

Hampton Conservation Commission
Draft Minutes
Tuesday, February 26, 2019

Present: Jay Diener, Chairman
Barbara Renaud, Vice Chairman
Pat Swank

Also present Rayann Dionne, Conservation Coordinator

I. Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Diener at 7:03 p.m. in the Town Hall Selectmen's Meeting Room.

II. Review Minutes

Mr. Diener postponed the approval of January minutes to the March meeting.

III. Appointments

1. 561 Ocean Blvd - Ocean Meadows Condominiums – increasing the height of the rear retaining wall

Mr. Larry Leland, President of Ocean Meadow Condominiums, and Mr. Ray Coutu, unit owner, were present to discuss the association's interest in increasing the height of the rear retaining wall which is constructed about 2' lower than the side retaining walls. The purpose of increasing the height is to prevent those higher tides like full moon or storm tides from entering the parking area and lower levels of their building. Mr. Coutu shared that they have had a Mason inspect the concrete and provide recommendations. He also added that they had the two parking lot drains checked, scoped and cleaned. They found out that the southern drain connects to Town/State drain pipe while the northern drain goes directly under the condo and discharges into the marsh. The northern drain outlet is about two feet below low tide. During high tide events, the water comes up through that drain and creates a 15-20 ft. puddle in the parking area. They are looking to have it closed up. If they close the pipe then they will need to construct something underneath the parking lot to store and treat water.

Mr. Diener asked if they could re-grade the parking lot to pitch towards the southern drain that is still operational. He also asked how much they wanted to increase the height of the rear retaining wall.

Mr. Coutu responded that there is a concrete alleyway on either side of the building. It has a side and rear wall that ties into the building's foundation. When it was built the rear wall was built lower than the side walls. They would like for the height of the rear wall to match the side walls. He shared that the Mason recommended building a new rear wall inside of the alleyway, about 12" landward of the existing rear wall. This would pull it back from the marsh and the new wall would be about 2.5 ft. tall. He also noted that there is a crack between the alley concrete and building foundation that needs to be filled.

Mr. Diener asked if the alleyway slopes towards the marsh or towards the parking lot.

Mr. Leland responded that it's pretty flat but does pitch slightly away from the marsh towards the parking lot. He also shared that they have placed sandbags on top of the rear retaining wall during high tide events and it has helped. However, it's only a temporary solution and they are looking for something more permanent.

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Mr. Coutu added that when the condos were built in 1982, the walls were sufficient for dealing with tide height but conditions have been changing.

Mr. Diener asked when there is a big rain storm do the side alleyways fill up with rainwater. Mr. Coutu responded that they do not fill up and that the water drains towards the parking lot.

Mrs. Dionne asked if there could be metal channels added to the rear wall that would allow them to install plastic boards to keep the water out. Similar to a stop log system and might involve less concrete work.

Mrs. Dionne asked if the Commission thought this project warranted a Town Wetlands Permit if the proposed work was going to occur on top of existing concrete.

Mr. Diener did not see the proposed work as having a major impact

Ms. Renaud agreed as long as there also no temporary impacts and that all of the work occurs within the existing alley footprint.

Mr. Coutu felt that should not be an issue because the work will only involve brackets and mixed cement.

The consensus of the Commission was that they should prepare a scope of work explaining how the work will be performed. This scope could be sent to the Conservation Coordinator and she will get feedback from NHDES Wetlands Bureau as to whether this type of work triggers the State Wetlands permit. Once the necessary permits are determined, they should notify the Conservation Commission at the beginning and end of the work and photo document the construction process.

IV. New Business

1. ArcGIS training for Conservation Coordinator –

Mrs. Dionne shared that UNH offers a 3-day training for learning how to use ArcGIS software which is the primary software for creating maps and maintaining data layers. She shared that she has basic working knowledge of the software. This training would be beneficial because the software has been updated/changed making a refresher necessary but it would enable her to keep the conservation lands/easement data layer updated and be able to create new maps for areas such as the Town Forest. The cost of the training is \$399 and to outsource the effort of updating our conservation land layer would be between \$50-80 an hour. Mrs. Dionne shared that the Commission has a budget line item of \$100 for training and she would request the remainder from the Town if the Commission endorses this training.

Ms. Renaud asked how this additional work would fit into the Conservation Coordinator's already full schedule.

Mr. Diener responded that having this training would make the effort of making maps and keeping up the data layer easier and more efficient.

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The Commission members expressed their support for the training.

2. 191 Island Path

Mrs. Dionne shared a packet of photos, plans, and project description for enlarging the existing marsh side deck at 191 Island Path. She noted that the proposal is to increase the current 4 ft. wide deck to 11 ft. wide, increasing the square footage by 91 sq. ft. The new deck would be constructed out of a permeable decking material with plantings around the perimeter of the deck. The property owner is looking for feedback on the project proposal before submitting a Town Wetlands Permit application.

Mr. Diener shared that he liked the planting around the perimeter of the deck but would also like to see plantings along the edge of the lawn where it abuts the marsh.

Mrs. Dionne noted that the plants around the perimeter of the deck, when mature, should help to prevent the area underneath being used for storage and defeating the purpose of permeable decking.

Ms. Renaud and Ms. Swank supported the deck perimeter plantings and row along the marsh edge.

Mrs. Dionne added that a legal instrument should be recorded to ensure that future owners are aware that the decking material needs to be maintained as permeable. A similar instrument was drafted for another recent project that involved the use of permeable materials in the buffer. That could be used as a template for this project.

The Commission members also supported the need to have a legal instrument recorded at the Registry of Deeds.

V. Old Business

1. Coastal Flood Hazard Policy

Mr. Diener passed out the draft for a coastal flood hazard policy statement as prepared by Mrs. Dionne. The Commission supported the concept of the development of a policy at the January meeting. The intent is to share the Commission's position on the increased frequency and damage of coastal flooding and the need to make sure that all projects within the Wetland Conservation District and Floodplain are evaluated for how to reduce the property's flood risk potential and ensure there are no flooding impacts on nearby properties. Mrs. Dionne shared that as part of this effort she is also working to compile all of the flood-related recommendations from documents such as the Rockingham Planning Commission's Tides to Storms and the NH Coastal Risks and Hazards Report. This could be a valuable resource when the Commission is considering regulations revision and land conservation efforts.

Ms. Renaud recommended emailing the document to the rest of the Commission and discussing it further at the March meeting. Everyone agreed.

2. 2019 HCC Warrant Articles

Mr. Diener reminded the members that the Town vote is on March 12th. He commented that the only article that seems to be getting press is #3 which relates to placing structures in the tidal Wetland

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Conservation District on pilings. He shared that there was an inquiry from the Union Leader, but there hasn't been much around town. He is pretty optimistic about the Commission's four sponsored warrant articles passing.

Ms. Renaud shared that the biggest point made publicly during the Deliberative Session was if you do elevate on pilings it reduces your flood insurance policy and the savings over time pays for the elevation costs.

Mr. Diener noted that the Commission's warrant articles are proactive revisions. If they pass it will give the Commission momentum to move forward.

Ms. Swank commented that the wording for the conservation land purchase warrant article makes the money request appear larger if you don't read the entire article. She recognized that the wording is legally set.

Mr. Diener agreed and added that the Board of Selectmen and Budget Committee endorsed it which is a positive.

VI. Conservation Coordinator and Chair update

Mr. Diener gave a brief update on a Seabrook-Hampton Estuary Alliance project which recently organized a group called the Coastal Hazards Adaptation Team (CHAT). The group is composed of various Town Board/Committee members, some Town Staff, and two residents. There have been two meetings and the third is scheduled for next month. He shared that the initial plan was for the group to meet every other month, but the group has been requesting monthly. So far it's been going really well. It should make the Commission's efforts easier when dealing with permit applications to protect our tidal resources. He also shared that one potential outcome from this group could be the identification of a coastal hazard zone that could be subject to additional regulations building construction.

Ms. Swank asked if the meetings are recorded or if minutes are taken.

Mr. Diener responded that there is no video, but minutes are taken and can be available upon request. There will be public meetings in the future.

VII. Adjourn

Ms. Renaud recommended adjourning the meeting at 8:05 and all were in favor