

**ACTION SHEET
CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

**1 JUNKINS AVENUE
PORTSMOUTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE
EILEEN DONDERO FOLEY COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

3:30 P.M.

August 10, 2022

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Barbara McMillan; Vice Chair Samantha Collins; Members: Allison Tanner, Lynn Vaccaro, Mika Court and Thaddeus Jankowski and Alternate: Abigail Gindele

MEMBERS ABSENT: Jessica Blasko

ALSO PRESENT: Peter Britz, Environmental Planner/Sustainability Coordinator

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I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. July 13, 2022

*After due deliberation, the Commission voted to **approve** the minutes as presented.*

II. WETLAND CONDITIONAL USE PERMITS (NEW BUSINESS)

1. 1465 Woodbury Avenue
Bromley Portsmouth, LLC, Owner
Map 216, Lot 3

*After due deliberation, the Commission voted (6-0) to recommend **approval** of the Wetland Conditional Use Permit to the Planning Board with the following **stipulations**:*

1. *Applicant comply with NOFA standards for organic land care when maintaining proposed new pervious area.*
 2. *Applicant ensure that no snow will be stored within this lot as it drains to wetland. Applicant shall include signage which will indicate that no snow storage shall be placed there.*
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III. STATE WETLAND BUREAU APPLICATIONS (OLD BUSINESS)

1. Minor Impact
333 Borthwick Avenue (Site address: 444 Borthwick Avenue)
(Portsmouth Regional Hospital)
HCA Realty, Inc., Owner
Map 234, Lot 7-4A

*After due deliberation, the Commission voted to recommend **denial** of the State Wetlands Bureau Application for the following **reasons**:*

- 1. Site review by another wetland scientist was needed.*
 - 2. The reason for the arbitrary 501 parking spaces was needed.*
 - 3. The applicant did not consider the least impactful way to obtain more parking, like looking at other lots that were not heavily utilized.*
 - 4. The applicant should show the commission their studies because they would be helpful in determining whether other areas would be more suitable.*
2. Standard, Dredge, and Fill
99 Peirce Island Road (Pool House)
City of Portsmouth, Owner
Map 208, Lot 1

*After due deliberation, the Commission voted to recommend **approval** of the State Wetlands Bureau Application as presented.*

IV. LETTER TO CITY COUNCIL

Dear Council Members:

Through the submission of a wetland's dredge and fill application, the Conservation Commission recently became aware of plans to completely renovate the Peirce Island swimming pool, pump house and systems to bring the facility up to current health and safety requirements. These rehabilitation efforts include replacement of the pool's vinyl liner, gutter, underground surge tank, concrete pool deck, and stormwater drainage system.

Peirce Island itself includes salt marsh, tidal pools, meadows, rocky cliffs providing vistas of the surrounding areas and *Iva frutescens* (Marsh elder), a threatened species in NH. Approximately one third of the total project impacts will occur within the Tidal Buffer Zone, including permanent impact to the rocky shore.

Beyond the deterioration expected in this heavily utilized resource, the pump house needs to be moved because it is within the Tidal Buffer Zone, within the 100 foot flood zone and below projected sea level rise. The pool itself is within the flood zone and has previously been inundated with water from the Piscataqua River. The chlorinated contents of the pool are an obvious danger for the natural systems of the Island and the river. Meanwhile, the proposed upgrades do not include renewable resources, such as solar/solar thermal energy systems, or consideration of alternative treatment methods.

We would appreciate reconsideration by the Council of this information before proceeding with the plan to rehabilitate the entire pool and associated systems. By having the foresight to consider the potential for flooding, further destruction of natural resources can be avoided. Including renewable energy resources in this plan would be a positive step in consideration of

the future climate action plan. A superior long-term investment might be to move the pool to a more convenient, less resource-sensitive area within the City.

The Peirce Island pool is a heavily utilized and appreciated resource in the City of Portsmouth. Rebuilding the pool in the same location without looking for strategies to make the pool more sustainable and more resilient does not seem to be in line with the efforts of our future climate action plan, and will ultimately have detrimental effects on the patrons of the pool, residents of Portsmouth, and Peirce Island, which in itself is a great natural resource for the community.

Sincerely,

Barbara McMillan, Chair
On behalf of the Conservation Commission

The Commission voted (5-0) to submit the letter as drafted as a recommendation to the City Council.

V. ORGANIC LAND CARE COMMITTEE UPDATE

Member Thaddeus Jankowski discussed reaching out to NOFA representatives who would be able to conduct educational courses and provide the City with educational resources on the benefits of adopting NOFA for land use management practices.

Peter Britz explained there would be an Organic Land Care Outreach Meeting on August 31, 2022.

There were no items voted on.

VI. OTHER BUSINESS

There were no other business items discussed or voted on.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

*At 5:20 p.m., the Commission voted to **adjourn** the meeting.*