

**Conservation Committee Minutes, 7/11/2018, City Council Chambers, City Hall,
One Government Way.**

Attendees:

Scott Orzechowski, Chair; Dale Smith-Kenyon, Vice Chair; Sarah McGraw, Treasurer;
Angela Ficco; Shane Conlin; Larry Hamilton

City Staff/Other Present:

Shanna Saunders, Planning Director

Absent:

Jeremy Rhodes, Secretary

Minutes

Meeting called to order at 19:05 by Scott Orzecowski

- Prior to approval of meeting minutes, informational discussion was held by Planner Saunders re: right to know laws and posting requirements of Land Use Boards as well as other City meetings. State Bill 91A requires that: 1) all meetings must have minimum of 48hr notice prior to the meeting; 2) by 144hrs (6 calendar days) post meeting, minutes shall be posted online as Drafts. Once minutes are approved, the final version(s) will be posted. Anyone may request copies of information from the City. If there is a quorum of Commission/ Committee Members outside of scheduled meetings, that gathering/ communication (e.g. Email) may constitute a “meeting” and as such, meets the above requirements of notice and recording/ posting of minutes. When responding to Emails, do not reply to “all,” rather reply only to sender or directly to Planning Secretary or Planner. The Commission may update rules of procedure after it/ they are put on agenda. Will add “144hrs” information to agenda for next month to allow inclusion in rules.

McGraw inquired about ability of Commission to have “Minute Taker” who was not a member of the Commission. Planner replied it had been considered but would be cost prohibitive as well as logistically difficult due to number of committees, boards, and commissions that would be eligible.

Review of past minutes: Approval of meeting minutes: 4/11/18 amended to correct: under Attendees last name of Dale “Scott-Kenyon” to “Smith-Kenyon”; corrected “lightening” under section 2B: Old Business to “lighting.” Motion for approval as amended made by Ficco, seconded by McGraw, passed by Commission; Minutes of 5/9/18: discussion: The Chair questioned if quorum was present at that meeting. He was advised that as the number of Members at that time was 5, 3 members constituted a quorum. Motion made for approval by McGraw, seconded by Ficco, approved by Commission with Smith-Kenyon abstaining.

2) Old Business:

1. A) Commission Handbook update:

Smith-Kenyon reviewed information from review of Handbook:

Annual report is required by the Commission. Discussion ensued: may be as simple as Data page with facts. Orzechowski suggested keeping of Commission calendar to keep track of this and other requirements so as to avoid missed deadlines. Planner Saunders reviewed that 2017 Annual Report of was in process now, draft should be completed soon. Commission may be able to get report into Report. Planner is uncertain if Annual Report refers to calendar year or fiscal year and will find out.

McGraw reviewed that the Report her parents receive is usually 1 brief synopsis of each department not more than 1 page.

Ficco reported ideas for education and outreach to help meet Commission requirements. She suggested locations to occur such as public library, schools. Discussed value of experience attending Coverts programs, low cost, volunteer requirements, what was included in workshops/ fees.

Conlin suggested copy of the City's Natural Resource Assessment be included in Member binders. Also discussed was Commission responsibility of reviewing permit applications and Conservation Easement monitoring. McGraw reports she is working on developing similar book for the Sustainability Committee. Ficco reports she has ability to obtain and print more detailed maps of Easement and other sites for Site Walks and Monitoring.

"Joe Bald" Fund: Planner will follow up to ascertain source of funds and if Commission may receive funds for this without going through City. McGraw queried if there was specific fund/ source for business expenses to the Commission. Planner Saunders reviewed \$10,000 Capital Improvement Funds available to City Depts. These typically have limited lifetime of 10yrs and must be applied for. She anticipates Funds will be freed up in Aug/ Sept. Commission may ask for money to conduct business. Could include request for "Frank Richardson Memorial Trail" signage. Ficco suggest other potential sources of funding could include The United Way for a Story Board Trail at Malley Farm. McGraw suggested possible availability from SELT. Orzechowski reported citizen Levasseur's bequest may also be source. Suggested made for resource, jurisdictions, and contacts to be added to Handbook.

State RSA will be copied by Saunders and reviewed at next meeting.

1. B) Land Conservation Strategies: Conlin asked for review of current projects Commission is involved in. Projects reviewed by Orzechowski. He also advised that NRA due for review/ update in 3 years and will require funding. Commission could apply for CIP funds, Grants. Saunders reports Council will probably primarily want grants accessed as was done initially for NRA. Commission may be able to use combination of funding sources.

McGraw initiated discussion of Commission's LTG workshop planned for Sept. Discussion ensued re: need to keep City Council involved, knowledgeable; use of constituents/ citizen advocates; outreach to Councilors, citizens for educational purposes to help meet goals. Ficco suggested potential advocate in UNH Co-operative Extension. Saunders suggested involvement of constituents would be best as well as talking directly to Council members.

Conlin reviewed his work history: NH Fish and Game for 7 hours and currently at Department of Agriculture. As result, is willing to help with grant writing applications and is familiar with potential funding sources. He and Hamilton will work together on this.

1. C) Other Old Business: Saunders provided update on status Wetlands Buffer Ordinance. Council currently reviewing Ordinances related to HDC. Saunders advised that she will keep Commission informed as to when Council will address. Suggested that Members begin direct contact with Council members and their Constituents now to educate, address concerns/ answer any questions, and facilitate understanding of importance, goals of Ordinance. Suggestions made for improving education/ outreach to public and Council such as trail walks, meet-and- greet. Orzechowski noted that he's had improved response from Council Members when he's directly engaged them. Pointed out that often Council is unaware of specific agenda items until actual meeting. This can lead to less informed decisions than what could occur with education contacts before meeting.

Conlin questioned if any designated Prime Wetlands in Somersworth. Advised there were not. Discussion: specific criteria to meet; assessment required, including function, boundaries, etc. Can be costly, would require expertise. Ficco inquired if could utilize HS students or the like. Saunders replied that such work would require Wetland Scientist or the like. Suggestion made to consider evaluation of peat bog due to uniqueness, environmental value. Other suggestions related to Lily Pond. Discussions re: education and involvement of community and Council continued. Resources to assist reviewed contacting Prof. Tom Lee of UNH, Heidi Holman, sites to use.

McGraw updated Commission of status of Landowner Letter Draft. She is looking for feedback and will send copy to Members for their individual thoughts; only reply to McGraw. She will check with Nature Conservancy for smaller, concise brochure to include with letter.

3) New Business:

1. A) Workshop Meeting with Sustainability Committee for Tree City fulfillment requirement:

Funding requirement met, often difficulties lie with location to be used or timing. Orzechowski reports there is specific list of native trees to choose from. List includes species, specific requirements, shapes, care needs, and environmental locations

to be considered. Public Works Department does the planting, Saunders does funding. Discussion of possible sites include recently renovated Millennial Park or another park; along City streets such as Main and Green. Saunders note plans in future for road upgrades and that would be best time to introduce trees at those sites. Ficco suggested Idlehurst Elementary School playgrounds as no shade there at present.

Workshop scheduled for 18:00 Wednesday 8/8/18 in Council Chambers.

1. B) Prioritization of recommendations from Somersworth NRA and C) Sustainability Committee Report Hamilton made motion to table until next meeting, seconded by McGraw. Motion unanimously accepted.
2. D) Member items and reports:

Ficco informed Commission about Storybook Trails such as the Winnie the Pooh Trail in Barrington, as well as others. She was interested in doing a Peter Rabbit story for Malley Farm to tie in with NE Cottontails. Ficco wondered how to proceed. Discussion re: other educational/themed walks ensued: Entomology walks at Mast Point Dam w/ Grantham as well as other sites. Conlin will follow up with coworker who is an entomologist and may be interested in doing such a walk at Dam or at Malley Farm. Ficco suggested she would contact Andy Fast of 4H for his expertise. Sources for funding of Storybook Trail discussed, including Wildlife Heritage Fund which received a \$600,000 bequest recently; Education Grants for Aquatic Insects.

1. E) Treasurer's Report: McGraw reports does not have most recent report from Finance Director but does not believe amount has changed
2. F) Other Business:

None

4) Workshop Business:

None

Motion made for adjournment made by Smith-Kenyon, seconded by Ficco. Motion carried and meeting adjourned at 20:44.

Respectfully submitted by Dale Smith-Kenyon, Treasurer