

**MINUTES OF WORK SESSION
CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

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

3:30 P.M.

NOVEMBER 7, 2007

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Steve Miller, Vice Chairman James Horrigan; Members, Allison Tanner, Brian Wazlaw, Eva Powers; and Alternates Mary Ann Blanchard and Richard Adams

MEMBERS ABSENT: Barbara McMillan, Skye Maher

ALSO PRESENT: Peter Britz, Environmental Planner

I. Discussion of potential changes to Article VI of the city's Zoning Ordinance

Chairman Miller explained that the purpose of this work session was to fine tune the Commission's recommendations for the new zoning ordinance and to move the recommendations on to Rick Taintor, the City's Zoning Ordinance Consultant.

The following are highlights from the discussion that was held on these specific topics:

Vernal Pools

- Include wetlands and vernal pools in section 10.813.31 Inland Wetlands.
- Vernal pools are defined as a confined basin that is wet at least two months out of the year with no fish.
- NH Wetlands Bureau is drafting a statement of definitions that could be used but is still in draft form.
- Would like to protect vernal pools with at least a 100 foot buffer but would like more. It was suggested that after 100 feet, 25% of it can be developed.
- Will have to check to see if a wetland scientist has to have vernal pool training.
- A minimum of 5000 sq. feet was suggested as a new minimum size for applying the wetland buffer. That is the smallest lot size in Portsmouth.
- Need to get vernal pools in Portsmouth identified.

Tree Ordinance

- Current enforcement involving trees falls under DPW. Is that the best place for it?
- Should a minimum size requirement be mandatory for the restoring or replacement of trees or shrubs?
- Would like to see the Trees and Greenery Committee take a more active role. It is a blue ribbon committee so it would take a change to the city charter.

- Do not like the fact that utility companies are given a blank check to cut. Notice should be given to local authorities. Utility companies should be able to cut without notification in the case of emergencies.
- Would like to encourage stewardship in regards to maintaining trees.

Wildlife Habitat

- Might be able to get some funding to do some mapping resourcing.
- Needs more teeth but need to do mapping first.
- Might want some type of local protection for wildlife corridors around natural gas right-of-ways.

Storm Water

- Would like to get away from acres of parking lots. Suggestion is if the project is going to cover a certain amount, must put in a parking structure. Another suggestion, the amount of impervious surface might require a parking structure. Need to encourage the use of pervious surface. Also want to encourage underground parking.
- The City is doing a lot in regards to sustainability. The Master Plan speaks of it and the zoning ordinance keeps it in mind.
- Underground infiltration is one reason that impervious surfaces are not proposed. It is cheaper to do.
- Need to have some incentives for using pervious surfaces.

Shoreland Regulations

- Does not cover fresh water, only salt water.
- New rules starting April 1, 2008. Sagamore Creek and North and South Mill Ponds will have 100 foot buffer.
- The State is pretty strict in regards to protection so may not need to increase our protection.

Buffers

- What to do with storm water systems already in the buffer. Might be better to take it out and leave it all manmade wetlands. Worried about the interpretation by attorneys.
- There should be some setback from the manmade wetlands that have been around a long time. The tendency is to cut the grass right up to the side of the swale. There should be a setback to wetland vegetation.
- Would like to see in 10.813.41 (Vice Chairman Horrigan's recommendations) the word "Further" removed and require a 100 foot buffer zone for storm water drainage systems.

At 5:35 p.m., the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Good
Conservation Commission Secretary

These minutes were approved at the Conservation Commission meeting on December 12, 2007.

