

CONCORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES
November 8, 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, Jan McClure (alternate). Assistant City Planner Beth Fenstermacher, and Administrative Specialist Lisa Fellows-Weaver were also present.

1. Minutes

October 11, 2017

A motion was made by Mr. Owers, and seconded by Mr. Coen, to approve the October 11, 2017, minutes, with edits that do not affect the context or outcome of the meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

2. NHDES items – nothing to report

3. Reports

a. Trails Subcommittee

Ms. Fenstermacher provided an overview of the Trails Committee meeting. She mentioned the upcoming hike November 18 at Oak Hill. She commented to the success of the Five Rivers hike that took place over the weekend with 75 people in attendance; it ended up being a good fundraiser. The attendees provided a lot of great feedback.

Ms. Fenstermacher reported that the Trails Committee will be reviewing and proposing new trails at Russell Pond. She stated that the proposal for the new trail was tabled until the Trails Committee comes up with new selection criteria, which will be discussed at the December meeting.

Ms. Fenstermacher updated the Commission as to the trail damages from the recent storm. She explained that Broken Ground trail had more damage than the forester could address. The damage will require a logger. The Riley Trail will require bridge repair as the bridge was uprooted.

Ms. Fenstermacher showed the Commission the new trail signs.

Ms. Tardiff stated that she is still working on the reformatting and structure of the trail subcommittee. This item will be on next month's agenda.

b. Upper Merrimack River Local Advisory Committee - Nothing to report

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.

In addition, Ms. Fenstermacher stated that the Mr. Grebowski, the Commission's intern, has been looking at the City's Forest Management Plan and is creating a data base of the information and is planning to research for software to digitize the information. Ms. Fenstermacher stated that this would be an opportunity for the use of forestry trust funds.

e. Street Trees - continue to next month

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4. City Council/Planning Board

a. Council Referral – Hunting on Conservation Land

Ms. Fenstermacher explained that the Commission has received a referral from City Council regarding a citizen's concern relative to hunting on the City land with trails. A discussion was held if hunting is allowed on all City conservation land and restrictions stated in the State statutes. It was noted that hunting is not allowed on the Winant Trail due to deed restrictions and it is posted as such. Ms. Fenstermacher will check for restrictions on other City trails. Rob Talmadge stated that hunting is not permitted along Pleasant Street through St. Paul's School.

Discussion ensued regarding solutions to continue allowing hunting on the trails or consider placing restrictions to bow hunting only rather than firearms. Commission members agreed that increased hunter and hiker education is needed. Ms. Fenstermacher indicated that safety tips for hiking during hunting season are posted on the website, as well as in kiosks at several trails, and Multi-Use Recreation signs from Fish & Game are posted at several of the trails indicating that hunting activity may be occurring on the property. Ms. McClure suggested that the hunting schedule be posted on the City's trails website. Ms. Leslie Talmadge stated that the locations where hunting is not allowed should also be noted on the website.

The Commission agreed to respond to the referral and to the citizen's concern stating that hunting is a traditional use in NH and per the RSAs is allowed anywhere on land in NH unless otherwise posted.

b. Presentation to the City Council - Postponed

This item has been postponed to December. Councilor Coen stated that Council has a positive position with regards to open space. He stated that open space was a major topic of the campaigns this year. He stated that it is great to have open space in the City and it is good for economic development.

5. City Open Space

a. Horne Property, Reserve Place

Ms. Fenstermacher stated that the title search for the Horne property for Reserve Place has been received, everything is clear, and the cost was \$187. She added that a public hearing will be held at the December 13 meeting.

b. Hardy Property, Oak Hill Road

Ms. Fenstermacher stated that she was contacted regarding a parcel on Hot Hole Pond Road that is 85 acres, abuts Oak Hill, and according to Ron Klemarczyk, the forest land has been well managed. She provided additional history of the area and the proximity to other City property. Discussion ensued as to the advantage of the area. The Commissions requested that a letter of intent be obtained from the owner prior to obtaining an appraisal.

The Commissions requested that a status report be provided of all properties for the next meeting.

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c. Stickney Hill Road

Ms. Fenstermacher reported on follow up actions regarding the odor from the new farming activities on Stickney Hill Road. She stated that Five Rivers and Department of Agriculture met with the new owners to discuss the actions they plan. She stated that the plan for this property is for the field to be a hay field for 5 years, and Five Rivers will require that the facility test the soils to determine the nutrient levels and how much manure can or should be applied. She mentioned that a conservation plan needs to be put in place. The owners are currently working on a plan to increase outreach with the neighbors.

d. Easement Monitoring

Ms. Fenstermacher reported that Sam Durfee has continued to work on the easements and is 60% completed. In addition, it was brought to her attention that a portion of the Millstream easement is not an easement; it is covenants and the Commission is not responsible to monitor or enforce violations. There are two violations on the property that are within the conservation easement, enforcement action of violations in the open space is the responsibility of the homeowners association and is a code violation.

6. Follow-up/On-going Items:

a. Concord-Lake Sunapee Rail Trail

Ms. Fenstermacher stated that the estimate for the appraisal was higher than what the Commission authorized; it came in as \$8,500. She stated that there is no cost estimate for the title, to date. A discussion was held regarding the amount of detail that is required as there are different uses as well as the fact that this area goes through six zoning districts; it is a very large task. After discussion, the Commission determined that the property's highest and best use should be considered, which is a corridor, and the appraisal should be completed as a corridor. In addition, they said the northern parcel should not be part of the appraisal.

Ms. Tardiff stated that she will work on this item over the next month.

b. Country Hill Estates

Ms. McClure stated that she is working on this item.

c. Haller properties

Ms. Fenstermacher stated that she is hopeful to close within the month.

d. Mountain/Sewalls Fall Road property

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

e. Richards Community Forest Encroachments on Sanborn Road

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Ms. Fenstermacher updated the Commission on the driveway encroachment on Richards Community Forest off Sanborn Road. She stated that the City Solicitor letter that was sent out via Certified Mail was refused. Another letter has been sent out and the deadline for the property owner to respond is November 30.

Ms. Fenstermacher will continue to follow the progress of this project and update the Commission accordingly.

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

This item was continued to next month.

7. Other Business

a. Promoting Local Agriculture - Partner with NHACC

Mr. Owers spoke to the possibility of obtaining a \$5,000 grant with the NHACC. He stated that this would be a good opportunity for assistance for next spring. He stated that he will follow up with Ms. Richter and update the Commission next month.

b. Volunteer Day

It was suggested that the Commission sponsor a volunteer day for clearing up invasive species on the trails.

c. West Portsmouth Street – Vegetation

Ms. Fenstermacher reported about the growth and progress of the river bank buffer plantings on West Portsmouth Street.

There being no further business, Mr. Lewis made a motion, second by Mr. Coen to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Fellows-Weaver
Administrative Specialist