

PEMBROKE CONSERVATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 20, 2023

In attendance: Ammy Heiser (Chair), Carol Bertsimas (Vice), Brian Mrazik (Secretary), Wendy Weisiger, Ayn Whytemare, Tom Gallo, Karen Yeaton (BOS Rep)

Absent: Kevin Foss (PB Rep)

Call to Order: Meeting called to order at 7:08 pm

Planning Board Applications: None

Zoning Board Applications: None.

DES Letters and Applications: None.

Review and Approve Minutes December 12, 2022, January 9, 2023, and February 13, 2023:

Ammy moved to accept the minutes of the December 12, 2022 meeting, as drafted. Carol seconded. All voted in favor except Tom and Wendy who abstained. Ammy moved to accept the minutes of the January 9, 2023 meeting, as drafted. Carol seconded. All voted in favor except Tom and Wendy who abstained. Carol moved to accept the minutes of the February 13, 2023 meeting, as drafted. Tom seconded. All voted in favor except Ammy who abstained.

Conservation Lands:

1. Monitoring Update: Carol, Tom and Brian monitored the Keniston and Taylor easements on February 20.

2. Annual Monitoring Day: This is set for April 1 (rain date of April 2), meeting at 9 AM at the Town Hall. Ayn will post an invitation on social media for interested members of the public.

3. Property Signs: Ayn motioned that the CC expend not more than \$1,000 to procure up to 10 ‘generic’ (without specific parcel names) conservation-land signs that could be used as temporary replacements for signs lost or stolen. (These signs would list the rules and could also be permanently placed at less frequently used entrances to the properties.) Tom seconded. All voted in favor. The header for the sign will be “Pembroke Conservation Area” and the police telephone number will be updated to include the area code. Ammy will contact Chief Gaskell to determine the most appropriate phone number to display. The CC discussed whether “no smoking” should be added to the list of rules on the bases of improving the natural experience for all conservation-area users, reduced litter, and reduced fire-hazard. Ammy will review previously adopted rules to determine if this would be covered without the need for a formal amendment.

4. Robert Frost Memorial Park (Girard): Ammy discussed the February 6 and March 7 meetings of the Meet Me In Suncook Committee (MMISC) and the proposal by Girard Tree Service, LLC for vegetation removal to restore views of the Suncook River within the Park (aka the Girard Conservation Area). The work would involve tree removal, selective pruning, and invasive species cutting and disposal. Although the CC has historically stewarded this property as a conservation area, a review of the deed indicates that the parcel was donated to the Town

without any designation as to its intended use. Given the small size of the area (0.34 acres) and that it has been converted to a park, it has minimal benefit as a conservation area and is probably best managed as a park under the purview of the Recreation Commission and/or the Public Works Department, which currently operate and maintain other park lands. Ammy will contact David Jodoin to discuss a transfer of responsibility for this parcel. Ammy will also call Jocelyn Carlucci of the MMISC to discuss the issue.

Other Business:

1. Concept Plan for Development of Lot: 634-47: Carol attended the TRC meeting on February 14 regarding the concept plan for a major development on this 129-acre parcel that lies south of the NH 116 and US 3 intersection and is owned by MNP Realty. The area is currently zoned commercial (C1). The plan includes 30,000 square feet of retail and commercial buildings, 245,000 square feet of warehouse, 93,800 square feet of residential units (townhouse and cottage) and associated roads, parking and other infrastructure. Initial concerns raised at the TRC meeting included density, traffic, access, and the overall mix of commercial and residential use in a commercially zoned area. Carol expressed environmental concerns with the concept plan. Of major concern to the CC is that this area is contained entirely within the Aquifer Protection District and includes some of the highest transmissivity/well-yield areas in the Town. It is adjacent to, and lies just downstream of, the Town's existing Soucook well field. This is one of the few areas in town with suitability for the placement of additional public water-supply wells. Except for the immediate area along Pembroke Street, the entire parcel is designated within the NH Wildlife Action Plan as highest ranked habitat in the biological region and includes specialized habitats, including pine barrens, grassland, wetlands, vernal pools and floodplain forest. The Pembroke Natural Resources Inventory identifies 52 acres of this area (Lower Soucook Wetlands Evaluation Unit) as the highest value wetlands for preservation in the Town of Pembroke. The CC intends to closely follow the evolution of this concept plan to ensure that these natural values of the area are protected.

2. Membership Dues: Ammy motioned that the CC pay the following membership dues: Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests (SPNHF) - \$100, Five Rivers Conservation Trust - \$200, New Hampshire Association of Conservation Commissions - \$375. Carol seconded. All voted in favor except Wendy who abstained.

Mail and Correspondence: Copies of the Merrimack County Conservation News and the SPNHF Forest Notes were circulated.

Adjournment: By consensus, the meeting was adjourned at 8:15 PM.

NEXT MEETING: March 10, 2023