

CONCORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES
October 11, 2017, 7:00 p.m.
Second Floor Conference Room, City Hall, 41 Green Street

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

1. Minutes

September 13, 2017

A motion was made by Mr. Chormann, and seconded by Mr. Lewis, to approve the September 13, 2017, minutes, with edits that do not affect the context or outcome of the meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Horne Property, Reserve Place - Follow up on October 4th site visit

October 4, 2017 – Site Walk

A motion was made by Mr. Lewis, and seconded by Ms. Boisvert, to approve the October 4, 2017, site walk minutes, as written. The motion passed unanimously.

A discussion was held regarding the trail easement and property location. This parcel is 7 acres and the City owns a neighboring lot. Members felt that it was a good opportunity and agreed to pursue this parcel. Pending results of a title search, a public hearing will be scheduled.

A motion was made by Mr. Chormann, seconded by Mr. Owers, to expend up to \$1,000 for a title search of the Horne property. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Merrimack River Greenway Trail – TIGER Grant

Ms. Fenstermacher explained that the City is applying for a TIGER grant for the portion of the rail trail located between Commercial Street and Boscawen. The grant is the “Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery”, or TIGER Discretionary Grant program, and it provides opportunities for investment of roads, rails, and transportation infrastructure. The grant deadline is Monday, and the City would like a letter of support from the Conservation Commission to be included in the application. Ms. Fenstermacher provided a draft of the letter; all members agreed to the content of the letter and agreed it should be submitted. Ms. Tardiff signed the letter of support.

4. NHDES items - Nothing to report.

5. Reports

a. Trails Subcommittee

Ms. Fenstermacher provided an overview of the Trails Committee meeting. She updated the Commission of the trail vandalism activities on the Batchelder Mill and Broken Ground trails. Cameras have been installed; pictures have been submitted to the Concord Fire Department. Additional discussion was held regarding obtaining additional cameras in the future and adding it to the budget for next year. Also suggested was having signage made stating “Camera Surveillance”.

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Ms. Fenstermacher explained a potential change with the W. Portsmouth Street trail. It has been suggested to eliminate a portion of the trail that runs through the agricultural fields and end it at the end of W. Portsmouth Street on one end, and remove the spur from W. Locke Road to connect through the fields.

Ms. Tardiff stated that she is still working on the reformatting and structure of the trail subcommittee. She added that the goal is to have some guidance as to what their duties are with specific goals for the beginning of year.

Ms. Fenstermacher stated that there were approximately 20 people that attended the Mayors walk last Saturday.

b. Upper Merrimack River Local Advisory Committee

Ms. Fenstermacher stated that Council reappointed Mr. Chormann as a member for the UMRAC at their last meeting.

c. Contoocook and North Branch Rivers Local Advisory Committee - Nothing to report.

d. Forestry - A copy of the monthly forestry report was distributed for review.

Ms. Fenstermacher stated that Peter Grebowski is the Commission's intern and is working to create a database of the forest management plan and the forester reports.

e. Street Trees - continue to next month

6. City Council/Planning Board

a. Council Referral – Whitney Road Re-zoning

Mr. Lewis recused himself for this discussion.

Ms. Fenstermacher explained that the applicant has requested to re-zone approximately 9 acres in the Urban Commercial District and 5 acres in the Industrial Zoning District to Highway Commercial Zoning District. They have also requested that Council relieve the covenants and restrictions on the use of the land from 2008. This change in zoning would accommodate a mixed use commercial development to allow for larger businesses, buildings, warehouse, retail, grocery store, etc. She stated that the City Planner has requested the Commission provide comments or concerns regarding the proposal.

A discussion was held regarding the history of the property as the Commission reviewed the plan provided. Additional discussion ensued regarding the current development and proposed allowable uses should the zoning district be changed.

Members expressed concern with the nearby wetlands and were not in favor of filling any wetlands. Members had no comment on the Council referral and agreed the wetland concerns would be addressed through the permitting process.

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Mr. Lewis returned to the Commission as a voting member.

b. Council Referral – 51 Antrim Road

Ms. Fenstermacher stated that the City Council referral for Antrim Road has been withdrawn.

c. Open Space Presentation to the City Council – Postponed to November

Councilor Coen noted that Council referred the Open Space Plan to the Fiscal Policy Advisory Committee (FPAC). Commission members may attend FPAC. Additional discussion was held regarding the Land Use Change Tax and the fact that the Commission's financial status and funds will be changing as the land in the City is changing; there will be less land in current use that can be developed and taken out of current use, therefore, eventually less money will be received.

d. Public Information Officer

Mr. Coen stated that Council approved the new position of a public information officer who will be responsible for coordinating information to all networks; it is a full-time position who will work in coordination with the current position in General Services to push to get all City information to the public, which was the guiding force for this new position.

e. Letter - Resident Profile Avenue

Mr. Coen stated that Council has received a letter from a concerned resident relative to hunting and the discharge of firearms in the vicinity to trails and schools. Is there a policy for this. The Conservation Commission and Parks & Recreation were courtesy copied. Ms. Fenstermacher commented that the City website has information regarding hunting and safety when walking on the trails.

7. City Open Space

a. Richards Community Forest Encroachments or Sanborn Road

Ms. Fenstermacher updated the Commission on the access easement to the Richards Community Forest off of Victorian Lane that goes through private property. She stated that the City Solicitor has sent another letter. City trees have been removed and now apple trees have been planted along the property line. Members expressed frustration and suggested that there be some type of legal action taken for timber trespass. Ms. Fenstermacher will continue to follow the progress of this project and update the Commission accordingly.

8. Follow-up/On-going Items:

a. Concord-Lake Sunapee Rail Trail

Continued discussions were held regarding the intent of the Commission with acquiring the Pan Am properties located off N. State Street. Overall the Commission has stated that they feel that there is some conservation value with the southerly parcel which is located between the Pierce Manse and Smoke Stack

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Center; however, the encroachments on the northerly parcel, located between the Smokestack Center and N. State Street, are of concern and that this may be an opportunity for the City to purchase these parcels. It was noted at a prior meeting that the State is not interested in purchasing this property.

Discussion ensued regarding the many encroachments. Mr. Owers suggested that the Commission may be able to turn over the northern parcel to CLSRT for other potential projects.

A motion was made by Mr. Owers, seconded by Mr. Chormann, to have an appraisal and title search completed for both parcels. Motion passed unanimously. Mr. Owers amended the motion to include that the appraisal and title search work will not exceed \$2,000. Mr. Chormann, seconded the amendment. The amendment passed unanimously.

b. Country Hill Estates

Ms. Fenstermacher updated the Commission on this project. She stated that she and Ms. McClure did meet and discussed the options for the project. More information was provided regarding the options for the project; Wetland Reserve Easement (WRE) and/or an ARM for the underline fee, and the responsibilities of the land owner selling to the Commission or if the Commission should pursue the full amount via ARM. It was noted that the project does meet the criteria per NRCS review.

A discussion was held regarding obtaining an appraisal. Ms. McClure will obtain WRE values and a copy of the application and update the Commission next month.

c. Haller Properties

Mr. Coen stated that Council adopted the Haller easement and it was positively received. Ms. Fenstermacher stated that the survey and boundary line will be updated then the deed description will be updated. She is hopeful to close within the month.

d. Sewalls Falls Rd/Mountain Road Follow-up

Ms. Tardiff and Mr. Kane will follow up on this item.

e. Conservation Easement Standard Templates: Agriculture/Forestry, Riparian/Wildlife, and SPNHF revised

Ms. Fenstermacher stated that the City Solicitor has suggested that no changes are necessary.

Ms. Fenstermacher suggested that members review the documents and a work session will be scheduled, if needed.

9. Other Business

a. Reminder - NHACC Annual Meeting & Conference - November 4th

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b. Promoting Local Agriculture - Partner with NHACC

Mr. Owers will be talking with NHACC tomorrow regarding opportunities to use funding to promote local agriculture.

c. Marion Crosby Property

Ms. Fenstermacher reported that she met the daughter of the property owner, and she is interested in opportunities for selling the property. The parcel is landlocked, wooded parcel off Currier Road. The City holds a trail agreement across this parcel for the West End Farm Trail. More details will be discussed when the family decides to further pursue their options.

There being no further business, Mr. Owers made a motion, second by Mr. Coen to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously at 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Fellows-Weaver
Administrative Specialist