

**MINUTES
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
1 JUNKINS AVENUE
PORTSMOUTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE
CONFERENCE ROOM "A"**

3:30 p.m.

November 13, 2019

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Steve Miller; Vice Chairman MaryAnn Blanchard;
Members; Adrienne Harrison, Allison Tanner, Barbara McMillan,
Samantha Collins

MEMBERS ABSENT: Alternate, Jessica Blasko

ALSO PRESENT: Peter Britz, Environmental Planner/Sustainability Coordinator

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I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. October 09, 2019

Ms. Tanner noted that "leech" should be corrected to "leach." Also, page 7 should say "comments on the intensity of the development."

Vice Chairman Blanchard moved to approve the minutes from the October 9, 2019 Conservation Commission as amended, seconded by Ms. The motion passed by a 4-1-0 vote. Ms. Harrison abstained because she was not at the October meeting.

II. CONDITIONAL USE APPLICATIONS (OLD BUSINESS)

1. 0 Banfield Road
Maud Hett Revocable Trust, Owner
Assessor Map 256, Lot 2
(This item was recommended to be postponed to the Planning Board at the October 09, 2019 Meeting.)

Vice Chairman Blanchard moved to postpone this application to the December 11, 2019 Conservation Commission Meeting, seconded by Ms. Harrison. The motion passed unanimously.

III. CONDITIONAL USE APPLICATIONS (NEW BUSINESS)

A. 225 Borthwick Avenue
Liberty Mutual Insurance, Owner
Assessor Map 240, Lot 1

Lennie Foss from Elf's Landscaping represented Liberty Mutual and spoke to the application. The project consists of adding four 7 by 7-foot patios with picnic tables. The front area where the curbing was redone will also be reseeded for grass.

Vice Chairman Blanchard questioned if the patios were on the other side of the pond. Mr. Foss confirmed that they were.

Vice Chairman Blanchard questioned how the trash would be managed. Mr. Foss responded that there will be a trash can at each area and the landscapers are there daily.

Ms. Tanner moved to recommend approval of the Conditional Use Permit to the Planning Board as presented, seconded by Ms. Collins. The motion passed unanimously by a 5-0 vote.

B. 333 Borthwick Avenue
HCA Health Services of New Hampshire, Inc. dba Portsmouth Regional Hospital, Owner
Assessor Map 240, Lot 2-1

Chris Acres with Kimley-Horn spoke to the application. The proposal is for a 2-story addition at Portsmouth Hospital. Most of the addition will be on the second floor and a small portion will be on the first floor. It will be on the south side of the existing hospital. Currently there is asphalt driveways and concrete sidewalks there. The project will reduce the impervious area. The building will be on the top side of the bank away from wetlands, but in the buffer.

Ms. Collins noted that the plan included a parking occupancy analysis and questioned what was changing about the parking. Mr. Acres responded that there were no changes to the parking with this project. The City changed the Ordinance and they were required to provide an analysis. Mr. Britz added that it was required because site plan was changing.

Ms. Tanner questioned what seed mix they would be putting down. Mr. Acres responded that could be included in the next iteration. It will be stabilizing the disturbed edge. Ms. Tanner commented that after the lawn is established, they should not use fertilizer. Mr. Acres confirmed that they could coordinate with the hospital landscaper. Mr. Britz added that they could put in a conservation mix with a lower mow rate.

Chairman Miller noted that it could be an opportunity to put in shrubs too. If they are higher than the geese the shrubs could prevent them from going back there. Vice Chairman Blanchard noted that there were huge healthy junipers in the parking lot in front of Marshalls, so there are attractive low maintenance alternatives.

Vice Chairman Blanchard moved to recommend approval of the Conditional Use Permit to the Planning Board, seconded by Ms. Tanner with the following stipulation:

1. In the disturbed area shown on the plan where re-seeding is specified shall include a conservation seed mix and native plantings.

The motion passed unanimously by a 5-0 vote.

IV. OTHER BUSINESS

1. New Hampshire Association of Conservation Commissions- Annual Dues

Mr. Britz commented that he would pay the \$1,075 fee unless there were objections.

The Commission agreed it was worth paying. Chairman Miller added that it was good because they track the legislation and let them know what is going on. That is important.

2. NHDOT, Lafayette Road revitalization project #29640

Mr. Britz commented that he sent out a memo on this item. The State is starting the planning process and are looking for any environmental input.

Ms. Tanner noted that there was a substantial wetland opposite Wal Mart. Ms. Harrison added that it was for sale and noted that the Commission could make an offer. Mr. Britz responded that they could look at it. There is some storm water conversation out there. There are some white cedars and a sewer line runs through it.

Vice Chairman Blanchard agreed that would be an area of concern. The widening commercializes more of the residential part. It could become a bigger business corridor.

Chairman Miller noted that he was on this planning commission and they have met twice. The State does not have a plan, but they have been doing a lot of information gathering. The commission has stakeholders from conservation and the neighborhood. They are looking at traffic, bus routes, and would love to add sidewalks and bike routes. The State acknowledges the constraints of the landscape. They talked about putting in a median down the middle. The goals include eliminating the two lane to one lane inconsistency, improve safety, traffic flow and aesthetics.

Ms. Tanner commented that there should be water quality treatment in that area especially where the wetland is. Chairman Miller added that they should coordinate on the GIS maps of the wetlands to highlight them. Mr. Britz confirmed they could do that.

Chairman Miller commented that they were asking for information about contaminated sites. Vice Chairman Blanchard commented that there may be a site across from the Southgate Plaza. The restaurant there put in a fence to prevent the public from going into that area. Mr. Britz confirmed he would check with DES on that.

Chairman Miller noted that they also asked for a list of priority mitigation efforts. The Commission should make one. Mr. Britz commented that they have a list of available land and open habitat areas for conservation. They can go through and prioritize them for mitigation.

Vice Chairman Blanchard commented that they would need to address the runoff from the roads especially in the wetland areas. Slow and stalling traffic impacts air quality. Wider roads would

mean more salt. Ms. Tanner commented that putting in a median with trees would make a big impact. They need to keep the trees to reduce heat island affect.

Chairman Miller commented that the next meeting for this will be early December and they should meet for about a year. There were no plans yet.

Ms. Tanner commented that the State should put in another exit off 95 into Greenland or Rye because that would take a lot of traffic off Route 1. Mr. Britz commented that he could assemble a list of suggestions and send it out for review. They will identify conservation lands, contaminated sites and important habitat areas.

Mr. Britz commented that he has received emails from the neighbors around Great Rhythm. There was a lot of concern about their impact on the buffer and plantings they put in. Mr. Britz brought in pictures to show the Commission what it looked like. Mr. Britz was not sure if they put in the right sizes. Ms. Tanner confirmed that 2 quarts was really small, and 3 gallons was not much bigger. Mr. Britz suggested that they wait until the spring to see what grows in. It will take a while to grow in.

Chairman Miller agreed they needed to wait until spring. Ms. McMillan questioned what seed mix they put in. Mr. Britz confirmed that he would ask and would suggest putting in another row of bushes. Ms. Tanner noted that a wildflower seed mix would not require any maintenance. Mr. Britz noted that he would follow up with the owners. There should not be any seating out there until they know the plantings are established. The neighborhood wants a more robust planting and say they are degrading the bank. Mr. Britz was not sure about that because it was just lawn before. Chairman Miller agreed that most of the cutting and abuse happened when it was a fish processing plant.

V. ADJOURNMENT

Vice Chairman Blanchard moved to adjourn the meeting at 4:23 p.m., seconded by Ms. Collins. The motion passed unanimously by a 6-0 vote.

Respectfully submitted by,
Becky Frey
Acting Recording Secretary