



**City of Nashua**  
**Conservation Commission**  
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**EXPANDED DRAFT MEETING SUMMARY**

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**NASHUA CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

**Tuesday, February 2, 2021**

**A. Call to order**

A regular meeting of the Nashua Conservation Commission was called to order on Tuesday, February 2, 2021 at 7:00 PM, via Zoom virtual meeting.

**B. Roll call**

Members present:

- Sherry Dutzy, Chair
- Gene Porter, Vice Chair
- Richard Gillespie, Clerk
- Brandon Pierotti, Treasurer
- Joel Ackerman
- Gloria McCarthy, Alt. (*Left early*)
- Josh Hauser, Alt.
- Carol Sarno, Alt.
- Maya Friday, student member

Also in Attendance:

- Matt Sullivan, Planning Manager
- Chris Webber, Department Coordinator
- Deb Chisholm, Waterways Manager
- Ald. Ernest Jette, Alderman Liaison
- Andrew Smeltz, NRPC

**COVID-19 Address**

Chairman Dutzy addressed the COVID-19 pandemic as follows: Due to the State of Emergency declared by Governor Sununu as a result of COVID-19 pandemic and in accordance with the Governor's Emergency Order #12, pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, this public body is authorized to meet electronically until further notice.

Please note that there is no physical location to observe and listen contemporaneously to the meeting, which was authorized to meet electronically pursuant to the Governor's order. However, in accordance with the Emergency Order, this is to confirm that we are:

## **1. Access**

The Commission is video conferencing utilizing Zoom for this electronic meeting. All members of the Conservation Commission have the ability to communicate contemporaneously during this meeting through this platform. Public access to this meeting is also provided via Zoom. The link to this meeting is contained in the meeting agenda, available on the city website.

## **2. Public Notice**

The Commission previously gave public notice to the meeting and the necessary information for accessing the meeting through public postings, and where applicable notice to abutters. Instructions have also been posted to the city website, and publicly noticed at City Hall.

## **3. Public Alert**

The Commission is providing a mechanism for the public to alert the Commission during the meeting if there are problems with access. If anybody has a problem accessing the meeting via phone, please call (603)-589-3115, and they will help you connect.

## **4. Adjourning the Meeting**

In the event that the public is unable to access the meeting via the methods above, the meeting will be adjourned and rescheduled.

## **5. Procedures**

The Chair is in control of the meeting, and to the extent practicable and advisable the Commission will follow the procedures identified in the Bylaws. The applicant will present the applicant's case, followed by questions by the Commission. The Chair will then allow testimony from persons wishing to speak in favor, or with questions or opposition, before the Commission deliberates and determines an outcome.

Applicants and their representatives, and individuals required to appear before the Commission are appearing remotely, and are not required to be physically present. These individuals may contact the Planning Department to arrange an alternative means of real time participation if they are unable to use Zoom. Documentary exhibits and/or visual presentations must be submitted in advance

of the meeting so that they may be displayed for remote public access viewing.

Real-time public comment can be addressed to the Commission utilizing Zoom virtual meeting software for remote access. Real-time public comments via audio will be addressed at the conclusion of the public hearing. This application will allow users to view the meeting, and submit questions or comments to the Commission utilizing the Zoom software.

The public is also encouraged to submit their comments via email to the Department email at [planningdepartment@nashuanh.gov](mailto:planningdepartment@nashuanh.gov) or by mail. Please be sure to include your name, address, and comments. Letters should be addressed to Planning Department, P.O. Box 2019, Nashua, NH 03061.

Please note that all votes taken during this meeting will be done by roll call. Conservation Commission meetings will be held electronically until further notice, when it is deemed safe to conduct meetings at City Hall.

The Planning Department and Conservation Commission thank you for your understanding and patience during this difficult time.

**C. Approval of minutes**

January 5, 2021

**MOTION** by Commissioner Gillespie to approve the minutes of January 5, 2021, as amended

**SECONDED** by Commissioner McCarthy

**MOTION CARRIED 6-0**

**D. Treasurer's Report**

None

**E. New Business**

➤ ***Election of Officers***

Mr. Sullivan read out the nomination of officers:

**Chairman:** Sherry Dutzy

**Vice Chairman:** Gene Porter  
**Clerk:** Richard Gillespie  
**Treasurer:** Brandon Pierotti

**MOTION** by Commissioner Gillespie to elect the officers as nominated

**SECONDED** by Commissioner Hauser

**MOTION CARRIED 6-0**

➤ ***Discussion of NRPC Round 1 Projects***

Mr. Sullivan provided an update on the developing contract and the work items to be included in that scope of service. He gave a detailed description of the three items they would like to start working on:

○ **Wetland Buffer Mapping of Prime & Critical Wetlands**

Commissioner Porter asked if the long range intent was to create a database that is the same as the Nashua GIS database.

Mr. Smeltz said it is possible, but when wetlands are delineated in the field it is typically done in-field by engineers. The kind of mapping he will do is more general.

Commissioner Sarno said it would be good to have a general idea of where the wetland is, especially in tablet form.

Mr. Sullivan said they will have to work with the NRPC on this. They don't want property owners to think this will tell them exactly where the wetland is.

Chairman Dutzy said if there was any project they wanted to do, they would create a Memorandum of Understanding with NRPC, so they know exactly what the deliverables are for that project.

Mr. Sullivan said it's good to have this structure in place. These three items will be individual task orders.

○ **Inventory of Conservation, Conservation Easement, and other Open Space Parcels**

Commissioner Porter said there was a natural resource inventory published in 2006. If they want to update that list, he thinks it would be wonderful.

Mr. Sullivan said he is aware of the NRI and is not proposing to update that as a whole. He is proposing an update of the open space parcel list.

Ald. Jette asked if this list would include parcels that the city owns. In Ward 5, he has found that there are a lot of parcels owned by the City of Nashua, and it's difficult to find out why. Would that be included?

Mr. Sullivan said it's something they should look at. Initially he had not contemplated that because he wanted to keep the scope narrowed to the Commission's existing responsibilities. He thinks they could incorporate an effort like that to include parcels that may be future conservation action priority areas.

Ald. Jette said that potential would give the Commission an opportunity to find out what is available.

Mr. Sullivan said it would be wise to find out why parcels were acquired, what their use is, and whether they should be protected by the Commission.

Commissioner Gillespie said in 2010 the Nashua River Watershed Association was hired to monitor all the easements on file, and came up with a list of 82 easements.

Mr. Sullivan said that would be a great resource.

Commissioner McCarthy said she thinks it is a good time to do this, especially with the Master Plan update.

Commissioner Ackerman asked how long it would take to do the study, and where the data would reside once complete.

Mr. Sullivan said it would be done by the end of the year. It's a high priority for him. He thinks long term they should have it in a mapping dataset so people can look at parcels interactively. It would be nice to make this available to the public and more interactive than a pdf document.

- **Standardized Map Set for Properties with Recreational Assets**

Commissioner Porter asked if the parcels of land already under Commission jurisdiction will be on the initial draft of items.

Mr. Sullivan said he has a staff member internally working to address that concern. He thinks they may need technical assistance, as it has become more complicated the more they review the ordinance. He would be happy to ask the NRPC if they have the budget to look at the zoning district and how they believe it should be delineated on the map.

Commissioner Porter said he thinks the Commission should have jurisdiction of the land along Pennichuck Brook and the Ponds for planning future activities.

Mr. Sullivan said they can look into it. He asked if they are free to negotiate with the NRPC over the cost and scope of these three items.

Chairman Dutzy said they can assume that is the priority list until they hear differently.

➤ ***Riverfront Lighting Project***

Waterways Manager Deb Chisholm said they had a meeting this week with the contractor who will be installing lighting along the Cotton transfer bridge up to the Greeley House. They will probably get started in April.

Ms. Chisholm presented some concept sketches showing the proposed lighting. She described the proposal at length.

Mr. Sullivan said this is in the Shoreland exemption zone, and they don't expect a Shoreland permit will be required for any of the trenching.

Commissioner Sarno asked if this lighting will be downward facing lighting.

Ms. Chisholm said it is upward facing on the bridge, and downward everywhere else.

Mr. Sullivan said the lights on the bridge will be LEDs, more or less making the supports illuminate without directing light into the sky.

Commissioner Sarno said the upward pointing lights can be very bad for migrating birds. If the light is only going to extend the length of the structure and not go into the sky, it won't be an issue.

Mr. Sullivan said there will be some ambient light escape from the bridge, but they could provide more information.

Commissioner Sarno said it might be worthwhile to talk to the Audobon Society to see if there would be an issue.

Ms. Chisholm said she can do a little research and get back to Mr. Sullivan on the specifics.

**F. Old Business**

None

**G. NCC Correspondence and Communications**

None

**H. Nonpublic Session per RSA 91-A: 3 II (d) concerning land (Roll call vote required).**

Nonpublic session was not required.

**I. Commissioners Discussion**

➤ ***Tree-Plenish:***

Student member Commissioner Friday said she is co-hosting a region-wide tree planting event throughout southern New Hampshire. Their goal is to plant 275 trees to offset the amount of paper used by Nashua South School, which amounts to 2.8 million sheets of paper. Currently their request has come from private Nashua citizens to have trees planted in their backyards. They have already reached over 220 trees planted.

Commissioner Friday hopes the Commission will be able to help them. One of the issues they ran into was that there were a lot of people wanted to donate, but they didn't have any space for new trees in their backyard. There is space on Commission lands, and it will help increase the biodiversity of conserved lands. They have three types of trees: Silver Maple, Red Maple, and River Birch. They have had offers of donations, so

it would be easier for the Commission to do this so they don't have to pull out government funds.

Chairman Dutzy said she asked Commissioner Sarno if she would be able to locate areas where they could plant trees. A lot of conserved land doesn't have a lack of trees.

Commissioner Sarno said a lot of conservation land is heavily forested, and areas that are currently meadows need to be maintained to keep them. There is an area of Terrell recently brush hogged and infested with orange bittersweet. They could remove the invasives and try to replant trees there.

Commissioner Friday said they are also looking for volunteers to plant the trees ordered. If anyone is interested in participating, they will have an event on April 17<sup>th</sup>.

Commissioner Sarno said she would like to volunteer.

Chairman Dutzy asked if they have contacted Parks and Recreation, as a number of parks in Nashua could use more trees.

Commissioner Porter said this initiative is exactly why they need an inventory of lands.

Commissioner Gillespie said Parks and Recreation has a tree program. They charge \$125 and deliver it to your house for you to plant.

Commissioner Friday said they are currently charging \$4.10.

Chairman Dutzy asked if they have worked with anyone in regards to the tree streets. There are a lot of streets around the Boys and Girls Club where they might be able to utilize a tree. Reforesting the downtown area would be a huge benefit for the city.

Commissioner McCarthy suggested she reach out to the Edgewood Cemetery to replant some of the buffer.

Chairman Dutzy said they would like to help, but the Commission doesn't have the areas identified.

Commissioner Friday thanked the Commission for providing alternative options.



Commissioner Pierotti gave some advice on reaching out to cemeteries.

➤ **Conservation Commission Action Items**

Mr. Sullivan volunteered to compile a list of pending projects from prior meeting agendas.

➤ **Subcommittee Reports:**

- o Easement Monitoring: None
- o Digital Marketing: Commissioner Hauser gave a presentation on what they would expect a Commission website to look like. A detailed discussion ensued. Mr. Sullivan said he needs to discuss this with Community Development Director Marchant to receive approval.

Commissioner Hauser led a discussion regarding a Conservation blog, and what the Commission would like to see on the website.

- o Land and Trail Management: Commissioner Sarno gave an update on beaver activity and their strategies to mitigate the damage.

Mr. Sullivan said authorization was given on December 1<sup>st</sup> for materials to mitigate tree damage.

Commissioner Sarno said the Buckmeadow kiosk has been vandalized.

Commissioner Ackerman says he typically uses Goof Off.

Commissioner Sarno led a brief discussion regarding trail closure signage.

Commissioner Porter said he attended a webinar on using controlled burns to maintain trails and open spaces. He said the Heritage Trail along the Merrimack River has been stymied for years by the railroad, but the Rails to Trails have a Trails with Trains webinar, which would be helpful in getting a trail along the railroad tracks.

Chairman Dutzy described a webinar she attended on the status of dams in New England.

Chairman Dutzy gave an update on the Joyce Park Wildlife Area. They just signed the contract for poison ivy mitigation, and they will have a zoom call with the Student Conservation Association. It looks like this will move forward in April or May.

**J. Adjournment**

**MOTION** to adjourn by Commissioner Porter at 8:38 PM

**SECONDED** by Commissioner Ackerman

**MOTION 5-0**

APPROVED:

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Richard Gillespie, Clerk, Nashua Conservation Commission

DIGITAL RECORDING OF THIS MEETING IS AVAILABLE FOR LISTENING DURING REGULAR OFFICE HOURS OR CAN BE ACCESSED ON THE CITY'S WEBSITE. DIGITAL COPY OF AUDIO OF THE MEETING MAY BE MADE AVAILABLE UPON 48 HOURS ADVANCED NOTICE AND PAYMENT OF THE FEE.

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Prepared by: Kate Poirier