

CONCORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

MEETING MINUTES – SPECIAL MEETING

February 8, 2024, 6:00 PM

City Hall, 2nd Floor Conference Room, 41 Green Street

Attendees: Chair Kristine Tardiff, Vice-Chair Jeff Lewis, Members Rick Chormann, Emily Landry, Jim Owers, Councilor Michele Horne, Alternate Mark Coen

Absent: Katherine Healy, Allison McGregor

Staff: AnneMarie Skinner, Acting City Planner
Krista Tremblay, Administrative Specialist II

Public: None

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Tardiff at 6:03 PM.

1. Conservation Preserves Matrix and Map Discussion

Chair Tardiff explained that the special meeting is being held to have a follow-up discussion on the preserves project to see about moving it forward. There was a subcommittee that was meeting regarding the preserves project. There are comments listed in the spreadsheet, and the GIS map correlates with the listed comments. A number of different categories were made by looking at the features of each site and the historical uses of the land, as well as the presence of wetlands and wildlife. On the spreadsheet the properties are listed by name and there is a parcel number for each one which correlates with the map. The spreadsheet is alphabetical by name whereas the map is chronological by number. Chair Tardiff wondered if the Commission wants to go by regions?

Mr. Lewis wanted to step back and have a discussion on the final product. Currently, there is this spreadsheet that contains comments from Ron Klemarczyk, Chris Kane, and Jim Owers. What will be the final product?

Chair Tardiff stated that is a good question. She noted the final product would be documentation for the Conservation Commission file and probably for a report to Council. Chair Tardiff stated she does not think there is anything the Commission is looking for as far as requesting approval to designate a land one way or the other. That is something that could be discussed down the road.

Ms. Skinner stated a report with recommendations in the future to for each property could be a final product.

Chair Tardiff suggested treating the project like the trail report and it becomes an amendment to the open space plan or a supplement to the open space plan.

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Ms. Landry stated it is like a type of management plan. It could be something they refer to when new conservation lands are purchased.

Mr. Lewis has another question about the preservation designations on the spreadsheet. Some of the designations are hard to understand because we are looking at a document that has three different people's opinion. Mr. Lewis is questioning what is the definition of preserve and what is the Conservation Commission trying to do?

Chair Tardiff stated that is something the Conservation Commission should better define.

Mr. Chormann stated Ron Klemarczyk, the city forester consultant, sees properties with forestry potential. What are the criteria? Do all of these parcels have forest management plans? How do we decide the best use if it involved forestry or not? Is it an income-generating consideration? Is it forest-health consideration? Or, the trees are there, they can do forestry and there is no real compelling reason to do forestry other than it will support forestry? Maybe it would be better to leave everything free of forestry and leave for recreation, passage, or otherwise. Maybe leave in an untrammelled state. If there is no compelling reason to do forestry, then don't do forestry.

Chair Tardiff stated she thinks the use category is a result of conversations. Historically they have done timber management and harvesting to generate some revenue for the forestry fund for trails. They need to be mindful, if they are going to stop timber harvesting, of the intended and unintended consequences of that action budgetary wise.

Mr. Owers stated it would be interesting to see how much money is generated from timber harvesting. He does not feel that it is that much.

Mr. Skinner stated it is not that much, noting that the money from the Bunten lot timber harvest this year was not quite \$15,000.

Mr. Coen asked if that was the 11,000-acre lot.

Mr. Owers stated it was 40,000 acres.

Ms. Landry asked if the original goal was to have certain amount of properties for wildlands or timber harvest?

Chair Tardiff noted the notion that other communities designate areas as a wild place because it

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has value. Previously they sat down and did an inventory of the history, the natural resources, and how those drive future use and management.

Ms. Landry completed rough calculations for timber, wildlife, recreation, agriculture, watershed and natural preserves designations on the spreadsheet. For example, the percentage of acreage designated for recreation on the spreadsheet is 45%, and it counts all acreage even a small amount on one property. Timber is designated for 25% of the acreage, with 63% for wildlife, 32% for natural processes only, 13% for agriculture, and 21% for watershed. Some of these are more than one category.

Chair Tardiff did not think they were driven by the percentages on the front end, but were looking at the value of each site.

Mr. Owers stated the categories can be used to rank or prioritize the use of the lands. Then come up with a master plan document.

Ms. Skinner will provide all information for the city-owned conservation lands.

Ms. Landry will work on the spreadsheet matching the map to the categories.

Chair Tardiff stated she will work on definitions for the categories. They will schedule another special meeting to discuss the Ms. Landry's compilation and Chair Tardiff's definitions.

Adjournment

Ms. Landry moved, seconded by Chair Tardiff to adjourn the meeting at 7:41 PM. All in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Krista Tremblay
Administrative Specialist II