

MINUTES OF THE SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE

EXECUTIVE CONFERENCE ROOM

MAY 19, 2016 – 6:00 P.M.

Committee Members Present: Scott Orzechowski, Chair, City Councilor Jennifer Soldati, Angela Ficco, Doug Watson, Shanna Saunders and Michael Bobinsky.

Guests: John McPhedran, Maine DEP Office of Invasive Plants, Amy Smagula, Limnologist, and Exotic Species Program Coordinator, NH DES and Paul Susca, Drinking Water Source Protection Program, NH DES.

Chairman Orzechowski called the meeting to order at 6 pm.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Minutes of the April 21, 2016 meeting was not available; did not have a quorum for the April 21 meeting.

Presentation from the State of Maine DEP official and NHDES officials regarding the treatment of the European Naiad at the Northeast Pond.

Chairman Orzechowski introduced this agenda topic and invited John McPhedran to begin presentation.

John McPhedran discussed his background and that of his colleagues attending the meeting tonight from NH DES. John discussed the main reason he was at the City of Somersworth was to get permission from the City to apply the herbicide Diquat on the invasive weed that is starting to grow at a rapid pace at the Northeast Pond. The State of Maine requires DEP to obtain consent from any community downstream, of the water body affected; Somersworth and the Town of Berwick draws its water from the Salmon Falls River, which flows from the NE Pond, thus the connection. John provided a summary of what his presentation will cover and why he needs City consent to proceed with using an aquatic

herbicide for the treatment of the invasive weed that is not native to Maine or New Hampshire. John reported that the naiad weed was discovered by Pond volunteers and State officials and given the fast growth of this invasive weed and impact on water quality, the State needs to treat approximately 41 acres out of the 1,000 acres of the NE Pond. The State proposes to use an integrated approach to removal of the plants to halt or curb the growth of the invasive weed before further impacts to water quality. The integrated approach includes use of the Diquat aquatic weed spray, special aquatic blankets to deprive plants of light and hand removal. John plan has developed the proposed plan with officials from the State of New Hampshire DES- Water Quality as well as NH DES Invasive Plants Division on the removal plan; officials from New Hampshire support the integrated approach as well. The State of Maine's overall goal is to minimize and shrink the growth of the naiad weed while using the smallest amount of chemicals. If chemicals need to be used, Diquat is the preferred treatment for addressing the Naiad weeds.

Both John McPhedran and Amy Smagula provided in depth information about the use of Diquat in Pond, how it works on contact, applied by a licensed applicator, use of hoses and degrades in water after approximately 10-14 hours. Amy provided additional information about the application in the Pond and impacts on water supply, precautions taken and past practices used in Maine. She explained how the application would result in virtually a non-detect situation at the City's water intake on the Salmon Falls River, and offered to provide water quality monitoring on behalf of the City during the application period in the Pond. The State of Maine requires a general permit, notice of intent to the State of Maine DEP Commissioners, various community notifications and consent approvals from communities that draw water from the NE Pond or rivers and streams that flow from the Pond. Somersworth is in this category. The Town of Berwick recently reviewed the information presented by John and the Town Selectman very recently approved the request for consent by the Maine DEP.

Committee members asked many questions to John and Amy about Diquat and the integrated approach; both were able to satisfy the questions of the Committee. After discussion, Angel Ficco moved and Doug Watson seconded a motion to approve the Maine DEP integrated approach to remove or reduce the growth of the Naiad Plant at the North East Pond using Diquat and due to the relative low risk to the City's water supply; Committee members recommend approval of the Maine DEP plan to the City Council. In addition, given the technical nature of the use of the aquatic herbicide, the Committee would like the Maine DEP staff officials to make a similar presentation to the City Council for their information as well and to affirm the position of the Sustainability Committee. The motion was unanimously approved by the Committee members. This topic now will be presented at the Council Chambers as a pre meeting at 6:30pm before the Monday June 6 Council meeting.

Other topics discussed by the Committee included Mike Bobinsky providing a short report on the May 7 Spirit Up Community Day, Committee members discussed how they were not able to participate with a

booth and table at the registration location on the day of the event. Will plan to look to collaborate with other groups for next year's event to have Committee work examples on display at a booth or table.

Doug Watson gave a briefing on the Farm to School Grant program, explained there is a facilitated roundtable meeting with stakeholders and other sponsors/participants in the program on May 20. Somersworth School Department is a prime sponsor of the grant program and is active with the planning and development of the unique food initiative using local grown foods for school cafeterias and other special events. Doug also discussed how the development of the Community Garden program and Adopt a Spot program may be able to be linked in with the Food to School Grant program.

Meeting adjourned at 7:30pm.