

MINUTES TO CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEETING – SOMERSWORTH, NH

March 9, 2011 Council Chambers – City Hall

7:00 PM

Attending: Imants Millers, Scott Gessis, Liz Wilson, Frank Richardson, Muriel Ring, City Planner
Dave Sharples

1. Minutes of previous meeting. Scott Gessis made a motion to accept the minutes of the February 9, 2011 meeting. Imants Millers seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
2. Old Business
 - A. Discussion regarding developing a town and landscape scale invasive plant control strategy for the Great Bay and Coastal watersheds. While some invasive plant species are known to occur within the City, no significant populations have been identified, with the exception of variable milfoil in Willand Pond. The milfoil issue will be discussed under new business. In the event that invasive species are identified by the Commission during easement monitoring, an invasive species plan and control measures could be developed.
 - B. Any old business that may come before the Commission. None.
3. New Business
 - A. Discussion on a letter from NHDES regarding invasive species in Willand Pond. During summer 2010, NHDES identified variable milfoil, an invasive aquatic plant species, in Willand Pond. NHDES is proposing to contract with a consulting firm to conduct targeted herbicide treatments in Willand Pond to reduce the milfoil density and distribution and will pay 100% of the herbicide treatment costs. NHDES also suggested three actions to be taken by the Friends of Willand Pond and the City of Dover: form a volunteer Weed Watcher program, start a Willand Pond Milfoil Committee to work with NHDES in addressing the milfoil issue, and work to secure funding for future milfoil control efforts. Imants Millers mentioned that the milfoil issue was discussed at the last Friends of Willand Pond/Ad-hoc committee meeting and that NHDES will attend the next Friends of Willand Pond meeting to present information about milfoil control. Dave Sharples suggested that the Commission write a letter to NHDES to offer assistance related to these actions and that a representative from the Commission could participate in the Willand Pond Milfoil Committee and/or the Weed Watcher program. Frank Richardson expressed that the City should be proactive in addressing the milfoil issue and that the Commission should actively participate in the Weed Watcher program. Dave Sharples stated that he will write a letter to NHDES indicating that the Commission wants play an active role in the milfoil mitigation efforts and to take part in the Weed Watcher program.
 - B. Review and discuss Goal 4.1 of the 2010 City of Somersworth Master Plan regarding preparing an open space plan that prioritizes parcels for acquisition and preservation, assesses the most appropriate uses for City-owned parcels, and explores greenway linkage opportunities between these parcels. Dave Sharples reviewed the three goals listed in the 2010 Master Plan that the Commission is responsible for addressing. In regards to Goals 4.2 and 4.3, the Commission has already acquired land for conservation purposes and will work with Friends of Willand Pond and the City of Dover to address the water level and invasive species issues at the Pond. To address Goal 4.1, Dave Sharples indicated that if there is interest on the part of the

Commission to assess City-owned parcels for potential use as green space, recreation, etc., he will present GIS data at the next meeting to identify City-owned parcels and their attributes. All members of the Commission expressed interest in the GIS presentation and assessing parcels for appropriate use and potential development of an open space plan.

Imants Millers asked about restoring the trails around Willand Pond. Dave Sharples stated that trail building materials are stored at the Department of Public Works but that the water level issue at the pond must first be addressed. Muriel Ring asked if there are other walking trails in the City. Dave Sharples responded that there are unofficial trails on the City well parcel and near the old City wells. Frank Richardson said that there is also a trail off of Well Street near the water treatment plant. Muriel Ring suggested that a potential project by the Commission could be to develop a brochure of hiking trails for the public. Imants Millers expressed the possibility of connecting Malley Farm with Rollinsford. Dave Sharples indicated that it may be possible to develop trails between the golf course conservation easement and the Salmon Falls River.

- C. Update on Citizens for a Sustainable Somersworth (CSS). Liz Wilson informed the Commission that the City Council approved the formation of the Somersworth Sustainability Committee at the March 7, 2011 council meeting. The Committee will consist of Councilor Robin Jarvis; DPW Director Tom Willis; Director of Development Services Craig Wheeler; two members of the community, Doug Watson and Jennifer Soldati; business community member Paul Edgar; high school student Mary Boisse; Conservation Commission representative Liz Wilson; and Planning Board representative Matt Durkee. The first meeting will take place on March 17, 2011 at 7pm in Council Chambers. This meeting will be primarily an organizational one, and the public is welcome.
 - D. Member items and reports. Imants Millers received a "Saving Wild Places 2011" meeting brochure. The meeting is organized by the UNH Cooperative Extension. The meeting will take place on April 19, 2011 and will include a discussion on conservation easements. Imants Millers suggested that the meeting might be good training for commission members. Dave Sharples said that there is limited budget available for Commission members to attend trainings such as this one. Muriel Ring indicated that she would be interested in attending the meeting.
 - E. City Planner's report. Dave Sharples mentioned that there are several pending wetlands violations, and that the Commission may soon see applications for Conditional Use Permits related to these violations.
 - F. Any other new business. None.
- 4. Workshop business. None.
 - 5. Adjournment. Imants Millers moved to adjourn. Scott Gessis seconded the motion. The Commission unanimously voted to adjourn at 8:20 PM.

Respectfully submitted, Elizabeth Wilson (interim Secretary)