider adopting landscape regulations that require more native and less non-native and invasive species in Plainville site design.

**Seconded by:** R. Paz

**All in Favor 6 to 0**

**Motion Passes**

**VII. TRESURERS REPORT**

M. DeVoe reported that no expenditures have yet to be made in FY 23.

**A motion was made by:** L. Lozier to approve the Treasurer's Report.

**Seconded by:** D. Tyrrell

**All in Favor 6 to 0**

**Motion Passes**

**Report Accepted**

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**VIII. MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS**

- a. Linel Noble was contacted by the Board of Education regarding a signage project the school is working on with DOT to design appropriate trail signage for the proposed canal trail. As the project will effect Tomasso Nature Park, the school administrator in charge of the student effort would like to meet with the Commission and learn more about the history of Tomasso Nature Park. Linel will obtain several dates and times that work for the students and the administrator. In person and Zoom venues can be considered.
- b. Staff was asked to inquire as to why the Town Council liaison does not attend their meetings. Mark responded that it was not uncommon for a liaison to miss meetings unless they noted an agenda item that compelled their attendance. The Commission asked if another liaison who would be able to attend meetings could be appointed. Staff will elevate the inquiry to the Town Manager.
- c. Mark reported on various pending land use proposals.

**IX. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None

**X. ADJOURNMENT**

**A motion to adjourn was made by:** L. Lozier

**Seconded by:** R. Paz

**All in Favor 6 to 0 - Motion Passes - Meeting adjourned at 9:05 P.M.**

Respectfully Submitted,



Mark DeVoe  
Town Planner