

CONCORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

REGULAR MEETING

MINUTES

August 10, 2022, 7:00 PM

Second Floor Conference Room, City Hall, 41 Green Street

Attendees: Chair Kristine Tardiff, Councilor Stacey Brown, Members Kathy Healy, Rick Chormann, Jeff Lewis, Alternate Allison McGregor, and Alternate Mark Coen.

Absent: Vice-Chair Jim Owers, Emily Landry, and Chris Kane.

Staff: Beth Fenstermacher, Assistant City Planner
Lisa Fellows-Weaver, Administrative Specialist

Public: Rebecca Ross, Meredith Cooley

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Tardiff at 7:00 p.m.

1. Minutes

July 13, 2022

A motion was made by Mr. Lewis, seconded by Ms. Healy, to approve the minutes of July 13, 2022, with edits that do not alter the content of the meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

2. NHDES Items

There were no NHDES items to address.

3. Reports

Carl Matson was introduced as the new Trails and Open Space Ranger. Mr. Matson gave an overview of his background and interests. Members welcomed Mr. Matson.

a. Trails

Mr. Lewis attended the Trails Subcommittee meeting and provided an update to the Commission. He shared that the trail stewards are holding a work day Tuesday, August 30 at the Jim Hill Riverwalk. Work will include trail maintenance and relocating a portion of the trail along the river due to erosion.

Mr. Lewis stated that the Subcommittee reviewed the 2022 goals and discussed a potential trail from Broken Ground to Oak Hill. He noted that the location has been identified by the Conservation Commission as a conservation priority area. He indicated that there may be hurdles to constructing the trail including wetlands and private property ownership, and added that the Subcommittee will be presenting something to the Commission to make sure that this is something the Commission would support before moving forward with contacting property owners.

Ms. Fenstermacher stated that the Merrimack River Watershed Council held a removal of invasive species workshop at Merrill Park, which was well attended. She added that she would like to continue to work with the MRWC for additional educational opportunities hoping that this will give ample information to volunteers to be able to identify and remove the species on their own since this is one of the biggest maintenance issues on the trails.

Mr. Lewis stated that the Subcommittee continued to work on trail closing procedures. He believes that the procedures will be presented to the Commission in the fall.

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Mr. Lewis stated that the recent group hikes have been successful. Another hike is planned for this month at the Winant and Backloop Trails.

Ms. Fenstermacher explained that the Library and Parks and Recreation are partnering up and will be doing two guided book club hikes. A book will be assigned and readers will then hike a trail and hold a discussion about the book. The hikes will be held in September and October.

Mr. Lewis stated that Rob Talmadge reminded subcommittee members of the upcoming hunting seasons. Mr. Chormann stated that the Town of Hanover has placed orange vests at the trailheads for people to wear while hiking their trails and they are returned when they are done. Members agreed this was a great idea.

Mr. Chormann made a motion, second by Ms. Healy, to appropriate up to \$100 for the purchase of blaze orange vests for people to wear while walking on the trails during hunting seasons. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Fenstermacher stated that there has been some ATV use noted on the West End Farm Trail and Carter Hill Connector Trail. Mr. Klemarczyk tracked the usage to a property and a letter was sent via certified mail to the owner with copies to the NH Fish and Game who did indicate they would be following up. She added that at this time, there has been no new activity reported.

Councilor Brown stated that the CNHBC (Central NH Bike Coalition) will be hosting a bike movie night at the Red River Theatre. She thinks this is an opportunity to get information out there about the trails, including talking with cops on the trails with their mountain bikes. Concord TV will create the film, and members from the Trails subcommittee will be getting footage of people biking on the trails. She also spoke to an upcoming community Walk with a Cop on the Langley trail, which will begin at the hospital on to Auburn Street and back.

b. Forestry Report

The forestry report was distributed for review.

c. Tree Committee

Ms. Fenstermacher stated that the next meeting is August 25th.

Councilor Brown stated that a few Concord High School students attended a previous Energy and Environment Committee meeting where the Tree Committee Chair Ted Diers spoke, and they were inspired to do a senior project to plant trees and a pollinator garden in the school campus. Two 10 ft. serviceberry trees have been planted, paid for through the Conservation Commission tree planting fund, as previously approved. Future discussions will be held for similar projects. Through fundraising efforts, they have raised \$2,000 for additional pollinator projects throughout the campus.

Councilor Brown stated that she is hoping to be done with the tree tour by September. She explained that there are 22 trees on the State House complex and she is working to develop something to give to the Tree Committee and Conservation Commission to complete and give recommendations. Discussion ensued with potential apps and other digital options and ideas.

Ms. Fenstermacher stated that 30 potential locations have been identified for trees to be planted during the Penacook paving project. General Services will be looking into this further to determine feasibility of these locations. A joint meeting will be scheduled with the TPAC and

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Tree Committee to gather community support for planting these trees on private property. If enough residents agree to have a tree planted on their property, the City may be able to qualify for grant opportunities.

d. Local River Advisory Committees

Ms. Fenstermacher stated that the Turkey River Restoration and Management Plan has been finalized, and it was linked in the agenda. She has spoken to Craig Tufts at CNHRPC to find out what the next steps are. He indicated that at this time, UMLAC is working on figuring out funding and how to move forward with recommendations. In addition, she added that the report gives project specific recommendations in the City, and this could be used to create a list for future ARM Grants. Jeff Lewis indicated that he would review the report and help come up with specific recommendations for the list at the September meeting. Chair Tardiff requested that all members review the report.

She added that there are vacancies available for representatives on both advisory committees.

4. City Open Space and Easements

a. Potter Easement

Ms. Fenstermacher stated that on Monday, August 8th, Council approved a resolution for the executory interest in the easement and appropriated the funds for the property. She stated that the survey is being done by Mark Sargent and the appraisal will be finished up soon; hoping to close in February.

b. Gully Hill RFP

Ms. Fenstermacher stated that she reached out to NCRS regarding soil testing that should be completed prior to going out for an RFP so that the farmers are aware of the nutrients and the quality of the soil prior to the bid process. She explained the process and stated that the tests are sent out to the lab at the UNH Cooperative Extension. A discussion was held regarding what the test includes.

Ms. Ross provided insight on the soil testing and what is included for the cost.

Ms. Fenstermacher stated that the goal is for base line data. She, Ms. Healy, and Councilor Brown will collect samples Monday morning. The RFP selection committee will be determined at the September meeting.

Mr. Lewis made a motion, second by Mr. Chormann, to appropriate \$260 for soil samples for Gully Hill for the RFP process. The motion passed unanimously.

c. Richards Community Forest

Ms. Fenstermacher stated she, Ms. Tardiff, Mr. Klemarczyk, and Mr. Matson, met with Barbara and Albert Richards regarding the Richards Community Forests. She explained that this forest was donated to the City years ago with conditions that their brother David Richards be able to obtain 10 cords of wood annually. She stated that Ms. Richards and the family wanted the meeting to ask about trails and discuss what their vision is for the property.

Discussions were held regarding creating a trail system within the forest; however, there are circumstances where this would not be in the best interest of the City. It was noted that there is

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equipment on the property that has destroyed some wetland areas of the land and best forest practices are not being followed by Mr. Richards. Ms. Fenstermacher stated that the Forest Society holds the easement and has been involved in similar discussions in the past. There are wetlands and larger streams crossings. Additional discussion was held regarding funding for road access, safety, and liability issues. Members agreed that nothing should be done until there is no longer timber harvesting by Mr. Richards on the site.

Ms. Fenstermacher stated that Ms. Richards has requested copies of the easement reports; the property is owned by the City and there is no obligation to release these documents. Discussion ensued and members agreed to releasing the reports to Ms. Richards.

5. City Council/Planning Board

Ms. Fenstermacher stated that the Draft Code – Phase 1 is completed and is available for review. A schedule of the meetings was noted. Ms. Tardiff asked what the next steps would be. Ms. Fenstermacher replied that the goal is for everything to be completed together with a final presentation to Council in December. Ms. Tardiff suggested that members review the draft and come to the September meeting with any questions or comments.

6. Follow-up/On-going Items:

a. Conservation Easement Standard Templates

Ms. Fenstermacher stated that she did not have an opportunity to send out template examples. She will send something out to review at the next meeting.

b. Conservation Preserves

Nothing new to update.

c. MRGT

Ms. Fenstermacher stated that the sale was originally going to go through in September, however, PanAm was recently purchased by CSX and they need to review the P&S agreement for the PanAm parcel.

Ms. Fenstermacher stated that VHB should have a draft available for the November or December meeting for the trail through the cornfields. FMRGT is looking at alternatives for a trail extension and parking on the private property at 6 Loudon Road. Final layout will be contingent on the plans for the Loudon Street bridge, and potential impacts from the 93 expansion project. There are a lot of moving parts with the project as well as discussions. In addition, the visioning for the Kiwanis Park is on track for the first stake holder meeting to include the Commission in October or November. She added that she is hopeful that a status report on MRGT will be given to Council for next month.

Councilor Brown stated that the MRGT Triathlon is scheduled for September 11.

7. Other Business

Mr. Coen mentioned biosolids and expressed concern with the use on City lands. Ms. Fenstermacher stated that the City Solicitors and City Manager have addressed this matter and the use is prohibited on City property. Mr. Coen asked if there has been any testing to determine the condition of the soils. Councilor Brown stated that it would be good to know.

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Discussion ensued as to whether the soils at Gully Hill should be tested for PFAS.

Councilor Brown stated that NHTI is currently testing and learning how to clean the soil.

Ms. Tardiff added that there is much activity at the federal levels as well in order to understand the chemicals and the effect of the impact on ground water and water systems. She added that she expects there will be some guidance forthcoming.

Mr. Lewis questioned what we would do with the information, it would just open up more questions.

Mr. Chormann stated that NHDES may have done some studies already and it should be public information.

Ms. Fenstermacher stated that biosolids may be used on private property; the City does not regulate biosolids on private property; however, it is not allowed in the City. Members agreed to not test for PFAS at this time.

Meredith Cooley thanked the Commission members for their work. She stated that she is a part of the Concord Greenspace Coalition, the group that started the effort to remove Langley Parkway from the CIP. She stated that she supports the Commission and the public engagement and would like to help out. She stated that she is hoping to be in alignment with the City that the highway expansion does not divide the City; there does not seem to be a connection from the Loudon Road area to the downtown in the plan. They are also looking at the new Code, and agree in density not sprawl to be in line with the master plan. She added that she is working with Hannah McBride with reviving the urban canopy and working with the community, planning to fundraise to buy and plant trees. She is hoping to encourage volunteers and to engage the public in order to find funds for new trees.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Ms. Healy made a motion, second by Mr. Lewis, to adjourn the meeting at 8:33 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Fellows-Weaver
Administrative Specialist