

MINUTES TO CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEETING – SOMERSWORTH, NH

September 14, 2011 Council Chambers – City Hall

7:00 PM

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

1. Minutes of previous meeting. Dave Sharples noted that the first sentence of Part 3.B of the August 2011 meeting minutes should be revised to state, “Dave Sharples mentioned the City’s interest in opening access to Mast Point Dam back up to the public.” Dale Smith-Kenyon made a motion to accept the minutes of the August 10, 2011 meeting as amended. Al Bryant 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. Tree Planting/relocation discussion. Tom Willis and Nate Meers of the Public Works Department presented a tree planting/relocation plan and requested the Committee’s input on the plan. The plan calls for the relocation of an existing crabapple tree from the corner of Government Way and High Street to a location along Memorial Drive. The stated purpose of the tree relocation is to provide the tree, originally planted as a memorial, with more suitable soil conditions. The tree has also become an obstruction to traffic. In its place, the landscaping plan includes planting low level perennials on the corner of Government Way and High Street. The proposed landscaping plan includes improvements to plantings around the parking lot at the rear of City Hall, including perennial grasses and lilies. The plan proposes to remove four dying maple trees and replace them with liberty elms. Liz Wilson asked about the use of water and fertilizers around City Hall. Nate Meers responded that little to no irrigation takes place or will take place in the landscaped area, and that fertilizers are limited to a few applications of organic supplements each year. Dave Sharples indicated that the liberty elm is susceptible to Dutch elm disease and the maximum height of elms may interfere nearby power lines. He also suggested that a native deciduous tree, such as the dwarf black gum, may be a better choice. Nate Meers mentioned that the landscaping plan also calls for replacing brick under the picnic table behind City Hall and that the Public Works Department has a supply of brick that can be used for this project. Dark mulch will be placed in between perennials, and will be purchased from a local source. Liz Wilson made a motion for the Commission to support the relocation of the crabapple tree to a more suitable location, at an appropriate time of year, and using appropriate equipment with the exception of the three elms proposed for along Government Way. The Commission recommends that native deciduous trees with a maximum height less than that of the power lines be planted along Government Way in place of the dying maples.
- B. Discussion of Mast Point Dam. The Commission conducted a site walk of this location on August 20, 2011 and discussed the possibilities for removing some underbrush and reopening this area to the public. Dave Sharples asked Tom Willis of the Public Works Department if underbrush removal could be done by city staff or if a contractor would have to be hired. Tom Willis responded that a contractor would have to be hired. Dave Sharples asked the Commission if they would be willing to spend funds (non-land use change tax funds) towards the reuse of the Mast Point Dam area. Al Bryant suggested possible reuses of the area, including a boat launch,

trails, and stocking the river with fish. The Commission will discuss this issue further during a workshop immediately prior to the next meeting in October.

C. Update on the Somersworth Sustainability Committee. Liz Wilson summarized the August 2011 meetings. The Committee composed a list of projects to pursue, including a community garden, farmers market, participation in the Energy Technical Assistance Program, and community outreach. The next meeting will be held on October 20, 2011.

D. Member items and reports. 1) Al Bryant distributed the treasury report and stated that membership dues to Strafford Rivers Conservancy are due. Dale Smith-Kenyon made a motion for the Commission to renew its membership through use of Commission funds. Liz Wilson seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously. 2) Imants Millers noted that the next Willand Pond meeting is scheduled for September 22, 2011.

E. City Planner's report. 1) Dave Sharples distributed letters from the Town of Newmarket urging other communities to proactively address sources of nutrients and discharges of nutrients into waterbodies. 2) Muriel Ring resigned as Commission alternate. 3) The court awarded a judgment on the wetland violations case at the Davis property on Otis Road. The City was awarded \$60,000 in fines, and the property owner has 60 days in which to pay the fines and court costs.

F. Any other new business. None.

4. Workshop business. None.

5. Adjournment. Liz Wilson moved to adjourn. Dale Smith-Kenyon seconded the motion. The Commission unanimously voted to adjourn at 8:18 PM.

Respectfully submitted, Elizabeth Wilson (interim Secretary)