

ADOPTED
City of Keene
New Hampshire

CONSERVATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES

Monday, August 17, 2015

4:30 PM

2nd Floor Conference Room, City Hall

Members Present:

Thomas P. Haynes, Chair
George Hansel
Thomas Lacey
Brian Reilly

Staff Present:

Tara Germond, Planner

Members Not Present:

Janis Manwaring, Councilor
Matthew Walton
Bill Fleeger

Others Present:

3:30 PM SITE VISIT: 490 Washington Street

Prior to the meeting, members of the Commission conducted a site visit for a Wetlands Permit by Notification for 490 Washington Street, submitted by Toby Tousley.

Commission members present at this visit included Thomas P. Haynes, Chair, and Thomas Lacey. City staff present included Rhett Lamb, Planning Director and Tara Germond, Planner. Others present included Toby Tousley, property owner.

Commission members reviewed the site of proposed impact, an area of approximately 80 square feet, which appears to have served as a former crossing to the rear portion of the lot. Mr. Tousley is seeking to replace two steel culverts, each approximately 8-10 inches in diameter and 9-feet long with a plastic culvert of approximately 18-inches in diameter and 9-feet in length and plastic headwalls. Water currently drains on the site from the north/northwest to the southeast. At the time of the visit, there was no standing or flowing water present at the site. Mr. Tousley confirmed that the culverts would be replaced at the same grade.

1. Call to order

Chair Haynes called the meeting to order at 4:30 PM.

2. Minutes – July 20, 2015

Mr. Hansel made a motion to accept the minutes of July 20, 2015 with the following changes/corrections:

1) On Page 2 of 9, first paragraph second sentence change, “He continued, stating that this came up because of forestry activity that caused some debate.”, to “He continued, stating that this came up because the idea of forestry activity caused some debate.”

2) On Page 2 of 9, under 3) Conservation Master Plan, third paragraph, fifth sentence from the bottom change, “Mr. Lacey stated that hiring a sufficient forester will give the Committee a lot of information and including property values.” to “Mr. Lacey stated that hiring a professional forester will give the Committee a lot of information, and include timber values and environmental assessments.”

3) On Page 6 of 9, third paragraph first sentence, “curios” is spelled incorrectly, change it to “curious.” Same paragraph second sentence change “that travel” to “that the traveled”.

Mr. Reilly seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

3. Conservation Master Plan

Noting his absence from the last meeting, Chair Haynes commented he read through the minutes, and is still unsure what was accomplished regarding the Conservation Master Plan. He said it still feels like the Commission is trying to determine its objectives. Mr. Hansel commented that the Commission discussed some different avenues, but it may be at the point where a direction needs to be decided. Chair Haynes agreed with Mr. Hansel’s comment.

Referring to Councilor Manwaring’s suggestion from the previous meeting, Chair Haynes commented that he did not feel that Ann Shedd would be available to serve as a consultant for future plan development. He asked if others also felt it is important to establish objectives before the group can move forward. Mr. Hansel noted that prior to assigning a subcommittee to work on the Plan, it would be more productive to provide them with a better sense of direction. Chair Haynes commented this process is new to all; perhaps, the group is struggling with how to move forward. Chair Haynes also questioned whether or not is needed to bring someone in to help formalize these objectives.

Mr. Lacey shared comments and suggestions for moving forward, which are listed below.

- May set false objectives because unsure of where we are going in this process.
- Start the process with City owned land and associated land uses. This step will help identify a direction for the group. Determining the specific parcels the group is potentially interested will help identify who is needed to be hired to help with this process. This will also help City staff determine the scope.
- Find out what information is already available and figure out who will be doing the inventories.
- Choose where the group wants to focus its energy and resources (e.g. determine if it wants to be involved with City owned parks such as Wheelock Park).
- Request that City staff provide us an overlay map and inventory; given specific parameters.

Mr. Lacey continued if the group is doing a management plan it might be more ready than it thinks it is. Chair Haynes clarified what Mr. Lacey meant - not having some of those objectives defined is okay, because once more information is provided some of those questions about objectives will become clearer. Mr. Lacey agreed with Chair Haynes. Mr. Hansel supported the idea; adding that identifying parameters for the data to be collected and shared is something the group might want to do sooner rather than later. Mr. Reilly also supported this idea.

Discussion ensued with regards to how much detail should be included on the map requested from City staff (very detailed or broad stroked). Ms. Germond asked what other features besides City owned land would the Commission like to see, for example would they like to see environmental features. The basic information the Commission decided to ask for and decisions they made are as follows:

- Acreage of the parcels and any conservation easements
- Any type of soil data (cover) and wildlife
- Forestry and biological concerns
- Recreational uses (conservation easements and bike trails)
 - Mr. Lacey questioned whether or not anyone ever quantified the amount of dirt moved around for trail development for recreational uses in areas like Goose Pond and Drummer Hill?
- Printed map should include aerial (satellite) imagery, preferably taken during the leafless (winter) season with parcel boundaries outlined in some color on the map.
- Other data associated with the parcels will be added in a table form, separate from the map..
- Due to the costs of producing the maps, Commission members were agreeable to viewing the documents in a PDF format.

Mr. Hansel recommended an outline map with any associated notes attached to it. In response to Mr. Reilly, Ms. Germond reported the aerial imagery project from last year is being worked on right now. She added that the Planning Department has aerial imagery available at a resolution of 1 foot however more granular imagery will be available in the future. Ms. Germond indicated that she could do a map with aerial imagery and an overlay of parcels; she noted the challenge would be collecting the data associated with those parcels, and knowing what the Commission is most interested in getting from that data. Ms. Germond also suggested that as the Commission narrows in on sites, more specific data might need to be collected. Mr. Hansel recommended stipulating it be left up to staff's best judgement as far as how easy the data is to collect. Ms. Germond agreed to have a 36"x 48" map ready for the next Commission meeting.

Chair Haynes asked Ms. Germond if she could see anything else the Commission should be thinking about. Ms. Germond noted she is catching up to where the Commission is at, and asked if the initial intent of this is to be a management plan. Chair Haynes replied the goal is

sort of a conservation plan for the City of Keene. Ms. Germond asked who would implement the plan. Mr. Hansel explained the Commission would be asking City Council to adopt the plan. Mr. Hansel also confirmed for Ms. Germond that this would be a broader guiding document that aligns with current City projects, and would only involve City parcels as a start.

Ms. Germond referenced the City of Keene Conservation Plan, dated May 2015 (KSC) and asked if maps were included. Mr. Lacey replied that if they were, the Commission never received them. Mr. Lacey also pointed out the document never received a final revision. Mr. Hansel recommended taking pieces of it and using them, and not adopting it as the Plan for the Commission. Ms. Germond agreed to keep the information on the map(s) for next meeting at a high level and simple.

Commission members were in agreement that they should all look at this information and work on it as a group at the next meeting versus forming a subcommittee.

4. Communications / Notifications

a) 139 Roxbury Street, Keene Housing Shelter Rehab Project –

Ms. Germond reported this item was mistakenly included in the packet. No action taken.

b) 471 Chapman Road-

Chair Haynes reported that this is mostly informational since they were given permission to move forward with this project.

Mr. Hansel made a motion to accept this communication as informational. Mr. Reilly seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

5. Discussions

a. 490 Washington Street -

Mr. Lacey explained that there was a headwall right near the corner of the house. Mr. Tousley was going to extend the culvert and move the headwall up, and then install a land bridge. During weed whacking, Mr. Tousley and his wife discovered there already was a path on the property with two 8-inch culverts further up the channel. Mr. Tousley decided to change his plans and instead replace what already existed. Chair Haynes reported Mr. Tousley could probably drive over it now with a 4-wheeler as it is very rocky and bumpy.

Ms. Germond displayed photos taken at the site, noting the culverts run perpendicular to the crossing. Mr. Tousley is intending to replace the two pieces with one 18-inch diameter plastic culvert. She noted that Mr. Tousley said the grade would be the same so there would be no drainage back into the wetlands. Mr. Hansel suggested this would provide better drainage than he has now. Chair Haynes suggested this might improve the drainage; indicating he didn't feel this would have much of an affect the wetlands at all. Mr. Hansel also noted the standing water there is only seasonal.

Ms. Germond reported this is a Wetlands Permit by Notification application, and that Mr. Tousley proposes at a maximum 80-square feet would be temporarily disturbed, and 40-square feet permanently disturbed in that area. Commission members agreed this was a very small area.

Mr. Lacey moved that the Conservation Commission (Chair) sign the application, and that the Conservation Commission not intervene. Mr. Hansel seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

6. Reports from Committees / Liaisons -

a) **SWPO Subcommittee**- Nothing at this time.

7. Staff Updates - Nothing at this time.

8. New or Other Business - Nothing at this time.

9. Adjournment- next meeting date Monday, September 21, 2015

There being no further business before the Commission Chair Haynes adjourned the meeting at 5:23 PM.

Respectfully submitted by:
Mary Lou Sheats-Hall, Minute-taker
August 18, 2015