

CONCORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES
February 14, 2018, 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, Kathy Healy, Tracey Boisvert, Rick Chormann, Jeff Lewis, and Alternate Stefan Matlage. Assistant City Planner Beth Fenstermacher, and Administrative Specialist Lisa Fellows-Weaver were also present.

1. Minutes

January 10, 2018

A motion was made by Mr. Lewis, and seconded by Mr. Owers, to approve the January 17, 2018, minutes, as amended, as follows:

Page 2: ...unauthorized construction of trails in the Winant Park area,...

The motion passed unanimously.

2. Concord Parks & Recreation Department, to discuss wetland and shoreland permits for the proposed Terrill Park construction.

David Gill Concord Recreation Director was present along with Dave Fenstermacher and Kris Wilkes from VHB.

Mr. Gill stated that City Council has approved the overall concept plan for Terrill Park. The permitting process is now beginning. He explained that the construction plan is very similar to previous concept plans. This is a three phase project. Phase 1 will include an artificial turf field, an increase in parking spaces, lighting, relocation of the dog park, and improvements to the greenway trail. He noted that there is money in the budget for phase 1, which will be partially funded by private donations. The rest of the build out will occur over three years, if funding is available.

Dave Fenstermacher further explained the project noting that the existing dog park will be relocated to be closer to the existing parking area and will be connected by the proposed trails. Workout stations along the path are proposed for long term vision. The field will be a multipurpose playing field for all types of sport programs. Another component for the future includes playgrounds. He stated that the plan is to maintain existing trees to the extent possible. The plan keeps the pavement areas and any structures closer to the road, which will allow for the green areas on the site to be closer to the river. The parking lot is proposed to be impervious, with the exception of the drive aisles. Due to the heavy wear and tear in the high traffic and bus areas impervious concrete pavers will be used. He added that outer areas of the parking lot will be proposed to accommodate additional parking for overflow for events. Mr. Gill explained that they did try to stay away from the river buffers as much as possible; however, there will be encroaching into the shoreland buffer. They feel that the option presented is the best option for the project.

Kris Wilkes explained the wetland permit is for 1,590 sf of impact to a low functioning, isolated wetland area and a drainage swale along the road for the construction of the driveway. A culvert will be installed to allow the existing swale to continue to function. He stated that the drainage is into a forested wetland through a culvert under the park and into the Merrimack River. The disturbance will remove 400 sf of an

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isolated wetland, which was identified as a forested depression deemed to provide little function or value. Mr. Wilkes stated that to minimize impacts to the remaining forested wetland, minimal tree clearing is proposed. He stated that this wetland area along Old Turnpike Road is the most valuable wetland area of the property and will not be disturbed.

Additional discussion was held regarding the shoreland application which will also need to be completed due to the impacts associated with construction of the stone dust and gravel path. Also discussed was the under drainage of the turf field. It was explained that there is an 18" pipe that runs through the center of the field, which will tie into the stormwater conveyance swale.

Mr. Lewis stated that he did not have any specific concerns, but that he was interested in the proximity to the river with the maintenance of the open lawn and dog park and impacts of higher nutrient concentrations from dog waste and fertilizers on the water quality. He was also interested in the continued management of the site.

Other items noted were that the field can be plowed with up to an inch of snow and can be played on in the winter months. Mr. Gill stated that the City will plow the parking area. He added that they are proposing a porous pavement. The existing sewer lines are being relocated.

The NH Fish & Game findings were reviewed and there are no significant impacts or affects. Additional discussion was held regarding the presence of the Bald Eagle. It was noted that Fish and Game raised some concerns with the tree clearing along the bank of the river and they are still in communications.

A brief discussion was held regarding the lighting of the field and impacts on wildlife. Mr. Gill stated that all parks close at 11 p.m. and the lights should not have any impacts. Mr. Chormann stated that the lights will attract bugs which may have an impact. He also voiced a concern about the materials proposed for the turf field and the potential leeching of chemicals from the field into the river. Mr. Fenstermacher stated that they will be meeting with RPAC to discuss the turf materials, and he will provide a follow up memo after that meeting.

Mr. Coen asked about the ash trees. Mr. Wilkes explained that the area to the west of the field is ash and red oak, with some pine, black cherry, and beech. He noted that there is a lot of invasive species; knotwood, poison ivy, and honey suckle. Trees are proposed along the road side and more trees will be added depending on how the project develops.

Ms. Fenstermacher mentioned that the Army Corps maps indicate that this is in the floodway; however, it is outside the 100-year flood zone on the FEMA maps. She indicated that the Army Corps maps are from 1972, and do not account for the re-construction of the Manchester Street Bridge and the widening of the river opening associated with that construction. She further stated that the staff would like to initiate a study to update the maps over the next few years. Mr. Gill stated this side of the river did not flood during the Mother's Day flood, and it is higher than the developed areas on the west side of the river. Mr. Fenstermacher stated that flooding is not really an issue on this side of the river and they do not have any

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concerns with the floodway. Commission members were in agreement that the floodway designation is likely inaccurate, and the newer FEMA maps are probably more reliable for this portion of the river.

Mr. Gill added that they are working with the SPCA on the dog park.

The Commission felt that overall this is a good project for a sensitive area. It was suggested to have a site walk in the future.

3. NHDES Items – *Nothing to report*

4. Reports

a. Trails Sub-Committee

Ms. Tardiff provided guidelines for the structure of the Trails Sub-Committee. Minor revisions were made. The goal is to present the guidelines to the Trails Sub-Committee at their April meeting.

Ms. Fenstermacher stated that the Trails Sub-Committee established trail criteria, which was approved at their meeting tonight. They intend to finalize the criteria in March and then present it to the Commission in April.

Mr. Owers spoke to the Winant Park Area trespassing. He reported that he did contact a property owner who was receptive to working on the issues.

Ms. Fenstermacher reminded the Commission of the upcoming trail walks. The Trails committee is co-hosting a walk with the Library for the Concord Reads program kick-off at the Jim Hill Riverwalk on February 24th. Friends of the Merrimack River Greenway Trail is hosting a snowshoe walk through the Gully Hill Fields on February 17th. Chris Kane will be leading this walk.

Ms. Fenstermacher stated that Bob Holdsworth, the local representative for Leave No Trace will be coming in next month and do a presentation relative to the 7 Principles of Land Use and partnering with Leave No Trace for training. He will also assist the City with education for working with dog owners to reduce the amount of dog waste on trails.

Additionally, Marco Philippon from the Water Department will be coming to the March meeting to discuss trails being built on watershed property.

Ms. Fenstermacher noted that the City may be considering creating a position for a trail enforcement officer, which would hopefully be a full-time position with the potential to share with Parks and Recreation.

b. Upper Merrimack River Local Advisory Committee

Mr. Chormann stated that the Bug Nights are back and the spring programs will be planned soon.

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

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

Ms. Fenstermacher stated that the warmer weather has created a challenge for the timber sales in the watershed. She stated that Mr. Klemarzyk has shut down timber sales in two areas until the ground freezes again, or they may have to wait until the dryer spring/summer. Discussion was also held regarding addressing the Forest Management Plan.

Ms. Fenstermacher noted that the Department of Agriculture has a grant for the removal of the Tree of Heaven, an urban invasive tree, which is host to an invasive insect. She stated that there is many along the rail road corridor. Doug Cygan from the Dept. of Agriculture will be meeting with the City's arborist.

e. Street Trees

Ms. Fenstermacher stated that Heather Green of DNCR has expressed an interest in assisting with the Street Tree effort.

A discussion was held regarding a potential street tree nursery on Hall Street. Ms. Fenstermacher stated that she is meeting with Ms. Green in a few weeks and she suggested that these items be addressed at a follow up Commission meeting.

A short work session will be scheduled relative to street trees.

5. City Open Space

a. Easement enforcement policy discussion

The Commission discussed the existing easement violations and the need to formalize a process. This item was tabled to next month to allow for Ms. Fenstermacher to talk to the Deputy City Solicitor.

b. Priority list for Acquisition – ARM Grant

A discussion was held regarding the money available from the ARM Grant program. Ms. Fenstermacher stated that she attended a workshop at NHDES where the ARM Grant funds available were discussed, as well as the request from DES for each town to provide a priority list for the use of ARM funds. She added that there is a new mapping program identifying and ranking stream crossings that were assessed throughout the state. She provided an example of a priority list for review and offered to meet with Engineering for possible culvert replacement projects to add to the list. She explained that timing is the biggest issue as the work must be done in conjunction with wetlands permit applications. Projects were suggested for the funds, including the replacement of a culvert on School Street where re-paving is proposed.

c. Sewall's Falls Bridge

Ms. Fenstermacher reported that as mitigation for an easement on the Fish and Game Property along Sewall's Falls Bridge, the City agreed to replace the pedestrian bridge on the trail. Pictures were reviewed

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showing that the bridge is cantilevered out now and the scour underneath the bridge is 3 ft.; it is a safety issue now for pedestrians. She stated that discussions of options have been held and the City can either remove or the abutments of leave them in place; however, there is no way to know if there will be additional damages and there is an issue with getting the equipment to do the removal work.

Ms. Fenstermacher will take someone from NHDES out there to get their assessment.

d. Other

Ms. Fenstermacher noted that the Energy and Environmental Committee presented a goal at the City Council meeting to achieve 100% renewable energy by 2050. She met with members of the Committee to option more information and discuss staff involvement. It was suggested that they meet with the Commission to address overlapping goals. She offered to set up meeting over the next few months.

6. City Council/Planning Board

Councilor Coen stated that the Open Space presentation to Council was well received. He stated that he felt that it was helpful that the presentation was provided to FPAC prior to going to Council. He added that the comments were very favorable and he commended Ms. Fenstermacher and Ms. Tardiff for a job well done.

Ms. Fenstermacher stated that the Open Space Plan - Story Map section needs to be updated with newly acquired properties. She will address that and speak with the consultants for an estimate to have an update completed every six months.

7. Follow-up/On-going Items:

a. Follow up - NHACC Roundtable

Mr. Owers stated that he attend the Roundtable presentations. He explained that towns gave presentations on hot topics. He noted that Bow is very concerned with their land not being under easements. He suggested that Concord should begin to look into this as well.

b. Finance update

This item was continued to next month.

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

This item was continued to next month.

8. Other Business

- a.*** The Saving Special Places registration has opened. All members are encouraged to attend.

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9. Non-public session for the discussion of the acquisition of conservation property in accordance with RSA 91-A:3, II(d)

Mr. Owers made a motion, second by Mr. Lewis, to enter into a non-public session, per RSA 91-A:3,II(d). By a roll call vote, the motion passed by a unanimous vote at 9:04 p.m.

Mr. Owers made a motion, second by Mr. Coen, to come out of non-public session at 9:52 p.m. With a roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Owers made a motion, second by Mr. Chormann, to seal the minutes of the non-public session, per RSA 91-A:5, IV. With a roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

There being no further business, Mr. Lewis made a motion, second by Mr. Owers to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously at 9:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Fellows-Weaver
Administrative Specialist