

**ACTION SHEET
CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

**1 JUNKINS AVENUE
PORTSMOUTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE
EILEEN DONDERO FOLEY COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

3:30 P.M.

October 12, 2022

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Barbara McMillan; Vice Chair Samantha Collins; Members: Allison Tanner, Lynn Vaccaro, and Jessica Blasko (via ZOOM), Thaddeus Jankowski and Alternate: Abigail Gindele

MEMBERS ABSENT:

ALSO PRESENT: Peter Britz, Environmental Planner/Sustainability Coordinator and Kate Homet, Associate Environmental Planner

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I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. September 14, 2022

*After due deliberation, the Commission voted to **approve** the minutes as amended.*

II. WORK SESSIONS

1. 67 Ridges Court
Jeffrey & Melissa Foy, Owners
Map 207, lot 59

The applicant discussed the project with the Conservation Commission members. No formal was taken.

III. STATE WETLAND BUREAU APPLICATIONS (OLD BUSINESS)

1. Major Impact
41 Pickering Avenue
Esthers Marina, LLC, Owner
Map 102, Lot 25

*After due deliberation, the Commission voted to recommend **approval** to the State Wetlands Bureau as presented.*

IV. OTHER BUSINESS

1. Update on Conservation Lands (non-public session)

Ms. Tanner made a motion to move the update on conservation lands to the end of the agenda. Ms. Gindele seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Tanner made a motion to go into non-public session. Ms. Gindele seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Tanner made a motion to seal the minutes of the non-public session. Ms. Gindele seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

2. CIP Funds Discussion

Chair McMillan introduced this item with an update on the letter to the City Council requesting the \$500,000 for land acquisition items in the Capital Improvement Plan. It has been sent to the City Council, the Mayor, and the City Manager. She will speak to this letter at the December 14th Planning Board meeting where they decide to adopt CIP requests and then it will be sent to the City Council where Chair McMillan will again present it.

Ms. Tanner mentioned that she will not be around for the November meeting.

Ms. Tanner brought up that the City of Dover is looking at a program for when developers want to increase density on their property. This program would give developers an option to pay for increased density and that money would go into a conservation fund for the City. This would be an alternative to applying for a variance for density.

Mr. Jankowski had submitted four residential Capital Improvement Plan requests that were included in the packet. These requests included:

1. Funding for a commercial-grade steamer to kill weeds without pesticides or herbicides. Dover has one that they built themselves so that they do not have to use weed killer. They use it on the sidewalks and sides of roads. This would also have an added benefit of sanitizing surfaces. He had talked to Peter Rice about it previously and was told that there was not enough funding for it.
2. Funding for a deep tine aerator which could be used twice a year to aerate all the city parks. This was also something he had previously discussed with Peter Rice who expressed interest.
3. \$500,000 a year to transition the City to all electric landscaping equipment. There are more charging stations going up and electric infrastructure is growing in this area which will provide a better landscape for these types of tools
4. A pot of money that can be used for land conservation, recreation, and historic preservation. Mr. Jankowski proposed that one percent of the annual budget be used for this, which would be about \$1,000,000 a year. He does not believe that \$500,000 is enough.

Ms. Tanner also submitted a proposal to the Capital Improvement Plan as a resident. This regarded tree planting and having the City use its buying power to work with residents that would like to have trees on their property. There is supposed to be a number of trees that the City plants each year but enabling residents to plant would be helpful, especially by reducing financial burdens on the resident.

Mr. Britz mentioned that the public improvement submissions to the Capital Improvement Plan would not be put at the end of the plan this year as per usual and the City Council is making a more concerted effort this year to bring up the resident requests and they will include it on an upcoming Council agenda. This will provide an opportunity for the public to speak to it as well as hear some of the proposals. The December 15th Planning Board meeting is when they will vote to send certain requests to the Council, this is likely when they will take public input. The City Council will also have an upcoming public meeting with public input.

3. Standardizing Site Walks

Mr. Britz introduced this topic about site walks, mentioning that staff would like to see site walks become more regular for Conservation Commission applications. This would mean a set site walk date, exactly one week before each meeting, at 3:30 p.m. This would be the first Wednesday of the month and would reduce the need for further polling and scheduling if it is a standing date each month.

4. Digital Wetland Delineation Requirements

Ms. Tanner made a motion to move the Other Business item 'Digital Wetland Delineation Requirements' to the first item under Other Business. This motion was seconded by Vice Chair Collins. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Britz introduced this item and mentioned that City staff have been considering asking applicants for digital files of their wetland buffer and boundary delineations when they apply for a wetland conditional use permit. With updated delineations on file, the City could then prepare a higher resolution wetland map for the City of Portsmouth that could utilize these small-scale delineations to provide greater accuracy. This is not currently a requirement within the ordinance, but the Commission could ask for them from applicants that come in with delineations.

Mr. Riker requested to make a few comments on this potential new stipulation. His concern was how the information would be used by the City once it entered the City's GIS database. His hesitation lies in where property owners and applicants will have paid for delineations to be done and potential neighbors in the future might be able to request this data from the City for free when it is technically owned by the property owner who originally paid for it. This would also be affiliated with the wetland scientist who delineated it and stamped it.

Mr. Britz mentioned that staff will have to have a conversation with the Legal Department to see what they can require and what kind of impacts that could have to a contractor in the future with liability and permissions.

5. Boundary Marker Signs

Kate Homet introduced this topic and mentioned that she and Mr. Britz had been discussing how there is a requirement in the ordinance for wetland boundary markers. There is interest to start requiring these marker signs be installed with new applicants and there is preference for them to be purchasing City-made boundary marker signs. Ms. Homet modeled some sign designs for Portsmouth based off of a sign company's examples and the advice of the Exeter Conservation Commission staff member, Kristen Murphy. She is proposing that the Conservation Commission pick a design that would be preferred for City use, order a small, bulk amount for a trial run, and then sell them to applicants to have consistent signage across the City.

After discussion among the Commission, the preferred material is metal and not plastic. The preferred wording is City of Portsmouth, Do Not Disturb or Cut with a simple graphic along with the City seal.

6. Mr. Jankowski brought up an addition Other Business item, a standing sustainable land care subcommittee update.

Mr. Jankowski had a meeting with a NOFA Connecticut representative and Diana Carpinone to talk about how they are holding a live accreditation program for NOFA that will be in Portsmouth in the spring of 2023. He wanted to verify that one of the official sponsors of this training program would be the Portsmouth Conservation Commission. This will be a four day course running from 9-4 p.m. and they expect 30-40 students. Mr. Jankowski will talk to the library about holding it there. They will promote this via the landscape associations and it will be geared towards landscaping professionals.

Vice Chair Collins mentioned that the Discovery Center or the Urban Forestry Center would be a great location for the class as well.

Chair McMillan said that October 19th is what she had written down for the next subcommittee meeting.

Mr. Jankowski said that there would not be much to update the group on.

Vice Chair Collins mentioned that she did have some ordinance updates for that meeting.

Chair McMillan will have updates as well on the brochure. The meeting will be October 19th at 3:30 p.m. and Mr. Jankowski will come up with an agenda.

Ms. Tanner made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Ms. Gindele seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

V. ADJOURNMENT

*At 5:31 p.m., the Commission voted to **adjourn** the meeting.*