

Town of Newington, NH

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes, Thursday, July 13 2023

Call to Order: Chair Jane Hislop called the July 13, 2023, meeting at 6:35 PM.

Present: Commissioners Derick Willson; Andrew Meigs; Recording Secretary Jane Kendall; and Town Planner, John Krebs

Absent: Vice-Chair Laura Rogers; Jim Weiner; Alternate Member, Bill Murray

Public Guests: Gordon Leedy, with Tighe & Bond

1) **Landscape Review:** Doloma Investment of Portsmouth, Inc. for a 106-room Everhome Suites Hotel on property located off Woodbury Avenue, Tax Map 20, Lot 4-C

After a brief discussion of drainage and the wetlands, Gordon Leedy, with Tighe & Bond presented their landscape plan for the proposed hotel.

Mr. Leedy stated that anything outside the parking area would be seeded with New England wetland mix. Mr. Leedy said the frontage would probably be turf with some decorative grasses, and mostly or near native trees and bushes such as hydrangea, spirea, sumac, and viburnum.

Commissioner Willson asked if there would be a patio area for lodgers. Mr. Leedy said there would be, and there might be a plunge pool.

There was a brief discussion about the use of cool pavement with reflective aggregate materials. Mr. Leedy said he was only aware of concrete, which would be expensive for a parking lot.

Town Planner, John Krebs said cool pavement was not a bad idea, but there might be a concern that years later someone could topcoat with black asphalt and then all the material and hard work would go to waste. Mr. Krebs said the Planning Board was encouraging more trees in parking areas to shade the asphalt.

Commissioner Willson commented that it took a long time for trees to provide shade, however.

Mr. Krebs noted that the regulation requirements were for planting islands in parking lots, but some applicants wanted more parking, so they sometimes considered plantings on the outside perimeter.

Mr. Leedy said they were proposing river stone edge below the guardrail to stay back from the wetlands.

A brief discussion ensued regarding solar panels on carports as being a good opportunity to utilize the heat generated in parking lots.

Mr. Krebs said there were not a lot of high-quality uplands in this area, and so he was surprised that more businesses didn't pursue solar options in all the unusable property near this location.

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Mr. Krebs noted that there was limited snow storage in the plan, and said using solar panels could reduce snow storage and cool parking lots.

Mr. Krebs said hotels had been at capacity lately, and the Planning Board had asked the applicant to add a few more parking spaces for employees, and possibly a larger space for RVs, but parking size standards had changed. Mr. Krebs said the hotel was confident that they had enough spaces, and they wouldn't build a hotel, and not have adequate parking, or patrons would find another place with parking.

Chair Hislop asked if the hotel was concerned with the Town's weed patch running down the ctr of Woodbury Avenue. Mr. Krebs said he was not sure what was going to be done because it would continue to be an issue as the mall was developed.

Andrew Meigs moved to recommend the landscape plan for the 106-room Everhome Suites Hotel on property located off Woodbury Avenue, Tax Map 20, Lot 4-C. Derick Willson seconded, and all were in favor.

2) Summer 2023 Community Education Outreach

Chair Hislop said 25 people attended the oyster presentation at the Langdon Library in June with refreshments costing \$55.

Chair Hislop said Professor Ray Grizzle with the University of New Hampshire oyster restoration research program talked about how oyster farmers provided them with oysters they couldn't sell to restaurants during the Covid-19 shut down, which were used in addition to their grant for seeding oyster beds. She said Professor Grizzle was also researching the benefits or necessities of eel grass in Great Bay.

Chair Hislop said in response to questions of how oysters were fairing in the recent heavy rains, Professor Grizzle said oysters had a wider salinity range than lobsters, and the oysters would go dormant.

Chair Hislop said she hoped to have another public education event in the fall.

Mr. Krebs said Commissioner Jim Weiner had a seal wash up on his beach, and suggested that they invite someone from the Seacoast Science Center to give a presentation.

Chair Hislop said she would give them a call to see if they were available to give a presentation after Labor Day.

Mr. Krebs said it might make sense to invite the older Newington Public School kids, and tie into the children's activities at the library.

Mr. Krebs said the presentation might also be able to tie in with the impact to marine life that the City of Portsmouth Water Department's water main replacement might have

3) Additional Discussions

Mr. Krebs said that the Portsmouth Water Department had initially thought they might be able to float the lines across the bay, but later determined that they wouldn't hold

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with the current, so now they were building coffer dams that would disturb the floor of the bay.

Commissioner Meigs said he had observed a litter of fox pups out on a hillside on Fox Point, and asked what would happen if the construction into the next spring. Chair Hislop said foxes were inquisitive, and very adaptable. Jane Kendall said the wildlife disruption probably wouldn't be any more than the disruption to the wildlife in the 32 acres of the Shackford Pointe development, or any other undeveloped area.

Chair Hislop said she also wanted to talk about chipping invasives when taking trees down on Fox Point. Jane Kendall said she had also observed chipping and spreading of invasives in the Shackford Pointe developments, and thought it would be important to address along with landscaping.

Chair Hislop informed the Commission that the Board of Selectmen had members of Recreation Committee and her as a Conservation Commission representative talk with the New England Mountain Biking Association representatives that were proposing to improve signage on the Old Town Forest on the other side of Arboretum Drive on Pease Development Authority (PDA) property, although there was no representative from the PDA. Chair Hislop said she was concerned that there was no management of the forest in the bike path area.

Chair Hislop said she discussed verbiage and placement of the signs, and suggested that the signage have people stay on the PDA side to prevent trespassing, and damage to the Newington Town Forest side. Jane Kendall suggested that the Commission also consider No Trespassing signage for the Newington side.

Chair Hislop said parking was also a concern.

Chair Hislop said she also recommended that they talk with representatives from Great Bay National Wildlife Reserve.

Chair Hislop acknowledged Jane Kendall's resignation from the Commission, and thanked her for being an alternate for so long.

Minutes: It was decided to postpone approval of the May 11, 2023, Minutes until the next meeting due to few members being present.

Adjournment: *Andrew Meigs moved to adjourn. Derick Willson seconded, and the meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.*

Next Meeting: Thursday, August 10, 2022

**Respectfully
Submitted by:** Jane K. Kendall, Recording Secretary

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These Minutes were approved and adopted by the Conservation Commission at their August 10, 2023, meeting.