

MINUTES  
MAYOR'S BLUE RIBBON COMMITTEE  
ON THE  
SAGAMORE CREEK LAND  
7:30 A.M. – Wednesday, February 11, 2015  
City Hall – Conference Room A

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1. CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Spear called the meeting to order at 7:35 a.m.

**Members Present:**

Councilor Eric Spear, Chair  
Councilor Chris Dwyer  
John Mikolajczyk, Resident  
Lennie Mullaney, School Board  
Representative Alison Pyott, Resident  
Kory Sirmaian, Recreation Board Representative  
Allison Tanner, Conservation Commission Representative

**Staff Advisors Present:**

David Moore, Community Development Director, City Manager Designee  
Peter Britz, Environmental Planner/Sustainability Coordinator

2. Consideration of Minutes – February 4, 2015

School Board member Mullaney moved to accept the minutes as presented, seconded by Recreation Board member Sirmaian. Motion passed.

3. Overview of parcel background

David Moore gave a brief presentation regarding: *(Power point presentation available on Cityofportsmouth.com)*

- the Peirce Island Master Plan Implementation from 1999-present
- Creek Farm Public Access Improvements
- Sagamore Creek Land in context to other public conservation parcels
- City of Portsmouth Canoe-Kayak Trail
- City-owned undeveloped land
- Assembly of Creek Land parcels over time;
- and the use and discussions acquisition of the parcel through parcels for the last 100 years

4. Site environmental characteristics and past work

Peter Britz gave a brief presentation regarding: *(Power point presentation available on Cityofportsmouth.com)*

- Citywide wetlands
- Vernal Pool focus areas
- City owned and Public Undeveloped Land Assessment (PULA) properties
- Jones Avenue Property (PULA 69-73) Photos taken by Allison Tanner

Chairman Spear stated he would like to include the Conservation Commission recommendation of stewardship of various parcels in the recommendation to the Council.

Councilor Dwyer asked if the Conservation Commission has stewardships for the Creek Farm and Peirce Island properties. Peter Britz stated that the Conservation Commission helped build the trails at Creek Farm and does continue to steward the property along with the community stewardship. He stated that Peirce Island has its own Blue Ribbon Committee. He stated that in regards to partnerships, the Conservation Commission can help with planning events to help get the word out. He stated the goal is to revisit the existing reports and the properties and make sure that the Conservation values are maintained. He stated that the stewards will revisit and monitor the properties and decide which uses and activities are better for which areas. He stated they currently have 70% of the tracking information in a database and in the Spring they will begin monitoring and reporting various data.

Discussion ensued regarding raising awareness of the availability of the open spaces to the public and the possible negative impacts to the conservation efforts including going off trails, mountain biking, trash, parking and dogs. Some of the positive aspects of people utilizing the various open space land in the City include mental and physical well-being, connecting with nature, disconnecting from technology, etc. In general, it was agreed that having a variety of open space lands available and known to the public would help prevent against over usage of any one of them.

Discussion was also held regarding signage which could be installed at various areas with educational items about the flora/fauna etc. and therefore, the more people learn about properties they are visiting, the more apt they are to protect and take care of it.

Regarding a Kayaking/Canoeing landing being added as part of this parcel, it would need to have as little impact on the salt marsh as possible. Ms. Tanner stated that the Conservation Commission regularly reviews boat launches and would be able to advise on this location.

The Committee consensus was that it is important to keep in the forefront the particular 66 acre parcel that is in the scope of the charge from the Mayor.

Chairman Spear stated that in framing the initial report back to the Council in April/May, it would be towards passive recreation but with Conservation in mind right from the beginning.

Councilor Dwyer feels that the Conservation Commission should report to the City Council as a preface to this Committee's initial report. Peter Britz explained that they are currently applying for a grant in relation to the stewardship program, water quality improvements, etc. and should be hearing back on it in February/March.

Mr. Sirmaian asked what percentage of the parcel is made up of the landfill and is there anything we need to be aware of in regards to restrictions going forward. Peter Britz stated the landfill is approximately 7 acres and it is capped. He continued that because it is capped, we cannot dig down into the ground or disturb the surface, but it can be used otherwise. He stated there is also a potential to use it as an energy resource.

Finally access to the property and between other properties was discussed and in regards to any possible parking areas, it should be gravel or dirt and not paved so that water can be absorbed and not cause runoff issues.

## 5. Public Comment

Chairman Spear asked if anyone wished to speak:

David Foreman, Tidewatch Condominiums - asked for further clarification of the "6F" restriction which had been mentioned during the presentation.

Peter Britz explained. that the "6F" restriction means that it obligates the successors and assigns of the property to that recreational use in perpetuity.

Mr. Foreman stated he would like to see a legal restriction placed on the property that limits development forever.

Suzie Hamblett, Tidewatch Condominiums - stated that if the area located near the Elks property is used as a launch area, then the Elks would end up having to oversee the parking area. She also stated that another reason that people sometimes go off trail when walking is because of debris that has fallen during storms and so they have to make another path.

Sue Mellin, Tidewatch Condominiums - asked if this information would be available on the website and when. David Moore stated that all of the information would be up within the hour after the meeting.

Chairman Spear announced the next meeting would be held March 4, 2015 at 7:30 a.m. and would focus on the landfill portion of the property.

## 6. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 9:05 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Valerie A. French  
Recording Secretary