



City of Nashua
Conservation Commission
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NASHUA CONSERVATION COMMISSION

January 2, 2024

A. Call to order

A regular meeting of the Nashua Conservation Commission was called to order on Tuesday, January 2, 2024 at 7:00 PM, 229 Main Street, City Hall in Room 208.

B. Roll call

Members present: Sherry Dutzy, Chair
Dick Widhu, Vice Chair
Megan Cook, Treasurer
Jed Crook, Clerk
Brandon Pierotti
Carol Sarno
Gloria McCarthy, Alt.

Also in Attendance: Deb Chisholm, Sustainability Dept. Mgr.

C. Approval of minutes

December 5, 2023

MOTION by Commissioner Sarno to approve the minutes, as amended

SECONDED by Commissioner Jed Crook

MOTION CARRIED 7-0

D. Old Business:

None

E. New Business:

None

F. NCC Correspondence & Communications

Julie Moran - 16 Dumaine- Northwest Conservation Land and wants to provide any assistance to create blazed trails. The Land and Trail Management Committee will reach to her.

G. Commissioners Discussion

- 1. Northwest Conservation Land:** Commissioner Crook led a discussion regarding Northwest Conservation Land. The Commission agreed to do discuss. Commissioner Crook mentioned that there could potentially make trail from Westwood Park to the airport Perimeter Road that could possibly link the section to the Northwest properties.

Commissioner Sarno had bigger concerns that they are a pristine environment and has great wildlife. Trails can have an impact on the wildlife, try to consider the wildlife before adding trails. Just a little leery about adding trails knowing the impact it could take on wildlife. Commissioner Crook also understands is also concerned about the wildlife.

Commissioner Dutzy mentioned that a trail could impact wildlife between 100-400ft in each direction of the trail depending on the species.

Commissioner McCarthy asked since we have a good relationship with mountain bikers, is there a chance we can get them to diminish some of the trails so that they can regrow and get back some of that back. Maybe about 10%. It could give wildlife a little more of space back.

Commissioner Dutzy suggests a path along the stream could work out better and make more interesting. By adding trails in the wetland can cause it to create a problem.

Worried about encampment but if it's being monitored there could be a chance of no one being able to create encampment.

Commissioner Dutzy thinking of taking a field trip to the area in the Northwest Quadrant and Buckmeadow to see what can be done. (commissioners conversations ensued)

- 2. Pond Leveler:** Commissioner Dutzy contacted Chuck Crowe who is the owner of Best Way Wildlife Control. Asked for 3 references of people who have used his pond levelers. Contacted them and asked if they have ever had maintenance problems with their pond levelers. Two of the three people

contacted Commissioner Dutzy back- Both of them were from Conservations Commissions. One was from Windham and couldn't remember the second one. They both gave good reviews, Windham has several of them and only one has maintenance issues but Chuck went out to fix them. The other conservation commission said that you can get a contract for maintenance with them. Commissioner Dutzy does not want to pass on this, because she wants to know if this was the issue for flooding. Pick another location like Buckmeadow to add another one and the NCC can overlook at the project and work with Chuck and his crew. Possibly do a year of contract for maintenance to see if it works. After a year we can visit back to see if it's worth it before giving up on it for good.

Maybe set something up for someone to go about once a month to check it to see if it's still working or needs maintenance.

Buckmeadow would be a good place. We do have drone footage and you can see there is 1 beaver dam upstream and 1 down steam causing flooding in the path. That's on the google drive.

Going to call Chuck to see if a group of NCC commissioners can go out to see where it could be added.

Deb Chisholm mentioned that Chuck would have to go out to check out the area first to see if it's adequate or not.

Will be sending google drive link to Commissioner Dutzy from the drone images and video so that Chuck can take a look at it.

3. **Ego Chainsaw:** Commissioner Dutzy said that they agreed to buy an ego chainsaw, it's 14in, not going to buy an additional battery due to cost.

Deb does not know how to do purchasing with Ace Hardware but we will contact park and rec to see how they do it. Commissioner Dutzy can purchase the ego chainsaw and be reimbursed but maybe hold off since there is not a lot of funds available for it yet.

Talked about budget.

4. **Trail Support:** Commissioner Cook was wondering the status of when previously discussed about getting support on trails

and trail signage. Thought that they would go to NRPC to get support for a proposal. Did you decide to do that?

Potentially walking trails to have interpreted signs.

Commissioner Sarno indicated we just updated the signs on the kiosks. The dimensions were right and was able to be put up. They are lacking in detail, there are a lot of trails that exist that are on the map.

Issue is that when looking at maps, they don't seem to match what is on the ground. Accuracy on GPS that is being used is really hard to get accurate mapping. We could be at a point where we can work with NRPC to get things to look more similar.

Best source for trail mapping is an app called NEMBA (New England Mountain Bikers Association) which is an open source GIS software. Numerous conversations with Danny who is our point of contact for New England Mountain Bike Association (NEMBA)- Danny also mentioned that app Trail Forks is one of the best as well.

Are there other trails that don't reflect on the map?

Commissioner Sarno doesn't believe there is. It's mostly the mountain bike trails that are not captured in the layers.

Wonder if there is something we can add to map like a squiggle showing that those are the biking trails.

This year we should really mark the trails. Probably make the markers ourselves. (conversations ensued about creating markers on trails)

5. **Website:** Commissioner Dutzy indicated we really need to do something about our website. We have tried internally and everything else and I just think we need to hire someone.

Commissioner Cook said I agree with you and I can provide a non update, update. The only contact I have for Josh is his company email that he doesn't check periodically. We are not succeeding in getting in touch, and it's not that I don't think he doesn't want to be helpful but just that we don't have good means of contacting him

I wonder if we could maybe find 2-3 webmasters to look at the site. They might be able to tell by looking at it and possibly get a quote for 30 hrs of work over a period of time.

We do need a regular maintenance. It requires lots of work and I think that's why it fell out of date.

Commissioner Dutzy said It's a lot of work. Does anyone know of any webmasters? We did get a quote years ago from a company that did Merrimack. I thought the price was modest.

Commissioner Dutzy said it was easy as long as someone like Josh creates the shell on the site and then the maintenance can just be added. We just need the support. We could hire someone for a maintenance contract and they can work with you to make it work.

Commissioner Dutzy said we really need a marketing fund. When you talk to Janet this weekend maybe you can ask her. We can take funds from here for the site. Maybe like \$10,000 for marketing and education.

H. Subcommittee Reports

- **Monitoring Reports:** Commissioner Crook included Sullivan Farm & 635 which are both owned by the Society of the Protection of the NH Forest in our reports. I did the 635 one because I've done it for the past 2 years. We have never done Sullivan Farm because they have done it.
- **Sustainability: Deb Chisholm-** The objective of this whole plan is to really take some of the information in the City's new master plan and bring it to the forefront. We thought that it would be best to have a plan since the city has a Sustainability department now. This will help us determine what people think is important from a municipal stand point. This is looking internally like; the city could buy solar or the city could buy more electric vehicles. If you look at attachment from the packet that has a lot of information on the master plan, on the land use code that Sam Durfee the planning director is busy with and have a really good opportunity there to put information into that land use code from a sustainability point of view. We have a consultant on board that is helping us with the plan.

The city has participated in the NH Community Power Coalition- Their goal is to always be competitive and less expensive compared to Eversource. It is an opt-out program. The idea behind that was that everyone had that opportunity to save.

If you remember Justin Kates, the emergency management director a couple years ago had gone through a very extensive, very resilient Nashua program about climate hazards and how the city can be impacted by them and we want to build on those 3 things to become even sustainable and resilient.

The things that we are looking at are right here: clean energy, efficient buildings, resilience and healthy communities. Whether we are talking about storm water, air quality, community gardens, smart waste- how to maintain the longevity of our landfill. Trying to get additional funding, sustainable transportation and land use, that goes back to Sam Durfee and his land use codes. Trying to provide additional support for Nashua Transit for public transportation to get the word out.

The city is in the process of getting electric vehicles for their passenger fleet.

Thriving natural resources. Goals, Strategies, and Actions. It will not just be sustainability department fulfilling these actions. Every department will play a role but DPW will play a major role. We don't want this to be a 20 year plan, we want it more to be like a 5 year plan. The plan will have whom will be responsible for attaining some sort of action for completing the activity.

Commissioner Widhu asked will the city invite us to give specific suggestions when you get to the nitty gritty details or who will be doing that?

Well if you have nitty gritty details now I want to hear about it, send me an email and tell me what you don't like or like. I would love any kind of feedback on that.

Commissioner Dutzy mentioned when I was talking about our website, I feel like the website should be the place where you go for the education from the tree canopy, sustainable landscaping practices, and that's why I don't think we are

taking advantage of it like we should.
The strategies that we are talking about for thriving natural resources, we're talking about prioritizing conservation of open space. As we started pulling this together, they have a copy of the natural resources inventory, they have copies of all the stewardship plans, so the information you see here come from other documents.

I'm happy to take input, opinions, love it, hate it, never going to happen, best plan ever seen.

Commissioner Crook asked, green storm water infrastructure, what is that?

Something as simple as a rain guard. Love to see more of those, or something like trying to manage sewer overload- we have done a little bit of that.

Okay

What is Nashua's best-case scenario on combining sewage overflow.

Deb Chisholm responded that best-case scenario is getting millions of dollars and get new pipes separate from stormwater.

(commissioners' conversation ensued)

Commissioner Crook added another thing that I thought of- sorry to interrupt. Was that we talked about notifying abutters for conservation land or wetland buffers, it seems like notifying property owners or signage of easement can fit under prioritize conservation of open space or encourage sustainable landscaping practices. We have talked about this as a Commission quite a bit and it would be nice to see it fit into the city's plan.

Deb Chisholm agreed and thinks that one of the things the city can do better in is education across every department in the city. Educating folks is top priority.

(conversation ensued)

Commissioner Cook added I feel like it overlaps, some things are mentioned multiple times in some sections but I

think for managing water, trying to help people understand what to do on their property can make a difference. Trying to minimize tree loss is also important as well as planting trees.

Commissioner McCarthy indicated I scanned through this quickly and I don't see anything in here about lighting, and I know we have talked about this downward facing lighting. I know city was looking at dark skies but I don't know where that has gone. I just saw pictures on line and I saw a newer building with light pointing up to the sky and it's just glaring over everything. I feel like we have to have emphasis on overhead lighting.

Commissioner Dutzy indicated I think people need education on lighting, the bigger the watts is bad on the habitat. Also, we have to educate people on pesticides.

What we are trying to do is convert the landfill gas into energy to power the new building.

Is that still natural gas?

Well we are burning the methane and generating electricity- there is a facility that handles it. That is the idea on turning the DPW area into a micro grid.

Commissioner Crook indicated one last thing along those lines, possibly partnering with the state to address invasives on city owned properties.

(conversation ensued)

Commissioner Dutzy said maybe around Earth Day we can have the Conservation Committee sponsor a seminar on topic being: what are the most common invasives, what to plant and have valuable things to plant. Would be great to educate people. Possibly do zoom as well.

Commissioner Cook added one last comment on this- the idea of agroforestry or along those lines. The guy from regenerative roots had mentioned that he wanted more fruit trees around the city.

Commissioner Dutzy added he wants us to partner with him on Navaho park- Regenerative Roots is responsible of

redoing it and he approached the commissions. Its Andrew Morin. I could have him come during the next agenda to speak to him.

Deb Chisholm clarified that he reached out to the city, the city did not reach out to him. I'm not sure on the status on that.

Commissioner Dutzy said what we really need is a processing plant for fruits and vegetables that can freeze them and in the winter that's when you can go get your frozen vegetables. That way it can keep the season going.

If there is nothing else to discuss we can adjourn the meeting.

I. Public Comment Related to Items on the Agenda

None

J. Adjournment

MOTION to adjourn by Commissioner Cook at 8:51 PM

SECONDED by Commissioner Crook

MOTION CARRIED 7-0

KO - Taped Hearing