

**TOWN OF GRANBY  
CONSERVATION COMMISSION  
MINUTES  
MARCH 11, 2025**

**PRESENT:** David Desiderato, Will Madsen, Kara Marshall, Zachary Donais, Jim Szipszky, Andrew Small

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Stephanie Harper, Danielle Johnston, Lee Shaw

**ABSENT:** Kent McCord

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Kara Marshall called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

**2. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Lee Shaw stated she hoped everyone had a chance to read the DEEP report regarding the Barndoor Hills property.

Lee Shaw and Danielle Johnston both noted they were in attendance for item #4 on the agenda regarding the Barndoor Hills property.

**3. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF THE FEBRUARY 11, 2025 MEETING MINUTES**

D. Desiderato provided the following regarding the February minutes:

- Jim Szipszky's name is spelled incorrectly under Present and Barndoor Hills Farmland.
- Under Election it should state Kara Marshal was nominated as Chairwoman and should be noted as such going forward.
- Under Composting the following sentence is repeated: D. Desiderato will investigate pick up sites, any grants that may be available with Sustainable CT and keep K. Marshall updated.
- Under Invasives it should state the start time has changed from 9:00 to 10:00.
- Under Pace, the word 'again' should be removed to state "K. McCord would like to meet with him and discuss how the town can assist the Commission."

ON A MOTION by D. Desiderato, seconded by A. Small, the minutes of February 11, 2025 were approved as corrected.

**4. BARNDOOR HILLS FARMLAND**

- K. Marshall thanked Lee Shaw for sharing the DEEP report.
- J. Szipszky noted he spoke to the Town Manager to set up a meeting to discuss the Barndoor Hills farmland.

The discussion regarding the report included the following:

- J. Szipszky noted the report stated the farmer did not follow procedures for the application of command and did not follow worker protection standards. He would like to know what can be done to correct this. The Town Manager and First Selectman will meet with the farmer once they have a chance to review the report.
- D. Desiderato believes the farmer did not take time to learn the proper way to apply the chemicals.
- Z. Donais pointed out the commission can make suggestions but does not have the authority to do anything. He would like to make some suggestions moving forward regarding the lease language.
- J. Szipszky noted there are good elements to the lease but nothing regarding what pesticides will be used, etc. He believes a decision should be made whether to terminate the lease or monitor it.
- W. Madsen stated information regarding pesticide use should be strengthened in the next lease.
- K. Marshal stated any lease violations would be decided by the town attorney and the commission can make recommendations to the Town Manager regarding future leases. J. Skipszky offered to prepare a draft of recommendations.
- Z. Donais will get copies of the Worker Protection Standards that are on the PERC website and noted the DEEP report is available via FOI.
- J. Skipszky would like to refer to specific suggestions made by DEEP regarding corrections. Z. Donais will pull the relevant information from the Workers Protection Statement and distribute to commission members.
- Z. Donais stated upon receipt of the report, the farmer has thirty days to respond to any violations.
- The commission will wait until the Town Manager has gotten the information, see what recommendations he may have and meet with him before moving forward.
- A. Small believes the future lease should make the farmer responsible for cleaning up the property.
- J. Skipszky pointed out the farmer has other properties in town and any discussion should include all of them.
- To have an effect on the current growing season, K. Marshall noted the commission will need to act before their next meeting.
- J. Szipszky stated a "monitoring of properties" should include a walk through at the beginning and end of the growing season. He also suggested the creation of a 'monitoring plan' for the farmer. He will create a draft and circulate it to the commission.
- A meeting with the Town Manager will be scheduled prior to the next commission meeting.

## **5. COMPOSTING**

K. Marshall will introduce Mindy Gould to W. Madsen. He noted he reached out to her and is waiting to hear back.

W. Madsen reported he received some information regarding Blue Earth and reviewed it with the commission. He also noted they are willing to provide a brief presentation to the commission.

## **6. ENERGY CONSERVATION INITIATIVES**

K. McCord was going to investigate energy conservation initiatives but was unable to attend tonight's meeting.

## **7. SUSTAINABLE CT – WHERE ARE WE GOING?**

K. Marshall did not have any updates but did provide a brief overview of what the commission has done so far regarding Sustainable CT.

D. Desiderato noted that for purposes of affordable housing, he has joined the Housing Action Team. They have had one meeting so far and they are currently educating themselves on the topic.

## **8. LIBRARY PROGRAMS**

Holly Johnson spoke to K. Marshall about reinstating the library talks. They would be held on Thursday evenings from 6:30 to 7:30 in the reading room.

Holly suggested:

April – Water Equality (to line up with Earth Day)

May – Insects

September – Composting/Food Waste

November – Wildlife Diversity and Habitats

K. Marshall inquired if the committee members are interested in restarting this program and if so, suggested they each pick one of the suggested topics or make other suggestions regarding what interests them.

- D. Desiderato noted Invasives has a speaker's bureau.
- Z. Donais stated he will speak to the individuals associated with the Pollinator Meadow regarding a presentation on pollinators, pest control, etc.
- W. Madsen offered to cover composting/food waste in September.
- J. Szipsky will contact Connor Hogan from McLean to see if he is available in November.

## **9. INVASIVES**

D. Desiderato reported the next invasives action is April 12<sup>th</sup> from 10:00 a.m. to noon.

## **10. MEETING TOPICS FOR APRIL 8, 2025**

- Barndoor Hills Farm Property
- Updates on the following: Composting; Energy Conservation Initiatives; Sustainable CT; Library Programs; Invasives

## **11. FINAL COMMENTS FROM COMMISSIONERS**

- J. Skizpsky reported McLean Game Refuge is conducting a capital campaign to turn the building on Barndoor Hills Road into a zero-energy building that would be converted to include some office space.
- K. Marshall reported Aquarion is looking for nominations for their annual Environmental Champion Awards and the Native Plant Trust is looking for 'native plant heroes'. For

the Aquarion Award she inquired about the individuals who are working on the wildflower meadow, and she would like to nominate D. Desiderato as a native plant hero. He declined the nomination and there was a question whether the timing is right for the wildflower meadow. K. Marshall will forward the information Z. Donais.

## **12. ADJOURN**

**ON A MOTION BY** D. Desiderato, seconded by K. McCord, the commission voted unanimously to adjourn at 8:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Kane  
Recording Secretary