

CONCORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES
January 11, 7:00 p.m.
Second Floor Conference Room, City Hall, 41 Green Street

Members present at the meeting included: Kris Tardiff (Chair), Jim Owers (Vice Chair), Council Representative Mark Coen, Rick Chormann, Jr., Chris Kane, Tracey Boisvert, Jan McClure (alternate), and Jeff Lewis (alternate). Assistant City Planner Beth Fenstermacher and Administrative Specialist Lisa Fellows-Weaver were also present.

1. Minutes

December 14, 2016

A motion was made by Mr. Owers, and seconded by Ms. Boisvert to approve the December 14, 2016 minutes, as written. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Applicant at 23 Shenandoah Drive requesting an amendment to the previous Conditional Use Permit to impact additional wetland buffer to remove tree stumps.

Pam Tarbell was present requesting to amend the previous permit to impact additional wetland buffer. Ms. Fenstermacher explained that the original subdivision was approved in August with a Conditional Use Permit needed for the construction of the driveway within the wetland buffer. They are now proposing to amend the CUP for additional impacts to the wetland buffer. Ms. Tarbell explained that they would like to remove a few additional stumps along the front yard and roadway that resulted from a timber harvest by the previous owner, and they plan to restore the area with grass and native species to the area.

A discussion was held regarding the process of stump removal and the Commission expressed concern with the amount of disturbance and the possibility of more erosion and disturbance caused by the full stump removal. The Commission agreed that grinding the stumps in place or cutting flush to the ground would have the least impact.

A motion was made by Mr. Kane to recommend the approval of the Conditional use Permit subject to the stumps being ground in place or cut flush, and staff reviewing the restoration plan and final inspection of plantings. The motion was seconded by Mr. Chormann. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Eversource Energy to discuss a proposed distribution pole replacement within the Turtle Pond Conservation Area off Oak Hill Road. All work will occur within wetlands, only temporary impacts are anticipated.

John Casey was present on behalf of Eversource regarding a utility pole replacement off Oak Hill Road in the Turtle Pond Conservation area. He provided pictures of the area and explained that this pole is failing and needs to be replaced. The process of replacing poles was explained and the work for this project will be done when the ground refreezes. This pole will be cut down and the new pole will be the same height as the existing pole just a few feet away. It is noted that NH Department of Environmental Services has been notified and has signed off.

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The Commission had no comments or concerns with the proposal as presented.

4. Jack Shields, CNBRLAC representative, to discuss a plan proposed by the CNBRLAC and DES to reduce/mitigate invasive plant species in the Contoocook watershed through a coordinated management plan with the various towns and Conservation Committees.

Jack Shields provided an overview of the Contoocook and North Branch Rivers Local Advisor Committee (CNBRLAC) and the other towns participating. He explained that the CNBRLAC is working with the Department of Environmental Services to mitigate invasive species on the Contoocook River, and in order for this project to succeed all communities must be involved. He stated that currently there are 14 towns that participate in CNBRLAC.

He further explained that the committee is involved in the Volunteer River Assessment Program (VRAP), a monitoring program that is EPA sanctioned and counts towards DES monitoring requirements. Mr. Shields stated that he is seeking funds to help with the coordination of this program and for the purchase of water sampling equipment kits. The total cost of the kit is \$2,300.

Discussion ensued as to invasive mitigation. Mr. Shields stated that invasive plant species such as milfoil which pushes out native species, effects swimming, boating, property values, etc. Milfoil is the most prevalent species that they are dealing with.

Members agreed that this water is a key resource to the City as we draw from the river to supplement the City's drinking water supply, and investing in this kit is funds well invested and felt that is a good strategy to begin facilitating now.

Mr. Shields also indicated that he will be taking time off and is looking for someone to replace him as Concord's representative for at least the next year. The meetings are held the 3rd Monday of the month at the Monadnock Paper Mill in Antrim. Ms. Fenstermacher will follow up with the water department to announce the vacancy.

A motion was made by Mr. Chormann to support the CNBRLAC and give the committee up to \$1,000 per year starting in fiscal year 2017, and to donate up to \$1,000 if there are funds left over in the 2017 budget. The motion was seconded by Mr. Kane. The motion passed unanimously.

5. Concord Orthopaedics to provide an update on the prior discussion for a potential Conservation Easement on the property at 297 Pleasant St.

Jeff Lewis recused himself from the Commission.

Jeff Lewis and Brendan Quigley of Gove Environmental Services were present along with Tim Paris and Carl Moskey from Concord Orthopaedics to provide an update to the Concord

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Orthopaedics projects. Mr. Lewis provided a brief overview of the proposed project to expand the parking lot on Langley Drive with a projected completion date to be this summer.

In addition, he provided an overview of a potential project at 297 Pleasant St., located adjacent to St. Paul's School land and State property. The proposed use for this property is for a new surgical unit. He explained that currently there are 2 acres developed in the front of the property for the existing house, barn, and substantial yard. The rear portion of this parcel consists of a mix of uplands and wetlands and will remain undeveloped; it also includes a trail along the parcel boundary that connects to White Farm. He stated that the rear of the property would be proposed for a conservation easement as a mechanism to meet the DES requirements for wetland impact mitigation, and the applicant would like to gauge the Commission's interest in holding the easement. He stated that this project has not been rejected by DES; therefore, they believe that there is value in the proposed mitigation land. The applicant was amenable to providing a permanent right-of-way for public access so the parcel could be used for passive recreation.

Discussion ensued as to the topography of the property and connectivity to other protected land. The Commission expressed concern regarding the amount of wetlands throughout the property and that the land and the fact that there are no conservation easements on other neighboring properties.

Mr. Lewis indicated that the parking lot project and a portion of the proposed 297 Pleasant Street project would require payment to the ARM fund. There was general discussion about whether the money could instead be paid directly for projects within the City, or if the money could "piggy back" on existing projects receiving ARM grant funds. The commission will continue to look at ARM funding opportunities, and a site walk will be scheduled within the next few weeks.

6. Jeff Littleton, to provide update on the Open Space Plan

Jeff Littleton of Moosewood Ecological met with the Commission to provide an update on the Open Space Plan. He provided a time line as well as an outline for the plan. He stated that currently they are working on writing and mapping now. As he explained various sections of the plan he described the maps and information materials that will be included in the plan.

General discussion ensued and changes were suggested. Mr. Littleton will return for the Commission meeting on March 8.

7. NHDES items – Nothing new to report

8. Reports

a. Trails Committee

Ms. Fenstermacher provided a report of the Trails subcommittee. She stated that the

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subcommittee will not be proposing any new trails in 2017 and instead will focus on improved signage, maintenance, and updates. Ms. Fenstermacher stated that the Committee finalized their goals for 2017 and Rob Knight will present the goals to the Commission at the February meeting. She added that one of the Committee goals is to conduct a trail walk every month. Additionally, she indicated that there was a discussion at the trails meeting about whether the City should be supporting any new trails and whether the volunteer committee can support the maintenance and upkeep of any new trails. She invited members of the Commission to attend the next trails committee meeting to be involved in the continued discussion.

b. Upper Merrimack River Local Advisory Committee – Nothing new to update

c. Forestry – a copy of the monthly forestry report was distributed for review.

d. Street Trees

Mr. Kane stated that he would like to create the subcommittee and is aiming to have a meeting in March.

9. City Council/Planning Board

a. Land Use Change Tax, LUCT

Ms. Fenstermacher provided a memo from the City Assessor regarding the Land Use Change Tax, LUCT. During review, it was noted that there is a discrepancy in memo relative to the total amount being collected by the City. Ms. Fenstermacher will follow up and report back to the Commission next month.

b. Gully Hill

Ms. Tardiff and Mr. Chormann provided a recap of Council's Ad hoc committee meeting from January 10, 2017, regarding the future of the Gully Hill and the easement. General discussion was held as the history of the property was explained and how the property was acquired. It was explained that the property was sold to the City at current use values and that it should remain as conserved land. The Conservation Commission receives funds through the LUCT and the intent of the money is to purchase conserved lands.

A lengthy discussion was held regarding options for this property and how the Commission should proceed. Various uses were offered to include organic gardens, trail connections, educational trails, and multi-uses. Councilor Coen commented that there is a perception that the property has been locked up by agriculture uses; however, it actually has been a multi-use property already. The Commission also discussed the possibility of creating a new RFP with restrictions that include a wider buffer, grant funding for pollinators, and more.

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The Commission made it clear that members feel that potential actions suggested at this recent meeting violates the trust that the commission puts on the Council. The Commission has a story to tell and a compelling case as to why this property should be kept in open space. The Ad hoc Committee has requested the Commission provide a memo with respect to their standings on the 2012 recommendations for Gully Hill. The Commission will be meeting January 17, 2017, at noon to continue discussions and draft this memo.

10. City Open Space

a. Open Space Plan – previously addressed

b. Easement Stewardship/Monitoring Update

Mr. Durfee will be coming to the February Commission meeting to update the Commission.

11. Follow-up Items:

a. Northern Pass

Ms. Fenstermacher provided an update as to the schedule of Northern Pass project.

b. Haller Property

Ms. Fenstermacher noted that Council approved the appropriation of grant funds for the Haller property last month, and a quote to complete the boundary survey was received for the amount of \$17,450. In addition, the updated appraisal has been received. The property value was deemed to be \$650,000. Ms. McClure will follow up with the Hallers to schedule a meeting.

A motion was made by Mr. Lewis to appropriate up to \$17,450 for the boundary survey for the Haller property. The motion was seconded by Mr. Kane. The motion passed unanimously.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Fellows-Weaver,
Administrative Specialist