

**MINUTES OF THE
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
PUBLIC UNDEVELOPED LANDS ASSESSMENT (PULA) COMMITTEE MEETING**

PLANNING DEPARTMENT CONFERENCE ROOM

3:30 P.M.

OCTOBER 29, 2008

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Steve Miller; Vice Chairman James Horrigan; Members, Allison Tanner, Skye Maher, and Alternates Mary Ann Blanchard, Richard Adams

MEMBERS ABSENT: Eva Powers, Barbara McMillan, Brian Wazlaw

ALSO PRESENT: Peter Britz, Environmental Planner

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

August 7, 2008
September 3, 2008
October 2, 2008

Ms. Tanner made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Adams. The motion passed by a unanimous vote.

There was discussion concerning the activities of other City committees that might impact the work that this committee was doing. Chairman Miller thought it might be a good idea to send a letter to other boards informing them of what the goals of the PULA committee are for better coordination. It was suggested that the letter be sent to the City Council and then it could be dispersed to the various boards from there.

The committee also talked about how the Natural Resources Outreach Coalition, located at the Cooperative Extension Office could be of help with the assessment. Chairman Miller stated that once they put the Request for Proposal together, it might be a good idea to sit down with someone from that organization to review it to see if they have overlooked anything.

Mr. Britz suggested that the committee come up with a "wish list" of tasks that they would like to see a consultant complete. He also pointed out that they need to identify all of the properties in the inventory and the assessment that have land and water conservation funds associated with them. Ms. Blanchard said that it would be helpful to get an idea of some of the restrictions that apply to those funds.

II. OUTLINE OF WORK NEEDED FOR PULA

Chairman Miller stated that the work for the committee today was to come up with a list of tasks to include in the Request for Proposal.

At this point in the meeting, there was significant discussion concerning the Jones Avenue site as one of the possible sites for the middle school. Included in the discussion was the topic of playing fields, current and future uses and needs. Also discussed was how the Conservation Commission could effectively engage in the process. Chairman Miller stated that he would speak to the Mayor about how the Commission could become more involved. Vice Chairman Horrigan stated that he would be very comfortable in making a statement in advance of any hearings concerning the Jones Avenue property because he felt it was such a unique piece of property. He would also discuss with him the idea of writing a letter to the City Council informing them of the committee's work as well as to try to ascertain the future needs of the Recreation and School Departments with regards to playing fields.

The meeting continued with the committee forming the following list of tasks to be included in the Request for Proposal:

- All habitat assessment
- Slope
- Geological assessment
- Wetland of all types
- Forest
- Grassland
- GIS mapping
- Ecological assessment – land types, then rare and native plants, species that use it, focus on the uplands
- Baseline assessment – is there dumping, what to know the change over time
- Soil assessment
- Identify unique communities

The committee also made a list of possible uses to be identified for various parcels:

- Passive recreation
- Active recreation
- Natural playground
- Conservation protection
- Education
- City facilities
- Alternative energy sites – windmills, wood lots
- Energy citing
- Water resources – drinking water
- Hunting – bow, shotgun
- Stormwater management – infiltration

Restoration potential – opportunities

There was also discussion concerning the need for affordable housing and the possibility of certain parcels being targeted for it. Mr. Britz said that the final assessment could identify those parcels that would be appropriate for development.

It was decided that Mr. Britz would work with the suggestions given to create a Request for Proposal. The draft RFP could be reviewed at the next meeting.

The next meeting was scheduled for November 20, 2008 at 3:30 p.m. in the Planning Department Conference Room.

II. ADJOURNMENT

At 5:15 p.m., it was moved, seconded, and passed unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Good
Public Undeveloped Lands Assessment Committee Recording Secretary

These minutes were approved at the PULA meeting on January 8, 2009.