



Town of Merrimack, New Hampshire

Community Development Department

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Town Hall - Lower level - East Wing

Planning - Zoning - Economic Development - Conservation

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CONSERVATION COMMISSION

AUGUST 21, 2017

MEETING MINUTES

A regular meeting of the Merrimack Conservation Commission was held on Monday, August 21, 2017 at 6:35 p.m. in the Merrimack Memorial Conference Room.

Chairman Gage Perry presided:

Members of the Commission Present: Matt Caron, Vice Chairman
Michael Boisvert
Cynthia Glenn
Gina Rosati
Tim Tenhave, Alternate Member (arrived at 6:45 p.m.)

Members of the Commission Absent: Councilor Jackie Flood

Also in Attendance:

Chairman Perry noted the agenda did not include the Annual Meeting and review of Bylaws. Those items will appear on the agenda for the next meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT - None

PUBLIC HEARINGS - None

APPOINTMENTS

1. Report /Approval of appointments from the Sub-Committees

Commissioner Glenn informed the Commission she spoke with Rose Shajenko, Alternate Member, Horse Hill Nature Preserve (HHNP) Sub-committee, regarding the vacant full member position. Ms. Shajenko stated a willingness to serve in that capacity. Commissioner Glenn noted the Commission interviewed Ms. Shajenko when she had applied for the alternate position.

MOTION BY COMMISSIONER GLENN TO APPOINT ROSE SHAJENKO AS A FULL MEMBER OF THE HORSE HILL NATURE PRESERVE SUB-COMMITTEE TO FILL THE REMAINDER OF THE TERM TO EXPIRE JULY 1, 2018

MOTION SECONDED BY VICE CHAIRMAN CARON

MOTION CARRIED

5-0-0

Chairman Perry noted he is working on compiling a single document identifying the name and contact information for members of each of the sub-committees. The document, once complete, will be a public document. Members who do not want their personal emails to be included as part of a public document should make that known.

The Commission engaged in a brief discussion of use of email, personal or otherwise, when conducting Town business.

Sub-Committee Updates

Commissioner Rosati spoke of discussions that took place at a recent meeting of the Wildcat Falls Sub-committee. A family has requested permission to install a memorial bench in Wildcat Falls. Commissioner Tenhave has provided the new plan design, which will be made part of the digital library. Commissioner Tenhave informed the Sub-committee of the need to provide the family with the form necessary to request an item be placed on a future agenda of the Commission.

It was noted the Sub-committee discussed erosion on the main access road (past the retaining pond where it splits off to the left leading straight towards the powerline trail). It will be drained at the low area; water bar will be placed on a trail that leads into that trail. When asked Vice Chairman Caron stated a water bar could be a piece of wood; anything that diverts water. In the large hole, riprap will be put in place, and used as a water bar. When asked who would do the work, he stated the Sub-committee hopes to obtain riprap from the Public Works Department (PWD). They would be pleased if the PWD were able to do the work, but would also be willing to do it themselves if provided with the material.

On the North Loop Trail, there is an area next to the river where there is a dip. The Sub-committee discussed installing a bridge. Vice Chairman Caron remarked it is only a dip and the only time people are having an issue with it is during the winter months. There is concern with people falling in the water. His recommendation was to install a snow fence around two trees that are approx. 6' apart, during the winter months. Were someone to fall in that area, it would provide something to hold on to.

Commissioner Rosati commented the Sub-committee addressed the question raised regarding placement of a picnic table; it will be placed across from the main detention pond. The PWD was made aware of the proposed location, and was acceptable to it. She questioned if the Sub-committee is required to fill out a request for an agenda item at a future meeting so that the matter can come before the Commission for approval. Commissioner Tenhave clarified it is an existing table that would be moved to an area that has very little vegetation. The Sub-committee wishes to put down base gravel type mix to help prevent vegetation from growing through it. He stated his belief that would not require a vote of the Commission. Chairman Perry agreed it would not as it is a maintenance item.

Vice Chairman Caron stated the Grater Woods Sub-committee would meet the following evening at 6:30 p.m. in the Merrimack Memorial Conference Room. There remains an open alternate position on the Sub-committee.

Chairman Perry spoke of having been contacted with a request for permission to cut the trail at Grater Woods, which he happily gave. Vice Chairman Caron stated appreciation noting the need for mowing in that area. He recently mowed several areas, e.g., Education Trail, Drilled Rock to Red Maple.

Commissioner Tenhave stated Peter Mikolajczuk, HHNP Sub-committee member, and Anita Creager, Heritage Commission, have been working on the wording for the Spaulding Foundation plaque. The draft language was provided to the Commission for feedback. It was noted the plaque would be large given the amount of text intended for it. Vice Chairman Caron questioned whether it would be a brass plaque, and was informed that is the thought. The concern expressed was regarding cost. Commissioner Tenhave stated Mr. Mikolajczuk is working on obtaining a quote.

The Commission was pleased with the proposed text; however, noted, if the cost is too great, it may be that the amount of text needs to be reduced.

STATUTORY/ADVISORY BUSINESS - None

OLD BUSINESS

1. HHNP Summit Trail

Chairman Perry noted the Commission engaged in a lengthy discussion of this at its June 5th meeting. The item was placed on the agenda for further discussion as it is believed there may remain differing opinions as to how the multi-use function will be addressed.

He stated the trail that was approved at the June 5th meeting cannot be a multi-use trail with the same scope as the original trail. It could be difficult for horses to traverse the area, and he does not believe there will be sufficient space for a snowmobile to maneuver around corners. When asked to identify the specific section, Chairman Perry stated the entirety of the trail from the bottom to the summit; there will be sections where, to compensate for the rise of the property, there will be relatively sharp turns, which he does not believe will support snowmobile use.

Vice Chairman Caron remarked the areas that the turns will be in will be flat enough so that a cross country skier could climb and descend without too much difficulty, but a snowmobile just would not be able to make the turns.

Chairman Perry stated the Commission had discussed that the Sub-committee will have to be responsible for finding an alternate path to accommodate users such as a snowmobile. Vice Chairman Caron commented he believes it will be a multi-use trail except for that one motorized winter use, and remarked we're talking 3 months of something that hasn't been in the HHNP for years. Chairman Perry stated agreement; however, noted it is in the Plan. If deviating from the Plan, there needs to be an alternate location to get the same use to that same point.

Vice Chairman Caron remarked, if looking to get users to that point on a snowmobile, users could take Rocky Trail to get to the powerlines, go up from there, and come in from Post 6 to Post 15. If the destination is the Summit, users can still get there on a snowmobile.

Chairman Perry stated his only concern had been that it be designated which trails could get snowmobiles to the desired area. When asked, he stated his belief the area will be safe for horses to travel; will have to trim it tall.

Commissioner Tenhave remarked his hesitation at the last meeting was to just ensure that what was being constructed was not a single-track trail. It needs to be wide enough to accommodate users passing each other, and get as many uses out of it as possible. As we begin laying it out, where it is possible to go an additional 20' in either direction while still addressing the same concerns regarding erosion, etc., the desire would be to allow for that increased size to accomplish a curve that will be a little broader. Chairman Perry stated agreement. Commissioner Tenhave commented when he walked the lower section (slightly west of the current rail), he noted points where it looked like it was going through two trees when it should probably be taken around the two trees to accommodate a slightly wider trail.

Chairman Perry questioned if the Commission agreed, based on the discussion, to move forward, and inform the Sub-committee it can begin making its plans.

Commissioner Tenhave remarked the plans also need to accommodate how the current trail will be closed, e.g., in the beginning we will likely have to put up discontinued trail signs and utilize foliage and other items to help obscure the trail.

Chairman Perry suggested part of the plan should also be to identify where the trail is for that section to the Summit for snowmobiles or other personal mobility devices.

The consensus was to inform the Sub-committee to move forward.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Sklar Waterfront Park – Disposition and plans for the property

Chairman Perry questioned the will of the Commission regarding first steps. Commissioner Boisvert suggested working with the Town to get the area clean of debris and to work towards putting a stop to current undesirable activity on the property. Commissioner Tenhave suggested the Commission request the Town Council appoint a Sklar Waterfront Park Advisory Committee, bring in the public, combine the Town lot with this one, and, understanding the Deed restrictions, have townspeople get together to help design what the vision will be for this property. He would like to see the current users of the property encouraged to be involved and have a say in the future of the property.

Commissioner Tenhave stated his opinion, if a committee is formed, it should consist of at least one member of the Commission to represent the interests of the Commission as the owner of the parcel.

Vice Chairman Caron commented he likes the name Sklar Waterfront Park, and questioned where that originated. Chairman Perry noted the previous owner, as part of the sale, requested naming rights. Chairman Perry spoke of having learned a great deal about the history of the property through discussions with the previous owner. It was suggested that the Commission look to capture that information in a more formal manner.

Chairman Perry commented there was some discussion of bringing the Parks and Recreation Department into the process.

Commissioner Tenhave noted the Town has been in discussion with the Merrimack River Local Advisory Committee and New Hampshire Fish & Game regarding the installation of a boat launch near Mast Road.

The Commission engaged in a discussion around the potential uses of the parcel; particularly given its water access, e.g., could reach out to the citizen who contacted the Commission previously regarding the potential of boat/kayak rentals along the water.

When asked, Commissioner Tenhave suggested the committee be created as a Master Plan committee so that a design could be created. Following that would be the implementation. Vice Chairman Caron noted the property could be added to the website.

It was suggested the Commission could reach out to Matt Casparius, Director, Parks and Recreation Department, to see if he would like to facilitate the process. There is also the opportunity to bring in the Nashua Regional Planning Commission (NRPC) to facilitate the process, which would involve a fee.

The Commission agreed the process of developing the property, addressing the existing issues, etc. should be a function of the Town. Vice Chairman Caron commented the clean-up alone of the boat launch area (Town side) is a large undertaking. Commissioner Tenhave commented, it was the membership of the Master Plan Committee of the HHNP that organized clean-ups of that property.

Commissioner Boisvert volunteered to reach out to Director Casparius and Timothy Thompson, Director, Community Development Division to discuss the property.

2. Fields Farm Subcommittee creation

Chairman Perry remarked this is a parcel the Commission has looked at and discussed with Kyle Fox, Director, PWD. There is the need for the creation of a Sub-committee to start the work on this property. Commissioner Tenhave volunteered to start the Sub-committee early next year.

Chairman Perry asked Commissioners to spread the word to abutters and others who may be interested in serving on this sub-committee.

Commissioner Tenhave volunteered to put a draft Charge together that mimics what has been done for other properties, in a timeframe that would allow for acceptance by the Commission by year end. From there the Commission could begin soliciting for members with the hope of assembling the sub-committee in the late winter/early spring.

OTHER BUSINESS

- **Town Paving**

Chairman Perry noted there is a good deal of paving occurring in Town. The PWD has already re-ground the parking lot at Bishop Field.

Director Fox has indicated that he will look to provide a week's notice of the intent to utilize any of the parking areas as laydown areas for the ongoing paving projects.

Commissioner Tenhave questioned if the HHNP parking lot received some of the re-ground material. Vice Chairman Caron stated his belief that has occurred. Commissioner Glenn questioned the timing of the paving

noting the wedding planned in the HHNP in September. Commissioner Tenhave suggested the Commission reach out to Director Fox to make him aware of the need for the parking lot on that day.

Maps

When asked, Chairman Perry stated there had been some minor changes to the map for Grater Woods. The NRPC is working on those changes. He will be speaking with them in the next few days. Commissioner Glenn noted the supply of maps at the HHNP has been depleted. Commissioner Tenhave stated there is the need for maps at Wildcat Falls as well.

Commissioner Rosati spoke of the draft press release she has prepared, and stated she would provide the Commission with a copy. The item will be placed on the next agenda for review.

Vice Chairman Caron questioned whether the Commission had the information needed to move forward with the ordering of appropriately sized laminated maps for each of the kiosks.

MOTION BY VICE CHAIRMAN CARON THAT THE COMMISSION ORDER THE LAMINATED KIOSK SIZED MAPS FOR EACH OF THE EXISTING KIOSKS; WILDCAT FALLS, GRATER WOODS, WASSERMAN PARK, AND THE HORSE HILL NATURE PRESERVE, AND AN ADDITIONAL MAP IN AMHERST AT A COST NOT TO EXCEED FIVE HUNDRED DOLLARS (\$500.00)
MOTION SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER TENHAVE
MOTION CARRIED
6-0-0

When asked, Chairman Perry stated he would first look to Papergraphics to see if they can do the work.

Vice Chairman Caron commented on having recently attended a meeting of the Parks and Recreation Committee during which they approved the Commission placing the kiosk in the resident parking lot at Wasserman Park. He will reach out to the contractor that did the kiosks for Grater Woods to see if they can do the work within the approved funding amount.

PRESENTATION OF THE MINUTES

Merrimack Conservation Commission. August 7, 2017

The following amendments were offered:

Page 1, Line 14; delete "Alternate Member"
Page 2, Line 25; replace "and" with "an" before "abutter"
Page 6, Line 4; insert "stated" before "his intent"
Page 9, Line 28; replace "4A" with "foray"

MOTION BY VICE CHAIRMAN CARON TO ACCEPT AS AMENDED
MOTION SECONDED BY CHAIRMAN PERRY
MOTION CARRIED
6-0-0

PUBLIC COMMENT - None

NON-PUBLIC SESSION

MOTION BY COMMISSIONER TENHAVE THAT THE COMMISSION ENTER NON-PUBLIC SESSION PURSUANT TO RSA 91-A:3, II(d) CONSIDERATION OF THE ACQUISITION, SALE OR LEASE OF REAL OR PERSONAL PROPERTY WHICH, IF DISCUSSED IN PUBLIC, WOULD LIKELY BENEFIT A PARTY OR PARTIES WHOSE INTERESTS ARE ADVERSE TO THOSE OF THE GENERAL COMMUNITY
MOTION SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER GLENN

A Viva Voce Roll Call was conducted, which resulted as follows:

Yea: Gina Rosati, Michael Boisvert, Cynthia Glenn, Matt Caron, Tim Tenhave, Gage Perry

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Nay:

MOTION CARRIED

The Commission entered non-public session at 7:49 p.m.

The Commission came out of non-public session at 9:00 p.m.

**MOTION BY COMMISSIONER TENHAVE THAT THE COMMISSION, BY ROLL CALL, SEAL THE MINUTES OF THE NON-PUBLIC SESSION UNTIL SUCH TIME AS THE MAJORITY OF THE COMMISSION VOTES THAT THE PURPOSE OF THE CONFIDENTIALITY WOULD NO LONGER BE SERVED
MOTION SECONDED BY VICE CHAIRMAN CARON**

A Viva Voce Roll Call was conducted, which resulted as follows:

Yea: Matt Caron, Michael Boisvert, Cynthia Glenn, Tim Tenhave, Gina Rosati, Gage Perry

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Nay:

MOTION CARRIED

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS - None

ADJOURNMENT

**MOTION BY VICE CHAIRMAN CARON TO ADJOURN
MOTION SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER BOISVERT
MOTION CARRIED
6-0-0**

The August 21, 2017 meeting of the Merrimack Conservation Commission was adjourned at 9:03 p.m.

Submitted by Dawn MacMillan