

**MINUTES
CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

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

3:30 P.M.

DECEMBER 14, 2011

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Steve Miller; Vice Chairman Mary Ann Blanchard;
Members, Allison Tanner, Barbara McMillan, Elissa Hill Stone,
and Peter Vandermark

MEMBERS ABSENT:

ALSO PRESENT: Peter Britz, Environmental Planner

I. OLD BUSINESS

A. Approval of minutes – November 9, 2011

It was moved, seconded, and passed unanimously (6-0) to approve the minutes as presented.

II. CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT APPLICATIONS

1. Commerce Way
Commerce Way, LLC, owner
Assessor Map 216, Lot 1-1

Mr. Patrick Crimmins of Appledore Engineering was present to speak to the application. He stated that the project received approval in July of 2008 and has not changed since that approval. The plan was for a private roadway that would be upgraded to the City's standards and when constructed would be turned over to the City. The project also called for the reconstruction of new sidewalks, an improved drainage system, landscaping, and lighting. He explained that the project required the reconstruction of the corner with a retaining wall to help reduce the impacts. The impacts would be 43 square feet of permanent impacts and 183 square feet of temporary impacts. Mr. Crimmins said that they currently had a Department of Environmental Services approval that was still valid for the project but that the City approval had expired.

Mr. Crimmins also told the Commission that they were proposing to install new catch basins along the entire length of the roadway. In addition, they would be removing 5,996 square feet of impervious area which would result in an overall enhancement in the buffer area.

Mr. Crimmins discussed the criteria to be met for a conditional use permit. He stated that the land was suitable since this was an existing road and would be constructed in the existing location. He added that the buffer would be enhanced by the removal of 5,996 square feet of impervious area and drainage upgrades. He pointed out that there would be no adverse impact to the wetland function. Mr. Crimmins also pointed out that there was one stipulation placed on the 2008 approval that required sloped curbing in certain areas to allow for wildlife crossing. He also noted that there was a small stand of phragmites in the wetland and he included in the plans the construction sequence on how they would prevent the phragmites from spreading.

Ms. McMillan asked about the impact to the buffer. Mr. Crimmins explained that the buffer would be improved. He said that the existing road was wider than what was being proposed. He added that they were still proposing the median strip that would include landscaping.

Vice Chairman Blanchard asked if this would involve the entire thoroughfare. Mr. Crimmins said the project encompassed the area from Woodbury Avenue to Portsmouth Boulevard.

Chairman Miller asked about the sloped curbing and wondered if the Department of Public Works would be okay with it. Mr. Crimmins said yes, it had been reviewed by DPW.

Vice Chairman Blanchard asked Mr. Britz if there was a roll for the Traffic and Safety Committee with regard to the City taking this road over as a City street. Mr. Britz said that he thought it was possible but he said it would first go to the City Council and would probably be referred back to the Planning Board. He added that the Planning Board might refer it to the Technical Advisory Committee. He thought it would be a while before the City accepted it. Vice Chairman Blanchard was concerned that if it became a City street, would the speed limit be 30 MPH. She wondered how it was posted now. Ms. McMillan said it was currently posted at 20 MPH. Chairman Miller recalled a lot of discussion about the speed limit at the last meeting because of the radius of the curve on the roadway.

Ms. McMillan asked if the catch basins would all have the oil/water separator. Mr. Crimmins replied yes. Ms. McMillan also asked about the maintenance of the catch basins. She recalled Steve Parkinson saying at the last meeting that they would be cleaned about once a year. Ms. McMillan thought that was an issue. Mr. Britz stated that he felt they would be cleaned at least once a year because the City just acquired a new truck to do that type of work. Mr. Crimmins pointed out that the site plan notes that the contractor would be required to clean all of the structures, then the City would take over the maintenance.

Chairman Miller asked about the timetable for the project. Mr. Crimmins said that they were hoping to go before the City Council this winter so that there could be spring construction.

Hearing no more questions, Chairman Miller asked for a motion.

Ms. Tanner made a motion to approve the application as presented with the same stipulation as noted in the 2008 approval:

- 1) That approximately 20 feet of slanted curbing be placed adjacent to the wetlands, centered on the culvert or thereabouts, to allow for wildlife passage.

The motion was seconded by Ms. Stone. There was no additional discussion.

The motion to approve the application as presented with the same stipulation as noted in the 2008 approval passed by a unanimous (6-0) vote:

- 2) That approximately 20 feet of slanted curbing be placed adjacent to the wetlands, centered on the culvert or thereabouts, to allow for wildlife passage.

III. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Stewardship efforts on conservation land

Chairman Miller commented that the loop trail project was well received and asked Mr. Britz to give an update. Mr. Britz said that the trail still needed signage. Ms. Tanner asked about the possibility of dedicating the trail to Alan Sturgis. She wondered if they would be allowed to do that. She also said that they should consider dedication something to Clotilde Strauss as well since she also dedicated a lot of time to the City. Mr. Vandermark commented that he felt dedicating the trail to Mr. Sturgis would be appropriate since Mr. Sturgis was on the Commission at the time the land was acquired and also that he lived close by it. Vice Chairman Blanchard cautioned about how the Commission would go about doing this as she did not want them to get involved in elaborate protocols to name something after someone. Mr. Britz said that he would do some research on how they might go about it.

Chairman Miller reminded the Commission that they had talked about developing a list of projects that would utilize volunteers that would help to build a stewardship core. Mr. Britz added that he had a Boy Scout that was eager to do something. The Commission discussed various sites that would make good projects.

Ms. Tanner commented that there was a site off of Route 33 that would be a good place for a community garden. Mr. Britz stated that trails could be formed in that area as well. He suggested that anyone interested in starting a community garden should speak to him. Mr. Vandermark commented that it was great when the community gardens were visible to the public.

Vice Chairman Blanchard stated that it was important to continue building on what they have already accomplished. Mr. Britz said that he had a list of the volunteers who helped with the loop trail.

B. Prime wetlands update

Chairman Miller asked Mr. Britz if the prime wetlands recommendation was sent to Concord. Mr. Britz replied no. He said that he talked with Dori Wiggin and it was still with her. Chairman Miller and Mr. Britz stated that they would be in touch with Ms. Wiggin to see about getting the recommendation moving. Chairman Miller said that he would like to finish the project.

C. Membership – The New Hampshire Association of Natural Resource Scientists

Mr. Britz explained to the Commission that membership in the organization would allow them to attend sponsored workshops at discounted prices. Ms. Stone commented that she has attended a number of the workshops and they were very good.

Ms. Tanner made a motion to obtain a membership with NHANRS. The motion was seconded by Ms. Stone. The motion passed by a unanimous (6-0) vote.

In additional business, Mr. Britz gave the Commission draft copies of the tree ordinance. He encouraged the Commission to look it over and note any changes that they felt were necessary. He said that Peter Loughlin, chair of the Trees and Greenery Committee was willing to come and speak with the Commission. Vice Chairman Blanchard thought that would be a good idea and that they should put it on the agenda for next month. Mr. Britz told the Commission to send their comments to him prior to the next meeting so that he could compile the proposed changes. He added that he would invite Mr. Loughlin to attend next month's meeting to discuss the document.

Vice Chairman Blanchard stated that she thought there was value in having the Conservation Commission support the tree ordinance. She thought that sending a letter of support to the Trees and Greenery Committee would be a good idea.

There was some discussion about a concern of invasive species encroaching on a private owner's property in the Tidewatch development.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

At 4:30 p.m., it was moved, seconded, and passed unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Good
Conservation Commission Recording Secretary

These minutes were approved at the Conservation Commission meeting on January 11, 2012.