

MINUTES TO CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEETING – SOMERSWORTH, NH

November 9, 2011 Council Chambers – City Hall

7:00 PM

Attending: Frank Richardson, Al Bryant, Scott Gessis, Imants Millers, Liz Wilson, Dale Smith-Kenyon, City Planner Dave Sharples

1. Minutes of previous meeting. Scott Gessis noted that the word “contentment” should be “contempt” in Section 2, and that his name was misspelled in Section 4. Frank Richardson said that Geoff Aleva’s name was misspelled, and that the word “dwelling” should be changed to “building” in Section 3. Imants Millers made a motion to accept the minutes of the October 12, 2011 meeting as amended. Dale Smith-Kenyon seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
2. Old Business
  - A. Any old business that may come before the Commission. None.
3. New Business
  - A. Discussion on a letter from Attorney Robert Fisher dated October 20, 2011. Robert Fisher was present at the meeting to discuss the letter he drafted requesting that the Commission consider purchasing a conservation easement on a portion of his client’s land at the Sunningdale Golf Club. Mr. Fisher indicated that the City has 160 acres, 60 of which comprise the golf course. Because the owners of the golf club have failed to pay property taxes, the City has issued a tax deed to itself, and Mr. Fisher was expressing his client’s interest in selling the Commission a conservation easement rather than handing the 60 acres over to the town. Frank Richardson asked Mr. Fisher to describe the conservation value of the proposed parcel, and Mr. Fisher stated that the proposed parcel contains a beaver pond and a brook. Additionally, the parcel is contiguous with Millennium Park. Frank Richardson indicated that the Commission would need to see the proposed parcel to get a sense of what his client was offering as well as the opinion of an environmental scientist. Given the complications of the tax deed, Frank Richardson also informed Mr. Fisher is not able to act on this proposal.
  - B. Mast Point Dam Reuse Discussion. Bob Belmore informed Dave Sharples of his and the Recreation Committee’s support for the Commission’s proposal to develop a plan to redevelop the Mast Point Dam area. The Commission decided to hold a workshop to begin a redevelopment plan. Dave Sharples said he would produce a concept map for the Commission to work from. Liz Wilson suggested that when it comes to the implementation of the plan, perhaps there are local businesses/ organizations that can contribute time, materials, or skills to develop and promote the area. Dave Sharples suggested that the Commission keep the council and recreation committee up to date and present the concept plan to the city manager.
  - C. Update on the Somersworth Sustainability Committee. Liz Wilson summarized the discussions of the October meeting. The Committee is submitting a grant application for new, decorative recycling receptacles at City Hall and the High School. Additionally, funds are being requested for educational materials to promote waste reduction, recycling, and where our waste is disposed of. There is an apparent lack of recycling at the high school, and the Committee will be contacting the superintendent regarding school district recycling policies and accountability.

- D. Member items and reports. 1) Frank Richardson brought up the issue of a vacant seat on the Commission. He indicated that he would like to approach Emmett Soldati to see if he would like to join the Commission. The Commission expressed their support for Frank Richardson to speak to Emmett Soldati about joining the Commission. 2) Al Bryant recommended that the new Comprehensive Shoreline Protection Act changes be discussed at the next meeting and their potential impact on the Wetlands Ordinance.
- E. City Planner's report. In regards to the Labrie property, there is not a lot that the Commission can do about the illegal dredge and fill activity that has taken place. Dave Sharples indicated that the property owner is in violation of the current state rules, and the violation occurred prior to the adoption of the Wetlands Ordinance. The issue has been referred to the DES and the Attorney General's office. Dave Sharples suggested that the Commission re-look at the ordinance to determine if more local enforcement action is appropriate. The Commission agreed.
- F. Any other new business. Liz Wilson stated that there would be a Green Alliance Climate Change Conference in Portsmouth on November 17<sup>th</sup>. Dale Smith-Kenyon stated that the UNH Cooperative Extension would be sponsoring a conference on Forest Law for Municipal Leaders.
4. Workshop business. None.
5. Adjournment. Dale Smith-Kenyon moved to adjourn. Scott Gessis seconded the motion. The Commission unanimously voted to adjourn at 8:04 PM.

Respectfully submitted, Elizabeth Wilson (interim Secretary)