

**MINUTES
CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

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

3:30 P.M.

NOVEMBER 9, 2011

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

MEMBERS ABSENT:

ALSO PRESENT: Peter Britz, Environmental Planner

I. NEW BUSINESS

1. Welcome new member – Peter Vandermark

Chairman Miller welcomed full member Peter Vandermark to his first meeting of the Conservation Commission.

2. Election of Vice Chairman

Ms. Tanner nominated Ms. Blanchard as Vice Chairman of the Commission. Ms. McMillan seconded the nomination. The vote to elect Ms. Blanchard as the new Vice Chairman passed by a unanimous (6-0) vote.

II. OLD BUSINESS

- A. Approval of minutes – September 14, 2011

It was moved, seconded, and passed unanimously (7-0) to approve the minutes as presented.

III. CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT APPLICATIONS

1. 750 Lafayette Road
750 Lafayette Road, LLC, owner
Assessor Map 244, Lots 7 & 8

Mr. Eric Saari and Mr. Eric Weinrieb of Altus Engineering and Mr. Chad Kageleiry of Summit Land Development were present to speak to the application. Mr. Saari stated that this property was the Bournival Jeep dealership on Route One. He familiarized the Commission with the site

by displaying a site plan. He said that the site was about 91% impervious surfaces. From a stormwater standpoint, almost none of that area was receiving treatment.

Mr. Saari stated that they would like to redevelop the site into two retail buildings. He showed the proposed Retail A building with 12,198 square feet and the proposed Retail B building with 17,802 square feet on the site plan. He pointed out that much of the existing pavement was sitting in the City's 100 foot wetland buffer. They would like to reduce that impervious pavement by 15%. Mr. Saari explained that the primary component of the plan was a new storm water system. They would like to install a large rain garden along Route One that would handle everything from the site. It would be treated, contained when necessary and vented out through the marsh and through the DOT system. He felt it would be a vast improvement as to what was there now.

Mr. Saari pointed out that the last page of the plans contained the landscaping plans which showed a large amount of plantings. He also pointed out that they were seeking a recommendation today for a State wetland permit that was recently submitted. Chairman Miller stated that it was nice to have the planting plan.

Ms. McMillan said that on the north side of the road, it was often flooded on Route One. She wondered how much coordinating they would do with the DOT. Mr. Saari informed the Commission that they would be working with the DOT. He explained that the DOT would be reworking the entire trunk line which would open up all of the catch basins to get them working again.

Vice Chairman Blanchard asked what they would be doing with the parking. Mr. Saari said that they were currently showing 151 parking spaces. He pointed out that they were taking away a half acre of pavement.

Vice Chairman Blanchard asked if they had a maintenance plan. Mr. Saari replied yes and said that it was in the drainage analysis and was also in the Alteration of Terrain application both of which the Commission might not see. He told them that it included yearly vacuuming of the catch basins, monthly sweeping of the parking lot, checking regularly to make sure the rain garden as draining, checking regularly to make sure the rip rap was in place, and cleaning out any sediment that had accumulated.

Ms. Tanner asked where the snow would be piled. Mr. Saari said that the snow would be pushed to the areas around the perimeter of the property. Any excess snow would be trucked off site.

Ms. Stone asked about the contamination on the property. Mr. Saari said that some of the monitoring wells would be able to remain but the ones inside of the building would be decommissioned. He added that irreparable wells and wells damaged during construction would have to be replaced. When they were finished, he said that the Department of Environmental Services would take a look at the site and determine where they would like new wells.

Ms. Stone asked if vapor barriers would be used. Mr. Saari said that that was beyond this process but he felt most likely there would be vapor barriers.

Chairman Miller asked if they would be using a geotextile on the bottom of the rain garden. Mr. Saari said no, they would be using a polypropylene sock over the pipe.

Chairman Miller asked the calculations of the rain event that the rain garden would handle and hold. Mr. Saari said it would handle the 100 year storm; however, it would not properly treat that amount of water. If it was a two year storm, it would treat it completely.

Chairman Miller asked Mr. Saari if he planned to use the raised islands in the parking lot for treatment. Mr. Saari said they were not large enough to give enough treatment.

Chairman Miller asked if all of the drainage would be going to the rain garden. Mr. Saari replied yes but added that some of the drainage on Greenleaf Woods Drive would run off in that direction.

Vice Chairman Blanchard asked Mr. Britz if there was a drainage plan for the Greenleaf Woods development. Mr. Weinrieb stated that he did research on the area and thought there was a Kimball Chase design from the mid 1980's. Vice Chairman Blanchard pointed out that a Greenleaf Woods project collapsed at one point but was re-started.

Chairman Miller pointed out that there was tree clearing at the back of the property. Ms. McMillan asked if there was any opportunity to do any plantings in that area. Mr. Saari said they were proposing to plant white cedars and an elm along the back of the property. They would also be placing a fence to help buffer it from the adjoining property.

Ms. McMillan asked for the percentages of the new impervious surface. Mr. Saari told her the new percentage would be 77% impervious surface.

Vice Chairman Blanchard asked how many underground tanks were on the property. Mr. Saari told her there were none now but there were twenty one tanks or dispensing posts at one time.

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

Ms. Tanner made a motion to recommend approval of the application as presented to the Planning Board. The motion was seconded by Ms. McMillan. Chairman Miller asked for discussion.

Ms. Stone stated that she would like to add the stipulation that vapor barriers are added to the foundations of both proposed buildings.

Ms. McMillan commented that it was an exciting plan and that a lot of effort had been put into it.

Hearing no other discussion, Chairman Miller called for the vote. The motion to recommend approval of the application as presented to the Planning Board with the following stipulation passed by a unanimous (7-0) vote:

- 1) That vapor barriers are added to the foundations of both proposed buildings.

IV. STATE WETLANDS BUREAU PERMIT APPLICATIONS

- A. Standard Dredge and Fill Application
 750 Lafayette Road
 750 Lafayette Road, LLC, owner
 Assessor Map 244, Lots 7 & 8

Vice Chairman Blanchard made a motion to recommend approval of the application as presented to the State Wetlands Bureau with the following stipulation:

- 1) That vapor barriers are added to the foundations of both proposed buildings.

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

The motion to recommend approval of the application as presented to the State Wetlands Bureau with the following stipulation passed by a unanimous (7-0) vote:

- 1) That vapor barriers are added to the foundations of both proposed buildings.

- B. Standard Dredge and Fill Application
 Prescott Park
 City of Portsmouth, owner
 Assessor Map 104, Lot 1

Mr. Jeff Murray of CMA Engineering, Mr. Steve McHenry of McHenry Architecture, Mr. John Moynihan, General Manager of Prescott Park Arts Festival, and Dan Plummer, a member of the PPAF Board of Directors were present to speak to the application.

Mr. Murray stated that the project encompassed the consolidating of three individual buildings for sound, lighting, and merchandising, into a new single building. The project also included the renovation of the existing pavilion building. He explained that the support building was inside the 100 foot tidal buffer zone but the pavilion building was outside the zone. Both buildings were within the shoreland protection zone and they have already submitted their application pertaining to that.

Mr. Murray explained that the support building would be located in approximately the same location as the current merchandise building and deck. It would be a 16' x 26' permanent building and would replace the three existing buildings on the site. This would allow the site to gain some green space. Mr. Murray said that the City was participating in some of the cost but fund-raising would raise the rest of the funds.

Vice Chairman Blanchard asked when the work would be started. Mr. Murray said it would depend on how successful the fund-raising was. He said the support building was something they would like to do first, hopefully in the spring. The pavilion building was a long range plan.

Vice Chairman Blanchard asked if this project was in response to an increase in attendance. Mr. Moynihan stated that concessions were not changing but the bathrooms were being expanded. He added that the support building was just a consolidation of several smaller buildings.

Chairman Miller asked if any trees would be removed. Mr. Murray said one mature tree would need to be removed to accommodate the pavilion renovations. No trees would be removed for the support building.

Ms. McMillan asked where the run off from the support building would go. Mr. Murray said that it would sheet flow across the sidewalk areas. They were not proposing any new drainage structures; however, he pointed out that the pavilion building would have gutters.

Chairman Miller asked if there was a volunteer group that maintained the gardens. It was determined that City staff maintained the gardens. Chairman Miller thought it would be a good idea to use rain barrels to increase awareness of conserving water resources. Ms. McMillan thought there might be a way to run the water to the gardens. She also pointed out that she was still trying to get the gardens next door to remove the purple loosestrife.

Chairman Miller asked if there were any more questions. Hearing none, he asked for a motion.

Ms. McMillan made a motion to recommend approval of the application as presented to the State Wetlands Bureau with the following stipulation:

1. That the applicant explores the possibility of directing the roof top drainage to the nearby gardens.

The motion was seconded by Ms. Tanner. Chairman Miller asked for discussion.

Ms. Tanner stated that a rain barrel would work as well. Chairman Miller added that it would also be possible to hard plumb a pipe right into a garden.

Hearing no other discussion, Chairman Miller called for the vote. The motion to recommend approval of the application as presented to the State Wetlands Bureau with the following stipulation passed by a unanimous (7-0) vote:

1. That the applicant explores the possibility of directing the roof top drainage to the nearby gardens.

Ms. Blanchard asked if there was any money for projects to reduce invasive species. Mr. Britz said that there was probably some grant money that could be applied for but they would need to have a plan. He added that the Peirce Island Committee might be a source of funds as well.

V. OTHER BUSINESS

1. Half day service project for 4-5 Boy Scouts

Mr. Britz stated that some Boy Scouts helped with the loop trail project and has asked if there were any other projects they could participate in. He encouraged the Commission to think of other projects that could be organized. He felt that if they did not keep the volunteers engaged that they would lose them for future projects.

Chairman Miller suggested putting together an active list of projects and an active list of volunteers.

Ms. Tanner said that they could use the guide that Mark West put together. She added that she would like to see a community garden off of Route 33.

Vice Chairman Blanchard asked who in the City would be knowledgeable enough to work with the volunteers. Mr. Britz said that the most knowledgeable people would be the Conservation Commission. Ms. McMillan said that Kevin Lucy from DES would come and help train people about invasive species.

Mr. Vandermark asked about the three organizations that were involved with the loop trail. Mr. Britz said the City, the State, and the Creek Farm were owners. Mr. Vandermark commented that he walked the trail recently and thought it was great. He added that some areas of signage on the trail were a bit confusing. Mr. Britz agreed.

Switching topics, Vice Chairman Blanchard asked the status of the Sagamore Creek land. Mr. Britz said that the Commission's recommendation was forwarded to the City Council. The City Council would take up the recommendation at their next meeting.

2. Update on Little Harbor Loop Trail

Discussed under Other Business agenda item #1.

3. Update on Goelet (48 Ball Street) plan

Mr. Britz shared the 48 Ball Street planting plan with the Commission and commented that it was a really nice plan. He told the Commission that the owners were open to having the Commission stop by and take a look at it.

In additional business, Mr. Britz discussed a memo from City attorney Robert Sullivan stating a potential conflict of interest of having the Conservation Commission consider acquisition of some or all of the Sanderson land on Spinney Road at the same time that the owner may be appearing before the Planning Board for subdivision approval. It was advised to put discussion of any acquisition on hold while the City focused on any development proposals.

Mr. Britz also informed the Commission that he was applying for a grant from NOAA with regard to planning around climate change. They would be looking at areas that were vulnerable to climate change. He asked the Commission if they were supportive of the idea and if so, he would like a letter of recommendation from them to accompany the application. The Commission was supportive.

Vice Chairman Blanchard stated that she hoped the Commission had information at their next meeting about the possibility of naming the loop trail and the Sagamore Island in honor and in memory of past Conservation Commission members Alan Sturgis and Jim Horrigan. It was uncertain as to what the process would be. Ms. Tanner also suggested remembering Clotilde Strauss.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

At 4:45 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 December 14, 2011.