

**REGULAR MEETING
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
PORTSMOUTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE
1 JUNKINS AVENUE
Conference Room A**

3:30 p.m.

May 8, 2002

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Alanson Sturgis; Members Charles Cormier, Donald Green, Carlton McNeil, Allison Tanner, J. Lyn Walters, Brian Wazlaw; and alternate Steven Miller

ALSO PRESENT: Peter Britz, Environmental Planner

ABSENCE EXCUSED: None

Chairman Sturgis called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m. Chairman Sturgis announced to the Commission members and public that the meeting would be adjourned after Item 1, the presentation by Seacoast Land Trust, to go into a non-public meeting.

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Cormier made a motion to accept the minutes of the April 10, 2002 Conservation Committee meeting. Ms. Tanner seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

II. PRESENTATION BY SEACOAST LAND TRUST on resource mapping project of Sagamore Creek and Berry's Brook watersheds

Robin Najjar of the Seacoast Land Trust gave the background of how the Seacoast Land Trust started, primarily a volunteer, non-profit organization. Along with the New Hampshire Estuaries Project and the Forest Society, the Seacoast Land Trust received a grant from the Estuary Protection Program to develop a state-of-the-art-mapping program. It is a great way to look at watersheds and help the organization with land protection.

Danna Truslow, executive director of the Seacoast Land Trust, gave a presentation to the Conservation Commission on the various multi-layering maps of Sagamore Creek and Berry's Brook watersheds. Ms. Truslow explained that the Forest Society did the bulk of the mapping and provided ranking values for Sagamore Creek and Berry's Brook. These two watersheds were chosen because of the proximity to homes. Also, Sagamore Creek is tidal and empties into Little Harbor. Berry's Brook watershed involves four towns: North Hampton, Greenland, Rye and Portsmouth.

The first base map of the presentation was a composite photograph of both watersheds, which showed existing conservation land as well as roadways, watershed boundaries, and existing parcel boundaries. The second map showed the groundwater resources and their protection lines. The third map showed the soil potential for development. The last map

detailed the surface water features for the Riparian and wetland buffer zones with a 200-ft. buffer zone along wetlands and streams.

Ms. Truslow further explained the point ranking system devised for characteristics of the parcels of land that could not be mapped, but were very important. Since there are not many large parcels of land left in the Seacoast, points were given for acreage sizes and proximity to conservation lands and watersheds. Additional points were given for the tidal areas near Berry's Brook. The upland area in the headwaters of the Sagamore Creek had the highest conservation value.

Peter Britz, City Environmental Planner, inquired if the Seacoast Land Trust had talked with landowners about conservation options. Ms. Truslow replied that many landowners do not know what options are available to their land. Ms. Truslow stated letters have been sent out to owners whose land has been identified in these conservation areas to let them know their conservation options.

Chairman Sturgis stated that many property owners do not know what is a conservation easement in that the property owner can state how the land can be used. Ms. Truslow stated that a conservation easement is a legal document and is permanent. If the land changes hands, the next owner abides by the restrictions from the conservation easement.

Ms. Truslow presented the maps to the Planning Department to help them with upcoming projects in these watershed areas.

III. Next Scheduled Meeting

The next scheduled meeting is June 12, 2002.

IV. Adjournment

Chairman Sturgis adjourned the meeting at 4:10 p.m. to go into a non-public Work Session to discuss the remaining agenda items.

V. Possible Land Acquisition

VI. Discussion of possible set of rules for the Commission

VII. Other Business

Respectfully submitted,

Terry L. Provencher
Planning Department Secretary