

SOMERSWORTH CONSERVATION COMMISSION
MINUTES OF MEETING
January 9, 2019

MEMBERS PRESENT: Larry Hamilton
Scott Orzechowski
Angela Ficco
Sarah McGraw
Mercedes O'Donahue
Jeremy Rhodes

MEMBERS ABSENT: Shane Conlin
Dale Smith-Kenyon

STAFF PRESENT: Shanna B. Saunders, Director of Planning and Community Development.

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m.

- 1) Approval of meeting minutes
Conservation Meeting minutes of August 8 2018

A. Ficco moves to accept, S. McGraw seconds, unanimous (S. McGraw, J.Rhodes Abstaining)

- 2) Public Comment

No Public Comments

- 3) New Business

- A) Rubbish Removal – Malley Farm

A Ficco notes 2 sites in need of work – an old farm debris site (broken glass, barbed wire, and similar debris) and an old party site in the woods. There's also an older concrete dam on site. S Saunders notes that Mike Bobinsky of DPW will facilitate a cleanup; trash will need to move to the parking lot, at which point DPW staff will be able to assist with removal. The farm debris site is vehicle accessible; the party site is not.

Volunteer labor (including Spirit Up Somersworth or corporate partnerships) would be a possibility, but liability concerns around content of farm debris could be an issue. Sarah McNamara (UNH) will assist; will be requested at Feb 2019 session to discuss.

- B) Alternate Land Conservation options

Parcel under consideration from prior session is a subdivision; has 2 associated lots (47 and 13 acres). S. McGraw spoke to SELT; they're interested in assisting. Norway Plains did submit a survey in 2013. The 13 acre lot has a house on it; the parcel does cut into a nearby stream; the nearby wellhead is owned by the city but is not otherwise protected. DPW is looking at bringing the well to a functional state and protection would be logical concurrent with that action. The Drinking Water Trust could be a good source of funds for this; SELT could provide guidance. These sites, plus the Salmon Falls Woods II (owned by PPMH Land Holding LLC, partially under easement) could all be linked together if acquired. These sites are all part of the flood plain connected to the wellhead, and would be a priority for conservation.

- C) Wildlife Inventory

S Orzechowski pulled checklists for the area; a large variety are available from various sources. This effort falls under the resource inventory mandate of the commission, and can potentially be used for research efforts as well. NHACC and SPNHF electronically publish lists; these could be linked to our site walks as well as submitted by general public to the publishing organization; we could facilitate. L Hamilton will look into the mechanics of this.

D) Any Other New Business

Monitoring of Properties – S McGraw will draw up a list of properties under consideration for monitor checks; a checklist for us to follow is available; spot check boundaries and look for encroachment/violation in general. We can pull tax maps from the city to assist; we will need to inform the city when we intend to check.

4) Old Business

A) Member Subcommittee Items and Reports.

S McGraw contacted landowner for property under investigation; they state that they inherited the property, and plan on selling both lots. SELT has expressed interest in attending a meeting with the owners; owners are willing as well. S McGraw will coordinate with SELT and S Orzechowski to discuss options.

S Orzechowski provided an update on conservation fund usage. We can use our funds for the NRI, site checks, land/easement purchases, training, speakers, materials, and related expenses. The account is managed by the city treasurer, but funds can be released only by the commission. Primary source of funds is land use taxes; we receive a partial percentage. We can also accept grants, donations, and similar sources with council approval. We are capped at \$75K/year from use taxes. Land purchases require council approval; non-land purchases do not. Property monitoring is a valid use.

A Ficco meeting with United Way 1/30 regarding the story walk; looking to use Millennium Park as a pilot site. Good access there, and could pull in all PK-2nd grade classes to try it out. Noble Pines could also be a good site; Jules Bisson park would be the third choice (few trees, but ADA compliant). Grant request will take place in August at the earliest.

B) Signage for Frank Richardson Trail

Sign wording has been submitted and approved at council; signs will be manufactured and placed on trail. S Saunders will coordinate. A Podium-style sign is standard.

A Ficco moves to approve; L Hamilton seconds. Unanimously approved.

C) No Motor Vehicles/No Hunting Signs in City Parks

We need to include the RSA reference on these signs; S Saunders will research. These will be posted in parking lots, every 300 feet on trails, and at each point of entry. We'll look to tie these to cleanups and site walks; will look to schedule at February 2019 meeting.

5) Treasurer's Report

Balance as of December is \$126,167.64; only noted expenditure was NHACC membership.

Motion: A Ficco moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by S Orzechowski.

1. Meeting adjourned at 8:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Jeremy Rhodes
Conservation Commission Secretary