

City of Nashua
Conservation Commission
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NASHUA CONSERVATION COMMISSION

February 7, 2023

A. Call to order

A regular meeting of the Nashua Conservation Commission was called to order on Tuesday, February 7, 2023 at 7:00 PM, 229 Main Street, City Hall in Room 208.

B. Roll call

Members present: Sherry Dutzy, Chair
Megan Cook, Treasurer (Zoom)
Brandon Pierotti
Maureen Bourque
Carol Sarno
Gloria McCarthy, Alt.
Dick Widhu, Alt. (Zoom)

Also in Attendance: Matt Sullivan, Comm. Dev. Dir.
Deb Chisholm, Sustainability Dept. Mgr.

C. Approval of minutes

January 2, 2023

MOTION by Commissioner Bourque to approve the minutes, as amended

SECONDED by Commissioner Widhu

MOTION CARRIED 7-0

D. Public Comment Related to Items on the Agenda

Chairman Dutzy said public comment would be limited to three minutes per speaker.

Denise Muccioli, 6 Midhurst Drive, Nashua NH: Ms. Muccioli expressed concern over graffiti sprayed on trees at Roby

Park.

E. Old Business

None

E. New Business

None

E. Officer Elections

Motion by Commissioner Sarno to nominate the following commissioners as officers:

Chair: Sherry Dutzy

Vice Chair: Dick Widhu, Alt.

Clerk: Jed Crook

Treasurer: Megan Cook

SECONDED by Commissioner Bourque

MOTION CARRIED 7-0

F. NCC Correspondence & Communications

None

G. Commissioners Discussion

1. Joyce Park Wildlife Sanctuary Plan Update

MOTION by Commissioner Cook to favorably recommend the Joyce Park Wildlife Sanctuary Plan to the Board of Aldermen

SECONDED by Commissioner Sarno

MOTION CARRIED 7-0

2. Lund/Almont Beaver Deceiver Update

Chairman Dutzy said Mr. Lisle came down yesterday and looked at the situation along Hassell Brook with Matt LeBlanc from DPW and Ms. Chisholm. They started at Forest Park Drive and Almont with the culvert, then to Pell Ave, then across the street to Lund Road. They found out that the culvert on Lund

Road has a large ring on it that inhibits the flow of water, and they don't know why. Community Development and DPW are working with the state to get that ring removed. Mr. Lisle identified three places where flow control devices could help, two on the Pell Ave side.

Commissioner Sarno said one of the dams is at the site of a former passage over the brook. That was supported by a couple of steel I-beams. It was once a crossing that washed out a few years back.

Chairman Dutzy said that was one of the areas Mr. Lisle suggested a flow device. The other device was upstream closer to Lund Rd. The third was on Lund Road.

Commissioner Sarno asked if there would be nothing upstream from Almont.

Chairman Dutzy said they looked at it, and the water was running well. Mr. Lisle felt it was prime habitat.

Commissioner Sarno asked to see a map. When she was there a large dam had been breached in several spots. She went there today and happened to speak to some residents. Since the time the Commissioners visited the city had been there multiple times to remove the dam. She thinks that is a dam that needs to be dealt with.

Discussed of the dam ensued.

Ms. Chisholm said that Mr. Lisle did not indicate the dam was problematic because it was removed from the actual culvert itself and allowed flow in the area. She spoke with Community Development Director Sullivan this afternoon, and the idea of creating additional flow upstream could be problematic at this location once the flow starts at the upstream area. It could get backed up there.

Commissioner Sarno said the city has gone in every other week for the past month to breach that dam. The residents claim that a backhoe was used to take out a large chunk. After each disruption the beavers come back and rebuild the dam. She asked why the city keeps breaking that dam down. That would seem to be a good spot for a beaver deceiver, if not the best one. The upstream areas don't seem to have a lot of water.

Chairman Dutzy said that location at Almont, the bank is real steep. There would have to be a lot of flooding. Whereas Pell Ave is basically level with the street. Today they received a quote from Mr. Lisle for \$12,900.00 for three flow devices. Mr. Lisle said that the two locations on Pell Ave were the highest priority. This quote includes travel, overnight stay, the three flow devices, and installation of wire on trees along Pell Ave to protect from the potential fall on homes. He is also including an educational process on how to wire trees for beavers.

Commissioner Sarno led a brief discussion of best management practices for tree wrapping. She said she doesn't have enough information to move forward on this. She doesn't understand why the dam she described has no immediate threat of flooding despite being regularly removed. If you remove the dams upstream, they will have a lot more water at that dam.

Chairman Dutzy said this is more art than science. Mr. Lisle said he feels this will solve the problem, but it could possibly create problems elsewhere. The other thing is that in talking with DPW, she did not walk away with the idea that the dam removal was done for the benefit of the area. She thinks there were other reasons why DPW was there other than trying to solve that problem.

Ms. Chisholm said they are on the same page. The thought is, are they approving the amount of money, or the details of his proposal? Are these the locations, or the amount that would include three beaver deceivers for locations of their choice?

Chairman Dutzy said they are voting on the plan that has been presented to them. Three deceivers in those locations, and the money to pay for it. Mr. Lisle is the expert, and they brought him in for his expertise. Even though it maybe doesn't seem logical, he would defer to him and his plan because he has 28 years of experience with it. She would put forward that vote. If the Commission is not comfortable with it, they can vote it down.

Commissioner Cook asked if Mr. Lisle talked about whether he saw evidence of recent beaver activity? What is the concern or urgency to install them? Do they see if there is recent activity before they install it, or just install it anyways?

Chairman Dutzy said her understanding was that last month a

beaver took a tree down. And there is a tree there with extensive damage that looked pretty recent.

Commissioner Sarno said she was there today and spoke with some neighbors. Every time the city disrupts that dam the beavers come back and rebuild it. The neighbors have put some metal over the trees because of beaver activity. She asked if Mr. Lisle was aware that the city is disrupting the dam that flows well. It flows well because there's a gap in it. She doesn't know how they can say it's flowing properly if the beavers haven't had a chance to fix it.

Chairman Dutzy said she can't address that.

Commissioner Cook said when she went out there with the USDA Wildlife Services they had a similar opinion that area maybe not being the best location for a dam because of the elevation difference between the stream, dam, and road. That seems consistent with what Mr. Lisle said. She asked if they could ask Mr. Lisle for a recap of why those locations are appropriate and that lower one less so.

Chairman Dutzy said Mr. Lisle said clearly that where the stream is narrowest, that's where the beaver activity is going to cause the most problems. One of the things he said about the Almont location, is not only because of the steepness of the cliffs, but the breadth of the water. So the problem you have at Pell and Lund is that the stream is so narrow, as soon as a dam gets built it's an issue. On Almont, the dam that he saw the beavers were doing a great job to create habitat behind the dam. Water flow was not an issue. Granted, if the flow upstream starts more, maybe they get a problem at Almont. But he didn't see that as a priority.

Commissioner Cook asked in terms of urgency, if they did not vote on this tonight, is that a major concern? When would he install these?

Chairman Dutzy said according to Director Sullivan, it's going to take them six weeks to get through the Board of Aldermen. At the same time, they probably have to send out letters to all of the abutters to notify them and ask for permission to work on private property. Mr. Lisle is going to be out the month of March, by the time they get through he'll be back. But if they need to get on his schedule. This is his downtime, especially because he lives in Vermont. If they could

approve it next week, he could be down here next week. If they delay longer than the beginning of April, they may not be able to get scheduled in. She feels comfortable. To her, this is a pilot project. They are trying something different, a solution that would allow the beavers to coexist with the abutters. But, it could be a bust. She thinks they have a good guy, but if the Commission is not comfortable they should be voting accordingly.

Commissioner McCarthy said she doesn't know a lot about beavers, but they are supposed to be great engineers. What they don't like is running water. The faster the water is running, the more they want to dam it up. Perhaps the reason Mr. Lisle chose the locations he did is because the water flows faster, resulting in greater beaver activity. Maybe the dam Commissioner Sarno is referring to has a slower flow.

Commissioner Sarno said it's possible. It may be because the banks are steeper. She is concerned because she has been told that the city keeps busting that dam. She would like that to stop happening.

Commissioner Bourque said a human impact may have something to do with what's happening. She understands the urgency of this and is comfortable with it, but the part that she would like more information on is what the exact proposal is. What is the benchmark they use to measure whether it is successful? What are the things they need to be aware of if something isn't right? How do they know whether it's working or not?

Commissioner Sarno showed a picture to the Commission where there was once a path, now only cement on each side.

Steve Abdeeli, 6 Bell Ave

Mr. Abdeeli said he grew up in this neighborhood and that used to be a footpath between Hassell Brook Dr and Pell Ave. That was how he used to go to school.

Commissioner Sarno asked if Mr. Lisle had seen this location.

Chairman Dutzy said yes.

Commissioner Sarno said the goal of the deceiver is to allow water to flow through the dam without making noise. It's a pip through the dam below water level. She asked how Mr. Lisle

would get the pipe through those steel beams.

Chairman Dutzy said her understanding is that the dam was downstream from that. He wouldn't be building a deceiver at that particular point.

[Unknown] asked if they could consider a contingent approval. Maybe get clarification that these beams wouldn't be an issue.

Chairman Dutzy said the issue they have is that Mr. Lisle is an artist. When you're working with an artist, you're not working with a businessman. Trying to get more information from Mr. Lisle is not going to work. She had asked him on the quote to break it up into multiple numbers and never got it, just one number. That's the facts. That's what you're working with. Mr. Lisle is a beaver guy, he's done it for 28 years, he knows what he's doing. That's what it is. She doesn't know how they will overcome this impasse. She agrees with the Commissioners that it is a leap of faith.

Mr. Sullivan said what is clear is the specifics of the proposal is not something the Commission is willing to agree to tonight. The timing is a challenge here. To initiate legislation and get it approved in a moderately timely manner is a challenge, given the Commission's regular meeting schedule. He would recommend a motion be made to amend the Commission's previous motion to request a not-to-exceed amount of \$13,000.00 from the Conservation fund to address beaver management issues within the Hassell Brook area, with details to be developed, working with a professional consultant to determine the extent of the measures used to deal with beavers. Keep it broad, work with Mr. Lisle in March to actually iron out those details, but at least secure the funding. He will represent to the Board of Alderman that these details have not been resolved, and doesn't think it will be an issue provided that the funding is clearly going toward beaver management. This would be subject to the ability to access those properties.

Chairman Dutzy said she would make that motion.

MOTION by Chairman Dutzy to amend the Commission's previous motion, to request a not-to-exceed amount of \$13,000.00 from the Conservation fund, in order to address beaver management issues within the Hassell Brook area, subject to the development of a plan and gaining abutter access

SECONDED by Commissioner Sarno

MOTION CARRIED 7-0

3. Forestry Management Plan

The Commission briefly discussed the status and stages of the plan, which would be done over a two-year period.

MOTION by Commissioner Sarno to approve an expenditure not to exceed \$25,000.00, in order to hire Full Circle Forestry to prepare a Forestry Management Plan, which shall cover four areas over a 2-year period

SECONDED by Commissioner Bourque

MOTION CARRIED 7-0

4. Vernal Pool Ordinance Discussion

Postponed.

5. Virtual Meeting Access

Postponed.

6. Tree Removal

Ms. Chisholm said they don't have a contractor to remove these trees. When a tree falls and they need to hire someone, every time they need to go through the Conservation Commission process to appropriate money from the Conservation bond to cut that tree. She would like it if they can find a way to have money set aside so they can get a contractor on board to handle these fallen trees.

Chairman Dutzy said they could do a retainer.

Ms. Chisholm said that is the idea, to hire someone who has an ability to move boulders, remove signs, and pick up leftover riprap so they don't have to go through the process of asking for a small amount of funds every time.

Commissioner McCarthy asked if they would have to put out an RFP for bids.

Ms. Chisholm said probably. Planning Dept. can do it.

Further discussion ensued.

MOTION by Chairman Dutzy to request the Community Development Division to prepare a RFP for on-call total land management services on an as-needed basis

SECONDED by Commissioner Widhu

MOTION CARRIED 7-0

7. Virtual Meeting Access

Postponed

H. Subcommittee Reports

Land and Trail Management

- Commissioner Sarno said the Society for Protection of NH Forests has a new stewardship manager for Southwest parcels. They are concerned about ATV activity at Buckmeadow. The Commission discussed deterrence measures.
- Commissioner Cook led a brief discussion regarding the potential for an interpretive trail. Chairman Dutzy said there may be grant funding at the state level.

I. Restaurant Waste

Chairman Dutzy led a brief discussion regarding single use plastic in restaurants. She said there will be a Styrofoam collection event in Harrisville soon.

K. Adjournment

MOTION to adjourn by Commissioner Bourque at 8:12 PM

SECONDED by Commissioner Cook

MOTION CARRIED 7-0

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MEETING MAY BE MADE AVAILABLE UPON 48 HOURS ADVANCED NOTICE AND
PAYMENT OF THE FEE.

KP - Taped Hearing