

Somersworth Conservation Commission
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
April 12, 2023

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jeremy Degler
Kevin Dodds
Angela Ficco
Scott Orzechowski
Jeremy Rhodes
Dale Smith-Kenyon

MEMBERS ABSENT: Doug Bryar
Sarah Childs

STAFF PRESENT: Dana Crossley, Planning Technician

The meeting was called to order by S. Orzechowski at 6:09 pm.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING(S)

A. Ficco moves to accept as submitted; K. Dodds seconds. Motion carries 6-0-0

2. PUBLIC COMMENT (five minutes per person and subject to closure in interest of time)

Jeff Wituszynski, resident of 17 Coles Pond Road, speaks; he noticed the Lily Pond Wildlife Management Plan in the agenda, and is interested in the plan being discussed and whether residents will be represented. Mr. Wituszynski is a long-term resident of the neighborhood, is licensed to work with wildlife by the state, and has been involved in work to manage beaver activity on the site that would have led to flooding if not managed. The commission and Mr. Wituszynski discussed allowable activities (hunting, non-vehicular use of existing trails – but not development of new ones) and the purpose of the plan (to manage the conservation parcel). The commission and Mr. Wituszynski agreed that his involvement with the land would provide extremely valuable insight into the plan to be developed and will work together on this effort.

3. CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT REQUESTS

None

4. NEW BUSINESS

A. **Any new correspondence-** None

B. Any new business to come before the Commission

The City is looking at grants related to the master plan which could assist with a full Natural Resource Inventory. Completion of this inventory is an open commission responsibility, and we could either use grant money or funds from our account to do so. The commission notes that our funding source (current use taxes) is either exhausted or nearly so for the City, and that future funding from the Council is likely needed.

5. OLD BUSINESS

A. **Easement monitoring-** No Update

B. **Any Correspondence regarding old business-** No Update

C. MEMBER ITEMS, SUB-COMMITTEE ITEMS, AND REPORTS

i. Lily Pond wildlife management plan

No further update beyond that discussed in public comment.

ii. **Invasives plan sub-committee report**

No Update.

iii. **Exploration of potential bridge and water bars at Malley Farm**

The Commission has looked at the prospect of a trail at Malley Farm in the past; the aim here would be to connect the community, address erosion, and improve conditions at the site. Given conditions and demands for a full trail, the Commission has been working toward a lighter approach, beginning with water bars to attempt to control erosion and potentially a stream crossing. Trails could then be added incrementally, including a more permanent story walk. A. Ficco and K. Dodds had looked into the prospect of a trail parallel to the river, including connection with state officials from Land Management and the Trails Bureau. Grant options were being examined, as well as involving the NHACC.

City Councilor Gerding has walked the site and believes that a trail would be beneficial as well; he joins us at this meeting. He notes that there appears to be an old trail behind the ballfield, including a bridge crossing with water bars, a pond, and other evidence of a prior trail. He had contacted the City Manager, who directed him to the commission. Councilor Gerding is willing to assist with leadership on this effort. A. Ficco and K. Dodds will work with him on this. S. Orzechowski notes that behavioral ecology will be important for this trail, as will the wetland present on the site, as well as off-road vehicle usage.

The prospect of a subcommittee is raised; Councilor Gerding will look into the administrative rules governing this. A site walk has been scheduled for April 19 at 4PM to examine the site and discuss possible actions.

D. Any other old business that may come before the Commission

J. Degler notes that we're approaching Vernal Pool season, and he is looking for a list to check. The borders of the Sunningdale parcel are recommended; there are a number of pools on the site, and the trails bureau and Fish & Game are already involved with the site. Trails on the site are being closed to Off-Road Vehicle with the cooperation of the Tri-City Trailblazers ATV club; we'll also need to sign these trails for prohibited use.

6. TREASURER'S REPORT

Starting Balance: \$191,146.53

Interest Income: \$2,189.07

Ending Balance: \$193,335.60

D. Smith-Kenyon moves to adjourn; J. Degler seconds. Motion carries 6-0-0

Meeting adjourned at 6:58 PM.

Respectfully submitted:

Jeremy Rhodes
Conservation Commission Secretary