



City of Keene, New Hampshire

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

City Hall

Monday, April 15, 2019

4:30 PM

2nd Floor Conference Room

Commission Members

Alexander Von Plinsky, IV, Chair
Eloise Clark, Vice Chair
Kenneth Bergman
Denise Burchsted
Councilor George Hansel

Brian Reilly
Art Walker
Thomas P. Haynes, Alternate
Dr. Steven Bill, Alternate

No visit this month

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of Meeting Minutes – March 18, 2019
3. Informational
 - a. West Street Dam – Rhode Island School of Design
 - b. Subcommittee reports
4. Discussion Items
 - a. Greater Goose Pond Forest Stewardship Plan
 - b. Community Development Department mission statement
 - c. Commission Priorities
5. New or Other Business
6. Adjournment – Next meeting date Monday, May 20, 2019

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City of Keene
New Hampshire

CONSERVATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES

Monday, March 18, 2019

4:30 PM

**2nd Floor Conference Room,
City Hall**

Members Present:

Alexander Von Plinsky IV, Chair
Councilor George Hansel
Art Walker
Brian Reilly
Thomas Haynes, Alternate

Staff Present:

Rhett Lamb, Community Development
Director/Assistant City Manager
Andy Bohannon, Director of Parks,
Recreation & Facilities

Members Not Present:

Denise Burchsted
Eloise Clark, Vice Chair
Ken Bergman

1) Call to Order

Chair Von Plinsky called the meeting to order at 4:30 PM.

2) Approval of Minutes – February 19, 2019

Councilor Hansel moved to approve the minutes of February 19, 2019, which Mr. Haynes seconded and the Conservation Commission carried unanimously.

3) Informational

**a. Updates to Section 2-774 of the City Code of Ordinances Related to
Conservation Commission Powers, Duties, and Guidelines**

Mr. Lamb informed the Conservation Commission that the City Council approved the change to Section 2-774 of the City Code of Ordinances related to the Conservation Commission. Copies of the updated section were provided to the Commission.

4) Discussion Items

a. Greater Goose Pond Forest Stewardship Plan

Mr. Lamb reported the public forum is scheduled for Tuesday, March 19th at 6:30 PM at the Michael EJ Blastos Room on Marlboro Street. He stated that Jeff Littleton and Swift Corwin will give a 20 minute presentation. Mr. Lamb noted the intent is to hear from the public and those at the first public meeting that are willing to participate.

In addition, Mr. Lamb reported that Andy Bohannon, Director of Parks, Recreation and Facilities will be going on WKBK Radio on the morning of Tuesday, March 19th on the Danny Mitchell show at 9 AM.

Mr. Haynes asked how the public forum will be set-up. Mr. Lamb responded that he and Mr. Bohannon have a call with Mr. Littleton (project consultant) tomorrow to sort out all of the

logistics and process. In addition, he noted the forum will be a facilitated series of questions. Mr. Lamb explained the intent is to let people say their piece on the document and for the Commission to review public comments at their April meeting.

Mr. Lamb added that a draft of the Greater Goose Pond Stewardship Plan has been posted to the City's website under the Conservation Commission page as well as the City's Facebook page. Mr. Haynes added that it would be nice for people to know the Conservation Commission is involved and part of the process.

Mr. Lamb recognized Mr. Corwin asking if he had anything to add pertaining to the presentation. Mr. Corwin reported they have a PowerPoint presentation and they think it would be better to talk about by example for different areas rather than talk about the numerous amounts of lots. He explained there would be a discussion about the four different areas and the basis for their recommendations. He further explained they would talk about the wildlife justification, subcultural ideas and the processes.

Mr. Lamb stated that it sounds like the intent is to be talking about using the four areas and what they are trying to achieve is not just in those areas but across the forest itself. Mr. Corwin responded in the affirmative. He noted the four areas are the north piece of the Paquette lot, the Minister's lot that is east of the Gilsum Road, the Burrows lot that is south of the pond and the Drummer Hill lot. Mr. Corwin stated they believe these lots are significantly different enough to warrant explaining why they are looking at doing different things.

Mr. Littleton added they would be showing examples of the different types of silviculture activities based on the different types of wildlife habitat management. He explained what they plan to do is provide a basic introduction of the background to the project in order to give everyone a sense of why the stewardship plan exists. Mr. Littleton stated they would go through their findings, existing conditions and then move into their recommendations. The recommendations are based on the three different themes of education, recreation, wildlife and habitat. Mr. Corwin added they would also emphasize the idea of promoting the development of the endowment fund and development of the steering committee. Mr. Littleton asked if there are certain elements or topics the Committee would like for them to cover. Mr. Haynes responded that if people have delved in deep enough they will provide recommendations or ask questions to have a better understanding. Mr. Littleton noted they plan to forego answering any questions until the end of the presentation in order to stay on target. Mr. Haynes suggested making the presentation as concise as possible and to leave more time for questions.

Mr. Littleton asked if at the end of the presentation if the City was planning on talking about a wrap up. Mr. Lamb responded this conversation still needs to take place between himself and Mr. Bohannon. He added that there does need to be introduction, a wrap up and to let people know what to expect after the meeting is over.

b. Beaugard Property Acquisition

Mr. Lamb reported the appraisal came back in and that it was not substantially different than it was in 2010. He stated they went through the City Council in December and the City Manager at that point had been authorized to negotiate with the appraisal in hand. Mr. Lamb reported they brought it back to the City Council and the City Council approved acquisition of the land at the new appraisal amount. The City Council authorized them to acquire the property after having spoken to Mr. Beaugard. Mr. Lamb noted that Mr. Beaugard agreed on the appraised number.

Mr. Lamb reported they are ready to move forward to the transfer of the property using the Conservation fund and the Land Use Change Tax Fund.

Mr. Lamb then recommended the Commission walk the property sometime in the spring.

c. Community Development Department mission statement

Due to the absence of Mr. Bergman, the Commission agreed to table this matter until the April meeting.

d. NH Association of Conservation Commission membership costs

Mr. Lamb stated that the Commission needed to make a decision on the NH Association of Conservation Commission annual fee which is \$900. He stated that Ms. Clark was familiar with the fact that the same membership costs substantially less in other communities. Mr. Lamb reported that Ms. Clark suggested the Commission make a donation in the amount of \$400 in order to preserve some of the Commission's budget. Mr. Lamb added the thought is that the Commission is not taking full advantage of the membership and to see if the NH Association of Conservation Commission would accept a lower rate.

Mr. Haynes made a motion to support the NH Association of Conservation Commission for a \$400 membership donation. The motion was seconded by Councilor Hansel, which was unanimously approved.

e. Commission Priorities

Due to the absence of several members, the Commission agreed to table this matter until the April meeting.

f. West Street Dam-Rhode Island School of Design

Mr. Lamb recalled the proposal the Commission heard from Dr. Emily Vogler with the Rhode Island School of Design. He stated that staff sent an email reaching out to Dr. Vogler to refresh intent and to see if they are ready to move forward in April with their proposal for community meetings and staff is waiting for a response. Mr. Reilly asked if there has been any discussion at the Council level. Mr. Lamb responded not at this time.

5) New or Other Business

Mr. Haynes reported that he met with Ms. Clark informally and they talked about the idea of an education outreach subcommittee. He stated they brainstormed different ideas and wrote them down. Mr. Haynes noted that Mr. Reilly was not able to attend.

Mr. Haynes reported that one of the ideas was to reach out to the partners of other cities and organizations. He stated one idea was to reach to Meghan Spaulding of Parks and Recreation to begin collaborating. Mr. Haynes reported that Mr. Bohannon mentioned the Ashuelot River Park Advisory Board. He stated that Mr. Bohannon reported the ARPAB wants to do more educational outreach and that the Board also has an open vacancy on the Board for a member from the Conservation Commission. The ARPAB meetings are generally held the second Tuesday of each month at 8:00 AM in the Recreation Center Room 12.

Mr. Haynes volunteered to attend the next ARPAB meeting to see if the Conservation Commission can be helpful.

Mr. Haynes announced the UNH Extension Service is offering on March 23rd a seminar for Easement Monitoring for Volunteers. The seminar will be held in New Durham at the Town Hall at 9 AM until 2PM.

Mr. Reilly asked as a follow-up to the minutes at the last meeting about the tree cutting at the Cheshire Medical Center. Mr. Lamb reported that last month the City received a letter from the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services about a second area of tree cutting along the Ashuelot River near Keene State College. He explained the report from the NH DES was that a determination would need to be made about whether there was a violation. Mr. Lamb noted they did not have the ability to access under winter conditions and that NHDES will inspect that area in the spring. In addition, he noted this was a question if this is a Shoreline Protection Act violation.

6) Adjournment – Next Meeting Date on April 15, 2019

Hearing no further business, Chair Von Plinsky adjourned the meeting a 4:58 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Jennifer Clark, Minute Taker

Reviewed by Rhett Lamb, ACM/Community Dev. Director
Edits by Lee Langella

Rhett Lamb

From: Bergman, Kenneth <kbergman@keene.edu>
Sent: Tuesday, January 22, 2019 3:15 PM
To: Rhett Lamb; Alexander VonPlinsky; Art Walker; Brian Reilly; Councilor George Hansel; D Burchsted; Eloise Clark; George Hansel; Katryna Kibler; Leona Langella; Mary Lou Sheats-Hall; Thomas Haynes
Subject: Community Development Department mission statement

In reviewing the City Council's revision of the CC's duties (which matches closely the draft document George Hansel shared with us, I noticed that our reporting "chain of command" reflects the title of the recently formed Department of Community Development.

The description of that department on the City website indicates that its function is "To develop and implement community based strategies to enhance economic opportunity, build strong neighborhoods and ensure a dynamic framework for quality growth and development while providing professional advice and technical expertise to promote and protect health and safety."

As someone who believes in the value of mission statements or statements of purpose, I wonder if, at some point, the last part of that sentence should be revised to read "promote and protect health, safety and *the environment*", In view of the department's oversight of the Conservation Commission, the Energy and Climate Committee, and the Greater Goose Pond Forest Stewardship Plan Committee.

I don't see a need to push for such a change immediately, but I wouldn't want to wait too long to have some discussion of this proposition. Ultimately, it would send the explicit message that economic development is to be pursued in ways that are environmentally sustainable and protective of natural resources. In my opinion, that point is not clearly implied by the phrase "quality growth and development." Maybe this idea could be placed on the agenda for some future CC meeting; I'm sure if CC support would just be the first of many obstacles to be overcome to win ultimate approval.

Ken Bergman

From: Rhett Lamb <rlamb@ci.keene.nh.us>
Date: Friday, January 18, 2019 at 11:37 AM
To: Alexander VonPlinsky <vonplinsky@gmail.com>, Art Walker <awalker@ne.rr.com>, Brian Reilly <reillybj@ne.rr.com>, Councilor George Hansel <ghansel@ci.keene.nh.us>, Denise Burchsted <dburchsted@keene.edu>, Eloise Clark <clarktreat@myfairpoint.net>, George Hansel <ghansel@filtrine.com>, Katryna Kibler <kkibler@ci.keene.nh.us>, "Bergman, Kenneth" <kbergman@keene.edu>, Leona Langella <llangella@ci.keene.nh.us>, Mary Lou Sheats-Hall <mshheatshall@ci.keene.nh.us>, Rhett Lamb <rlamb@ci.keene.nh.us>, Thomas Haynes <piperhistoricalservices@gmail.com>
Subject: 1/22 agenda packet link

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|---------------------------------------|---|--------------|---------|
| Department: | Community Development | Fund: | General |
| Division (s): Cost Center: | 01910 & 01920 | | |
| Mission: | To develop and implement community based strategies to enhance economic opportunity, build strong neighborhoods and ensure a dynamic framework for quality growth and development while providing professional advice and technical expertise to promote and protect health and safety. | | |

The reconfiguration of the three 4th floor departments -- Code Enforcement, Health and Planning -- into the Community Development Department is proposed in FY19. The combined Department will better serve the public and the needs of the City with a streamlined and simplified development process to assist those who want to do business or build in Keene. As the Department moves to a more efficient development process, primary functions will continue including long range planning, building permit/land use development review and inspections, property and housing inspections, food establishment licenses and inspections, and health inspections under State Statute and City Code. Positions within the combined department will change slightly: there will be one Department Head (also currently serving as Assistant City Manager). The former Health Director position will be realigned to Building Official and the full time Planner will be realigned to Senior Planner. These latter two positions will take on some supervisory responsibilities.

An important goal of this reconfiguration is to provide better customer service through a permit center where applications for most common permits can be processed quickly and by the staff person at the point of contact with the customer. The Permit Technician and Planning Technician positions are central to this approach and, where possible, these positions will be cross-trained to allow better coordination and interaction with other involved departments such as Public Works and Fire. The focus of a permit center will be on routine permits. The Department will continue to support City Boards and Commissions responsible for land use approvals such as the Planning Board, Zoning Board and Historic District Commission. Evaluation of this reconfiguration will continue in FY19 and propose improvements will be proposed as needed.

The Community Development Department reconfiguration includes the recently implemented software program – iWorqs -- for issuance and recording of building permits, site plan review, and other land use permits. Phase 2 of iWorqs will include an option for the public to submit electronic permit applications. This option will be available in FY19.

Work on the Land Use Code Update project is underway and will continue as a priority project in FY19. This evaluation and future implementation will further the mission statement of the new department while pursuing the goals of the 2010 Comprehensive Mater Plan (CMP).

The Department will see a continuation of large projects into FY19 with the ongoing construction of Hillside Village, MOCO Arts, 17 Washington St., and the renovations to the Library and Colony Mill building. Other large projects continuing in FY19 will be the design of the Cheshire Rail Trail Phase II project, and continued implementation of the CMP with the Planning Board and City Council. The Department will continue to play a role in projects related to the Economic Development Action Plan including implementing the new RSA 79:E District and Economic Revitalization Zones.

Background

The Community Development Department's merge of the City's former Planning, Health and Code Enforcement Departments has been in the works for the past few years. The merge is proposed after careful evaluation of tasks with the goal of streamlining for the betterment of our citizens, businesses, and community. These former departments functioned under many of the same State Statutes and City Codes. All staff under this new umbrella will continue with certifications, training, and memberships required in maintaining proper skills and knowledge of the ever progressing codes and standards.

| PRIMARY SERVICES & RESPONSIBILITIES: | | Align w/CMP | | |
|--|--|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------|
| Develop the Comprehensive Master Plan and Community Vision and implement that Plan and Vision through specific projects, policies, and programs. | | Economic Development | | |
| Administer the Planning Board's Subdivision and Site Plan review including the inspection process and related permits to work with Keene residents and businesses as they seek approval for projects before the Planning Board, City Council, and other boards. | | Future Land Use & Policy | | |
| Provide staff support, information, and services to a variety of City Boards and Commissions, City departments, officials, and citizens. | | Leadership | | |
| Administer the plan review and inspection program which includes review plans, issue permits, and conduct inspections for compliance to state building, accessibility, and energy code as well as City Zoning and Natural Resources Ordinances (including the sign code). Manage third party plans reviewers and special inspectors. | | Economic Development | | |
| Respond to citizen concerns and complaints related to permit and construction activity. Provide the public with information on codes and development processes. | | Economic Development | | |
| Investigate buildings and properties for compliance with the Property and Housing Safety Standards Ordinance, issue citations, and prosecute court cases. | | Neighborhoods | | |
| Promote and protect public health and safety, provide advice on public health issues, and enforce State and local health laws. | | Community Health & Wellness | | |
| Conduct an Environmental Sanitation program which includes regulating and inspecting restaurants, food stores, schools, day care centers, foster homes, nursing homes, and private sewerage disposal facilities. | | Community Health & Wellness | | |
| Maintain Public Health Mosquito Control Program through contracted services which monitors and larvicides 2,200 catch basins and other mosquito breeding locations. | | Community Health & Wellness | | |
| FISCAL YEAR 2018/2019 OBJECTIVES: | | STATUTE | CMP | VOICE |
| Continue Comprehensive Master Plan implementation process with Planning Board and Planning, Licenses and Development Committee | | 674:01:00 | Municipal Governance & Fin Stability | O,I,E |
| Continue the implementation of the new software system to incorporate citizen engagement with online permitting and centralized applications | | 155/674 | Municipal Governance & Fin Stability | O,C,E |
| Continue Phase II of the Land Use Code Update | | | Future Land Use & Policy | O, I, E |
| Write grants for funding to support programs/initiatives | | | Municipal Governance & Fin Stability | I |
| Update Bicycle/Pedestrian Master Plan | | | Transportation | O, I, E |
| Continue to support the City's Economic Development initiatives including the RSA 79E District and Economic Revitalization Zones | | | Municipal Governance & Fin Stability | O, I, E |
| Give presentations to community groups and professional organizations | | | Leadership | O, I |
| Increase the present level of review and inspection efficiency | | 155/674 | Safe Community | V,C,E |
| Continue training and certification of department staff | | 155/674 | Education | V,C,E |
| METRICS: | | FY17 | FY18 | FY19 |
| Complete the initial review of new residential permits applications in 7 working days (target 95%) | | 95% | 95% | 95% |
| Complete the initial plan review on new commercial permit applications in 10 working days (target 95%) | | 95% | 95% | 95% |
| Total building permits | | 467 | 450 | 450 |
| Total building permit inspections | | 2,000 | 2,200 | 2,000 |
| Maintain and conduct a Voluntary Housing Inspection Program | | 400 | 400 | 400 |
| Property and Housing Standard complaints | | 374 | 350 | 350 |
| Food Establishment and Health Code Inspections | | 385 | 400 | 400 |
| Adoption of revisions or updates to the Comprehensive Master Plan the same year they are proposed/identified | | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Complete 90% of the initial completeness reviews for new subdivision, site plan applications within 5 business days | | 91% | 92% | 93% |
| Complete 95% of minor amendment applications in 10 business days | | 98% | 99% | 99% |
| Complete 95% of all inspection requests within 5 business days | | 98% | 98% | 99% |
| Adoption of revisions to Planning Board Standards and Regulations the same year they are proposed/identified | | 0 | 0 | 0 |