



City of Nashua
Conservation Commission
229 Main Street
Nashua NH 03061-2019

Planning & Zoning 589-3090
Fax 589-3119
Web www.nashuanh.gov

EXPANDED MEETING SUMMARY

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NASHUA CONSERVATION COMMISSION

February 15, 2022

A. Call to order

A special meeting of the Nashua Conservation Commission was called to order on Tuesday, February 15, 2022 at 7:00PM in Room 208 in City Hall AND via Zoom virtual meeting.

B. Roll call

Members present: Sherry Dutzy, Chair
Brandon Pierotti
Gloria McCarthy
Josh Hauser
Carol Sarno
Jed Crook
Meghan Cook (Zoom)

Also in Attendance: Linda McGhee, Deputy Planning Manager
Dick Widu
Maureen Bourque

C. Approval of minutes

January 4, 2022

MOTION by Commissioner McCarthy to approve the minutes, as written

SECONDED by Commissioner Hauser

MOTION CARRIED 7-0

D. Old Business

None

E. New Business

None

F. Correspondence

None

E. Discussion Items

1. Conservation Commission Website

Chairman Dutzy said that Commissioner Hauser is providing an update on the website. He is also tendering his resignation from the Commission, as life has gotten busy.

Commissioner Hauser said the website is complete, and can be found at nashuanhcc.com. He gave the Commission a brief tour of the website amenities and services. He said he can handle the updates weekly. The Commission will handle the content.

Chairman Dutzy asked if it is live now.

Commissioner Hauser said yes. If they have questions, they can still call him.

Chairman Dutzy said he could be a volunteer consultant. She thinks they have a lot of content they could put on the website. They already have 200 followers on their facebook page. She thanked him for his hard work.

2. Officer Elections

Chairman Dutzy said they need to perform elections next month, for Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer, and Clerk. If anyone is interested in the positions, let her know.

3. Conservation Commission Brochure

Chairman Dutzy passed around a brochure to the Commissioners. She said the library was asking for a brochure they could hand out for the vernal pool presentation on April 28th.

4. Trail Signage

Chairman Dutzy said they should also be thinking about trail signage for Tirrell and Buckmeadow. There are many bike paths in the area, and it is easy to get lost. She thinks this would be doable in the summer.

Commissioner Sarno said the trails don't even all have names. Mapping would be an important step to determine what trails are there already. The trails are complex and there are interconnections. Color coding trails works well in Mine Falls because the trails are limited, it might not work well in Terrell. Wayfinding signs with a QR code would be helpful. This may be a significant project. The bike trails have very good signage, it's the Commission trails that are not marked.

[Unknown] said there is already a map online. Is it accurate?

Commissioner Sarno said it doesn't show all the trails. It is at the kiosk and has a QR code. It is lacking most of the biking trails.

Chairman Dutzy asked if it was from the Forest Society.

Commissioner Sarno said she doesn't know where it's from. It needs to be updated to show the mountain biking trails. They should look at the map and figure out the signage from there.

Commissioner Cook asked if there is a physical trail marking scheme. If it's a fairly complex system, are there blazes or markings?

Commissioner Sarno said no, the trails are totally unmarked. They were hiring the NRPC to make a map and trail marking plan, but that got bumped in favor of the natural resource inventory.

Chairman Dutzy asked the Commission if anyone had the expertise to develop a signage standard. They would have to come up with a system for naming the trails, identifying the trails, matching it up with a map, and a digital pinpoint. Or, who they can contact to get that started.

Commissioner Cook said there are classes on nature groupie that teach about trail maintenance. She wondered whether there would be any courses on setting up a network. The Audobon Society might also know.

Chairman Dutzy asked if this is something the Commission needs and wants to do.

Mr. Widu said as far as the blazes go, one must be visible wherever you go. They're been nailing plastic blazes into the

tree.

Chairman Dutzy said they might be a good source to start with to get this project done.

Mr. Widu said he can contact them.

Maureen Bourque said she will be visiting Canterbury soon, who is working on trails. She will speak to one of the stewards to see what resources they used. She shared her experience of trail names from Beaver Brook. She would be willing to contact Beaver Brook to see how they named their trails.

Commissioner Cook said she will look up a contact.

Chairman Dutzy said the Forest Society knows that property very well. It would be good to know how other places have done it, and they may have to hire somebody that has done this before.

Commissioner Crook asked if this would be in tandem with NEMBA. They have their own maps for these trails. Would the Commission be working with them?

Chairman Dutzy said the biking trails are also walking trails. They would be part of the mapping system. They might incorporate those trails.

Commissioner Sarno said the biking trails are well marked. They may want to use similar signage. They don't use blazes, but they use a similar system to Beaver Brook.

Commissioner Crook described the signage in Lovewell Pond. If someone has already done the work, maybe they don't have to remake the wheel.

Chairman Dutzy said they don't have a naming system for the trails.

Commissioner Sarno said the biking trails are well marked, it's the hiking trails that aren't. There is the NEMBA map and the NRPC map. Whatever they decide, they should use the same approach as in the park. Their trails go through Yudicky Park, so they would be working with the Parks Dept. to be consistent with the trail signage throughout the whole space.

Chairman Dutzy said they have been talking about this for years, and she thinks this is the year they should do it.

5. Turtle Trapping

Commissioner Cook said she has spoken with Jeremy Fontaine, and he has just received his permit for the turtle survey. She hopes to have a response from him soon on where he will be performing the study, and whether he has all of the materials necessary to perform the study. If he does two locations, he would need extra traps and supplies, and he would need to be able to be present at both locations. He may need volunteer support to check the traps.

Chairman Dutzy asked the Commission if he was willing to work in Joyce Park, if they would be willing to give money for supplies in an amount not to exceed \$700. They don't have a stewardship plan for Joyce Park, so they don't have a Joyce Park fund. If they agree that is something to support, she will talk to Matt to see if they can get this to work, contingent on getting the Board of Aldermen on board.

Ms. McGhee said they will need a motion.

MOTION by Chairman Dutzy to approve turtle study at Joyce Park Wildlife Sanctuary, with funding not to exceed \$700.00, contingent upon the Commission owning capital equipment after.

SECONDED by Commissioner Crook

Commissioner Sarno said it's a great idea. She asked who would retain ownership of the traps they would be purchasing. Who owns the traps?

Commissioner Cook asked if they have a place to store traps like that.

Ms. McGhee asked how large they are, and how many. They may be able to store them in the basement or Ms. Chisholm's office.

Commissioner Cook said it may not do the Commission any good to own them. You have to be permitted to use them. It may be best for them to go to Mr. Fontaine.

Mr. Widu said they could sell them to the Audobon Society or someone else who may use them.

Chairman Dutzy asked Commissioner Cook to discuss that with Mr. Fontaine. There's the labor and the equipment. He's doing this as a volunteer.

[Unknown] asked if Mr. Fontaine is willing to train volunteers to assist, so that a member of the community or Commission could get permitted.

Commissioner Cook said you need to have years of experience working with turtles. It would take time to build up the necessary experience. He is willing to train people to work under him with the necessary supervision, but they wouldn't be able to get permitted themselves.

Ms. Bourque said that Rivier has a biological program. They might be a resource for training.

Commissioner Cook said Mr. Fontaine presented to them a few months ago, so they are aware. Some of the students expressed interest in getting involved.

Chairman Dutzy said there may also be interest in the high schools.

MOTION CARRIED 7-0

6. Fish Hatchery

Chairman Dutzy said that with Commissioners Sarno and Cook, they met with Katie Marony from the Nashua Fish Hatchery.

Commissioner Sarno said there is a lot of open space at the hatchery, and they are planning to turn it into pollinator habitat. As a prerequisite for grant funding they need to collaborate. The Commission provided them with some recommendations and potential contacts like Beaver Brook. Right now they are in the planning stage for submitting the application, and the Commission may at some point visit.

Chairman Dutzy said there is something like 37 acres. The first thing Ms. Marony needs to submit a letter of intent, then apply for the grant of between \$50-100,000.00. She also wants to create an outdoor classroom and do educational work.

7. Land Water Conservation Fund

Chairman Dutzy said she followed up with someone who works for the Parks and Recreation Division. They have funding available, which is contingent on any open space having a recreational component to it. She asked Ms. McGhee for the digital easements for all of Joyce Park, to send it to them. They have very strict requirements for ownership and easements have to be in perpetuity. The Commission may be able to get funding to rebuild trails, help with erosion, and improve safety along the walkway. The Commission needs to think about next steps for Joyce Park now that the steps are built. The funding is reimbursable; the Commission pays for it, submits the receipt, and the Fund will reimburse 50-100% of the cost.

8. Upcoming Events

Chairman Dutzy said that the Nashua Library will be holding a Zoom event about vernal pools on April 28th. There will be a follow-up walk, weather permitting, to the vernal pool at Terrell Conservation Area on April 30th. In preparation for that, the Commission sent him information on the four pools. If any of the Commissioners want to tag along when he visits, they are welcome to. You need to inspect vernal pools multiple times to confirm whether they have all the indicators, so there may be even more.

A brief discussion of vernal pools ensued in Buckmeadow and Terrell ensued.

Commissioner Sarno said Science Café is holding a virtual session on pollinators February 16th.

9. Wetland Function Assessment

Commissioner Cook said she will be performing a wetland function assessment for her master's degree, and over the next couple of weeks, she will be hoping to finalize the focus areas.

10. Wetland Function Assessment

Ms. Bourque provided an update on her pending confirmation as a commissioner.

11. Natural Resource Inventory Update

Chairman Dutzy said that she, Commissioner Sarno, and Mr. Sullivan met with NRPC to discuss gaps in the map in terms of city owned land, conservation, and easements. There is a ton of work to be done. There's a plan in place for Mr. Sullivan to give information to NRPC in order to update that map. The ultimate goal is to have as complete picture of possible for city owned land and what land the Commission wants to conserve. They are hoping to finish this by the end of June.

J. Adjournment

MOTION to adjourn by Commissioner Pierotti at 7:59PM

SECONDED by Commissioner Crook

MOTION CARRIED

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Prepared by: Kate Poirier