



CITY OF DOVER

DOVER CONSERVATION COMMISSION – MINUTES

Meeting Type: Regular Meeting
Meeting Location: First Floor Conference Room - 288 Central Avenue Dover NH
Meeting Date: Monday, March 11, 2013
Meeting Time: 5:30 pm

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bill Hunt (Chair), Marcia Gasses, Lauren Jacoby, Ron Hebert, Cora Quisumbing-King, Kris Houle (Alternate)

STAFF PRESENT: Steve Bird (City Planner); Allan Krans (General Legal Counsel)

OTHERS PRESENT: Karl Leinsing, Heidi Holman, Mary Hebbard, Rick Hebbard, Sherry Sylinski, Jeffery Rowe

The meeting was convened by Chair Hunt at 5:33 PM.

1. APPROVAL OF THE PRIOR MEETING MINUTES

Gasses moved to approve the February 11, 2013 minutes, Quisumbing-King seconded. Vote: Unanimous

2. OLD BUSINESS

3. NEW BUSINESS

- A. NHDES Wetlands Permit for Karl Leinsing, Assessor's Map L, Lot 15D, zoned R-20, located at 77 Spur Road.

Karl Leinsing was present to explain the proposal, which is to conduct work adjacent to the Bellamy River in a tidal wetland to extend an existing dock by replacing a 240 sq. ft. dock with a 6 foot by 110 foot plastic float, a 11 ½ foot by 23 foot boat float tie-up and a 10 foot by 15 ½ foot jet ski tie-up. The floats will be held in place by 6 weights/anchors and chains. The increase in seasonal impact will be 420 square feet.

Houle: Where would the boat be located on the dock?

Leinsing: At the end of the dock.

Hunt confirmed with the applicant that the dock system was seasonal.

Bird: Have you received any feedback from DES yet?

Leinsing: Not yet but I did have a pre-application meeting with Dave Price.

Bird: Why did you go with the plastic dock instead of the aluminum or wood docks?

Leinsing: The plastic docks do not have the environmental issues like chemicals from the pressure treated wood and are designed with narrower bottoms to lessen the impact on the mud flats.

Gasses moved to endorse the NHDES Wetlands Permit, Hebert seconded. Vote: Unanimous

- B. Heidi Holman – NH Fish and Game Department - Discussion on the New England Cottontail Project and City Parcel off Garrison Road (Map J, Lot 3)

Heidi Holman was present to discuss the city-owned parcel off of Garrison Road and her program to create habitat for the New England Cottontail. Habitat restoration has been going on since 2009. We have been working in Dover, Durham, Lee and Madbury. It takes 5 to 10 years for land to come online after revegetation. There are 100 to 200 cottontails left in NH. We are working with Roger Williams



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Zoo to breed rabbits that can be released in the wild. We have a temporary pen at the Great Bay National Wildlife Refuge that is used to transition the rabbits. We would like to release the rabbits on the City property which has fantastic habitat existing. The parcel is adjacent to the Bellamy River Wildlife Reserve so it creates a larger contiguous area for habitat.

Houle: What invasive species are on the City parcel?

Holman: It is a mix of invasive plants that create good cover.

Gasses: This area is so thick that it is not a good area for walking.

Hebert: How do you prevent hunting after releasing the rabbits?

Holman: Hunting is restricted for this species in this section of NH.

Gasses: How does the release affect other species like deer and pheasant?

Holman: The habitat and cover are good for deer and turkey also. We do radio monitoring to monitor the survival rate after release.

Hebert: Do you work with UNH on this project?

Holman: Yes I am the coordinator for the entire state project.

Jeffery Rowe: I am an abutter to this land and I want to know why I was not notified.

Holman: This is a preliminary meeting with the Conservation Commission. We normally notify adjacent landowners prior to the release.

Rick Hebbard: That is not true. We were not notified when the state cleared trees on an adjacent lot.

Gasses: How far do the rabbits travel after release?

Holman: The rabbits stay in the thickets for the most part and do not impact neighboring gardens. They normally do not go more than one kilometer.

Gasses: The abutters need to be notified before we make a decision.

Mary Hebbard: We have the right to be notified. What diseases are being brought in by these rabbits? How much taxpayer's money has been spent so far? There are lots of predators out there.

Holman: There has been \$50,000 is state money spent, but most of the funding has come from federal grants. We received \$185,000 in the first round and \$70,000 in the second round. The rabbits are checked for disease prior to release. It is more expensive in the long run if the species is so depleted that the rabbit is added to the federal list. We test the hormone levels in the rabbits to evaluate their stress levels.

M. Hebbard: Do you have a plan for getting rid of the predators?

Holman: Not at this time, but the overall plan does contain an option to look at that in the future.

Rowe: Why do you continue to cut the other fields?

Holman: We are trying to create 20 acre areas for the rabbits, which is the minimum. By combining the City parcel with the NH Fish and Game parcels the area would exceed 40 acres, which would allow the rabbits to be safe in the middle.

Rowe: I don't want to limit my ability to hay.

Bird: I would recommend that Holman contact the neighbors to let them know about the project. I will explore the proper procedure for the Conservation Commission to follow and to determine if it is the Conservation Commission or some other board that would be granting permission.

Holman: I will contact the neighbors in the one kilometer area prior to coming back to you. I will be happy to go out in the hall and discuss this further with the folks that are here now.

Hunt: Thank for coming and providing us information of this program.



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C. Allan Krans – City of Dover General Legal Counsel – Update on Right to Know laws

Attorney Allan Krans was present to update the members on the latest right to know laws. He thanked the members for their service to the City. RSA 91-A, the state law on the right to know, is at the core value in Dover. People are interested in what is going on with their government. Municipal governments are stewards of the public trust.

Krans showed a picture of a glass house and explained how this was an analogy for transparent government. We want you to operate as open as possible.

Hebert: Not all meetings are public.

Krans: The vast majority of meetings are open and there are two primary reasons for having non-public meetings – land transactions and personal issues.

There was a general discussion on right to know issues.

Sherry Sylinski, a new resident, was present and discussed several issues with the members, including Tuttle Farm and the Cassily Community Garden.

4. REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

A. Discussion on Saving Special Places Conference – April 6, 2013

Hunt stated that members that want to attend should let Bird know as soon as possible.

B. Resignation of Conservation Commission member Deborah Calabro

Hunt reported that Deb Calabro has had to resign as a member due to health issues. She was a dedicated member and will be missed. Houle has volunteered to become a regular member.

C. Discussion on Joint Meeting with Open Lands Committee on April 8, 2013

Hunt said that the OLC asked for the joint meeting to be postponed until April because they did not have a quorum at their regular March meeting and had business to attend to. We will try to schedule it for April 8th depending on the amount of business.

5. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Update on Morrison Lane Conservation Easement Monitoring

Bird: A letter was sent to the association to inquire about the status of the management plan. Chris Wyskiel had contacted me after the last meeting to let me know that he had been asked by the Board of Directors to contact Mark West to begin the process of preparing a management plan.

6. ADJOURNMENT

Quisumbing-King motioned to adjourn at 7:08 PM. Jacoby seconded. Vote: Unanimous