

CONCORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

September 11, 2024, 7:00 p.m.

City Hall, 2nd Fl Conference Rm, 41 Green St

Attendees: Rick Chormann, Katherine Healy, Councilor Michele Horne, Emily Landry, Vice-Chair Jeff Lewis, Alternate Allison McGregor, and Chair Kristine Tardiff

Absent: Mark Coen, Tracey Lesser, and Alternate Jim Owers

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

Public: None

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Tardiff at 7:01 p.m.

2. Minutes – Approve August 14, 2024 meeting minutes

Vice-Chair Lewis moved, Ms. Healy seconded, to adopt the minutes with the correction to attendees to show Emily Landry as absent. All in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

3. New Business

a. Motion to authorize Chair to sign mowing permit for Jason Cross

Chair Tardiff stated the permit for mowing for Jason Cross is linked to the agenda and includes a map identified as Exhibit A showing the strip of City-owned property subject to the mowing permit. Chair Tardiff asked for a motion to authorize Chair Tardiff to sign the mowing permit on behalf of the Conservation Commission.

Vice-Chair Lewis noted that Mr. Cross was mowing more than the area shown in the agreement's Exhibit A, which is how this matter came to the Conservation Commission's attention.

Ms. Skinner stated this year he is only mowing the strip shown in the agreement's Exhibit A and has only mowed once so far this year.

Mr. Chormann expressed concern about allowing any mowing and its timing for habitat protections.

Chair Tardiff stated this document confirming an agreement from a couple of years ago, noting that the Conservation Commission agreed to the mowing of the 30-foot strip at that time.

Ms. Landry made a motion to authorize the Chair to sign the mowing permit. Vice-Chair Lewis seconded. All in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

b. Current Land Use Tax

Chair Tardiff noted she does not have a draft for the Conservation Commission to review, but she has started to review the information included in the agenda packet and has identified that more information is needed. Chair Tardiff would like to know how many acres are still in current use as of now, obtain a map for a visual of those properties in current use, and receive an estimate of the amount of dollars that would result if all the land came out of current use today. Chair Tardiff said she will send email to Ms. Skinner to obtain the information requested.

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c. Review fund balance

Ms. Skinner stated the Conservation Commission line item is the amount of dollars available for the purchase of conservation land.

Ms. McGregor arrived at 7:14 p.m.

Chair Tardiff stated the money in the fund comes from the current land use tax or other appropriations.

4. Reports

a. Trails Subcommittee update – Kris Tardiff and Jeff Lewis

Vice-Chair Lewis stated the chair of the Trails Subcommittee was pleased with the progress made at the meeting. Vice-Chair Lewis stated the Trails Subcommittee reviewed the comments from the Conservation Commission on the draft procedures and criteria for establishing a new trail and for discontinuing an existing trail. Vice-Chair Lewis stated the Trails Subcommittee accepted the changes made by Conservation Commission with minor adjustments. Vice-Chair Lewis stated the Conservation Commission can formally approve if they all agree to the minor adjustments. Beth's Bench is in progress. The Trails Subcommittee is working on a trail maintenance guide and will have for next month's meeting to get ready to send out to fall trail stewards. Trails Subcommittee discussed goals in progress. There is a group called Mountain Goats that will do guided hikes. Finally, there was discussion about installing a sign at the Swope connector.

Chair Tardiff asked if Trails Subcommittee needs to run that by St Paul's School to let them know of the sign and verbiage.

Vice-Chair Lewis was not sure, noting it can wait to when the sign is presented to Conservation Commission for approval.

Vice-Chair Lewis stated there was an issue with the wording for the project manager in the procedures for establishing a new trail. It was suggested to have the project manager be appointed in collaboration with the Trails Subcommittee.

Ms. Skinner stated that the Trails Subcommittee replaced the word "may" with "might" in both the criteria for establishing a trail and the criteria for discontinuing a trail. Regarding the sentence about designating a project manager in the procedure for establishing a new trail, Ms. Skinner read the proposed sentence as: "If the Trails Subcommittee agrees to move forward, a project manager is designated in collaboration with the Trails Subcommittee."

Ms. McGregor stated the member who will lead is the one to weigh in on the trail.

Ms. Landry wondered if the collaboration should be with the Conservation Commission, rather than the Trails Subcommittee.

Chair Tardiff suggested amending the sentence by swapping Trails Subcommittee for Conservation Commission.

Vice-Chair Lewis made a motion to approve as both procedures and sets of criteria as amended by the

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Trails Subcommittee, but with the one change to swap Trails Subcommittee for Conservation Commission. Ms. McGregor seconded. All in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

b. Forestry

The monthly report was attached to the agenda, but no discussion occurred.

c. Tree Subcommittee update – Rick Chormann

Mr. Chormann stated he did not attend the last meeting.

d. Local River Advisory Committees

No reports or discussion.

e. Society for the Protection of NH Forests – site visit Richards and Unitil

Ms. Skinner read the email from Brianna Belisle with the Society for the Protection of NH Forests regarding Ms. Belisle's recent monitoring site visits to the Richards, Unitil, and Gold Star Sod Farms sites. Regarding the Richards site, the email included a photo of the lawn area near the Cross residence noting that it appears the grass has not been cut for much of the summer. Also noted was a bridge in a state of disrepair that has finally fully collapsed. The email stated the Unitil site appeared normal, and Ms. Belisle noted no concerns. Regarding the Gold Star Sod Farms site, there are three makeshift signs posted on trees regarding the homeless, and those need to be removed.

Ms. Skinner stated she will work with staff to remove the collapsed bridge from the Richards site and the three makeshift signs from the Gold Star Sod Farms site.

f. New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services

No reports or discussion.

g. City Open Space and Easements

No reports or discussion.

h. City Council/Planning Board

Councilor Horne has nothing to report on City Council.

Ms. Skinner has nothing to report on Planning Board.

5. Old Business

a. Preservation Matrix

Chair Tardiff and Ms. Landry both noted that they have yet to complete their assigned items, which are necessary for the group to proceed.

b. Standard easement template

Ms. McGregor reported that she emailed the revised template to Ms. Skinner to distribute to the group for review, but it was not clear to Ms. Skinner the intent. Ms. Skinner did not distribute to the group, so she asked Ms. McGregor to email the document to her again and she would definitely distribute to the group for review and subsequent final action at the October meeting.

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c. Disposal of invasive plant species

Chair Tardiff noted that the link for more information on invasive plant species has been added to the webpage for the Conservation Commission, and this item no longer needs to be on the agenda.

6. Staff updates on items

Ms. Skinner had one update regarding the Perry trail agreement, noting that the city solicitor is still working on the agreement in conjunction with the fire chief.

Adjournment

Ms. Landry moved, seconded by Mr. Chormann, to adjourn the meeting at 8:03 p.m. All in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Krista Tremblay

Krista Tremblay

Administrative Specialist II