

SOMERSWORTH CONSERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES OF MEETING

April 10, 2019

MEMBERS PRESENT: Scott Orzechowski, Chair

Dale Smith-Kenyon, Vice Chair

Larry Hamilton

Angela Ficco

Mercedes O'Donohue

MEMBERS ABSENT: Sarah McGraw, Treasurer

Jeremy Rhodes, Secretary

STAFF PRESENT: Shanna B. Saunders, Director of Planning and Community Development

The meeting was called to order at 19:00.

- 1) Approval of meeting minutes February 13, 2019; March 13, 2019; Workshop meeting March 13, 2019

Tabled as minutes not available. S. Orzechowski will reach out to J. Rhodes to follow up.

- 2) Public Comment:

None

- 3) New Business

- A) Mayor's Preserve Somersworth Committee

S. Orzechowski reports he met with the Mayor to discuss joint sub-committee composed of members from both the Conservation Commission and Sustainability Committee to meet regularly with the Mayor. The goal would be to come up with a joint long-term plan for conservation, sustainability that would mirror/ support City Master Plan.

M. Donohue inquired as to function of Sustainability Committee. S. Orzechowski reviewed function/ role of committee as well as current and past actions/ issues addressed by the Sustainability Committee. Discussed: Refers to environmental, cultural, infrastructure long term sustainability; potential impacts on sustainability of

city in these areas; S. Saunders gave example of street update would look at all modes of use, not just vehicular as well as utilities on streets; cited streets due for update in near future: Constitutional Way, Maple St., Main St.; cost concerns for any project could be part of sustainability e.g., pay more for a project that would last longer, require less repair, more environmentally friendly and therefore cost less in the long run. Other examples included issues surrounding single use plastics, ways to encourage reduction in their use; Community Garden; Tree Ordinance/ Tree Board, identify process of decisions made to cut/ replace trees; Work with other states e.g. Maine re:safe drinking water for Somersworth and other N.H. municipalities that use the Salmon Falls River and others in the watershed, including cleanup of European Nyad in Milton Three Ponds; and lastly, effects of prolonged idling of diesel engines.

The Preserve Somersworth meetings would average once monthly, include three members from each committee/ commission. Commission members will be: S. Orzechowski, A. Ficco, and D. Smith-Kenyon. D. Smith- Kenyon asked when meetings will occur. S. Orzechowski reports scheduling will be up to committee members. M, Donohue asked what role will be of this committee. S. Orzechowski replied will help coordinate Vision 2020 and Maser Plan goals.

B) Other new business

A. Ficco reports concern related to information she reviewed on NH Fish and Game website re: posting land for "No Trespassing" or "No Hunting." She referenced NH RSA 212:34 and is concerned that if trails at various parks not posted, e.g. Malley Farm, that City will be open to suits if injuries to users occurred. "Duty to warn" of any dangerous conditions that may exist. S. Saunders reports the ordinance is for private land owners, not municipalities which follow different set of ordinances/ laws. City of Somersworth does not allow hunting in city parks. Malley Farm is a park, therefore, no hunting allowed. Cited Chapter 30 of City of Somersworth Ordinances.

4) A) MEMBER ITEMS. SUB-COMMITTEE ITEMS AND REPORTS

S. Saunders reports Mayor has designated _____ on April 17, 2019 at 17:00.

Site walk scheduled for Malley Farm Trails Saturday April 13, 2019. Reviewed meeting location

B) Update re: property 53 Coles Pond Rd

Discussed status of process in attempts to acquire land at 53 Coles Pond Rd. S. Saunders reviewed conversation she had with City Assessor re: value of land, both lot with building and adjacent open space. Reviewed suggestions from B. Belmore, City Manager. Grant application completed for Great Bay Resource Protection Partnership, Plans 1 and 2, March 31, 2019. Grant will match 50% to cover survey, appraisal, legal fees, title expenses and recording fees. S. Saunders reports there is another grant program that would apply as it is NH DES Drinking Water Protection. It would provide 50% match (?) up to \$180,000 for acquisition (?), legal and other fees. Usually

application due in late Summer or Fall. S. Saunders will follow up re: deadline and let S. Orzechowski know. Next step will be meeting between S. Orzechowski, S. Saunders, and B. Belmore the week of April 15, 2019. Finance Committee authorized Grant applications/ costs associated.

L. Hamilton reports he will be attending training workshop for grant writing week of April 15, 2019. S. Saunders will also be attending and they will work on pending grant application together.

C) Signage for the Frank Richardson Trail

Not discussed.

D) "No Hunting" signage at City Parks

See above Member Items

E) Malley Farm N.E. Cottontail habitat

A. Ficco reports noted evidence of cottontails, appropriate habitat. Need DNA evaluation of cottontail pellets to identify if Eastern vs New England Cottontail. NH Fish and Game will release NE Cottontails in appropriate habitats at various times. One probable NE Cottontail sighted at Farm. Prior to any release of Cottontails, S. Orzechowski will discuss with Mayor, obtain support of Conservation Easement in habitat area. A. Ficco inquired as to next step. S. Orzechowski will meet with Mayor and B. Belmore.

F) Japanese knotweed control at Idlehurst School and Malley Farm

A. Ficco reports more knotweed found on Stackpole Road, noted discarded piles of it in power line easement. Recommendation made (?) to include budget item in Annual Budget for cleanup/ control measures. S. Saunders reports it requires licensed herbicidal applicator and appropriate personnel to use. S. Saunders reports Babe Ruth League having problem with the Japanese Knotweed at The Pines baseball field, especially behind home plate. They reported unsuccessful attempts to control with cutting. As did not remove cuttings, has grown tripled in growth. S. Saunders spoke with Mike Bobinski, Director of DPW, re: workshop in methods of more effective removal.

UNH Co-op Extension recommends smothering it with thick, dark tarps and several inches of mulch on top of the tarp. One would need to cover an area larger than actual patch as knotweed will attempt to find light. Theory is that knotweed will be unable to make chlorophyll/ food and will starve entire plant, including root system. A. Ficco suggested informative newsletter on city website as this problem affects many parts of Somersworth. S. Saunders speculated UNH Co-op Extension may have informative booklet that could be used.

G) Easement documentation audit

D. Smith-Kenyon suggested workshop meeting at 18:00 prior to May 8, 2019 Conservation Commission Meeting. Commission concurred and S. Orzechowski will schedule.

Motion to adjourn meeting made by D. Smith-Kenyon. Seconded by L Hamilton.

Meeting adjourned at 20:05

Respectfully submitted:

Dale Smith-Kenyon

Conservation Commission Vice Chair