

Hampton Conservation Commission
Draft Minutes
Tuesday, March 26, 2019

Present: Barbara Renaud, Vice Chairman
Pat Swank
Peter Tilton
Diane Shaw
Sharon Raymond

Also present Alex Loiseau, Planning Board
Rayann Dionne, Conservation Coordinator

I. Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by Ms. Renaud at 7:00 p.m. in the Town Hall Selectmen's Meeting Room.

II. Review Minutes

MOTION: Mr. Tilton moved to approve the January 2019 minutes with edits provided

SECOND: Ms. Swank

VOTE: 4-0-1(abstained – Ms. Raymond)

MOTION PASSED

Since the majority of the members present tonight were not at the February 2019 meeting, Ms. Renaud recommended moving the approval to April Meeting. The members agreed.

III. Appointments

1. PREP – collaborative monitoring effort – Abigail Lyon

Abby Lyon with the Piscataqua Region Estuary Partnership (PREP) was present to discuss the results of the 2018 Piscataqua Region Monitoring Collaborative (PRMC) effort and seek the Commission's support for this year's effort.

Mrs. Lyon provided an overview of PREP and its mission which is to protect and improve the water quality and overall health of the region's two estuaries – Great Bay & Hampton-Seabrook. She shared that the PRMC program is a collection of community financial resources along with financial support from the NH Department of Environmental Services and the Great Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve to conduct a larger scale monitoring effort. There were a total of 5 communities that supported this effort in 2018 for a total contribution of \$48,000. This amount represented about 11% of the total monitoring budget of \$436,000.

She thanked the Commission for their contribution of \$1,000 last year that went to water quality monitoring in the Hampton-Seabrook Estuary (HSE). The full cost of monitoring the HSE in 2018 was \$24,000 which covered the data sonde and grab samples. Mrs. Lyon handed out a summary page of the 2018 monitoring results which covered chlorophyll-a levels in the Hampton River, the annual density of adult clams, and the annual mean catch per unit effort of green crabs. She shared that the data sonde collects temperature, specific conductance, salinity, dissolved oxygen, pH and fluorescent dissolved organic matter every 15 minutes.

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She shared that the NHDES shellfish program is another source of data. They deploy several data loggers in the estuary to help determine shellfish bed closures and data collected while monitoring the aquaculture sites.

PREP is looking for ways to further expand the monitoring efforts and is open to suggestions.

Mr. Tilton asked about the chlorophyll-a parameter and whether shellfish consume it and take it out of the water. Mrs. Lyon responded yes, shellfish are eating phytoplankton which is a form of chlorophyll-a.

Ms. Swank noted that the chlorophyll-a reading on the graph were just from July and whether July is a typical or worst case scenario month. Mrs. Lyon stated that higher values do occur in the summer when the phytoplankton are growing.

Ms. Shaw asked about the high spikes in the chlorophyll-a readings and Mrs. Lyon said she did not know the cause and would have to wait until the data are fully reviewed.

Mrs. Lyon noted that the data on clam and green grabs comes from the monitoring work done by Normandeau Associates through a contract with Nextera (power plant in Seabrook, NH). This monitoring effort is looking at the abundance of green grabs and neoplasia (cancer) in adult clams.

Ms. Renaud commented that based on the graph it looked like the population of green grabs was down. Mrs. Lyon said they were going down but are now increasing. Mr. Tilton added that having really cold winters can reduce their population.

Mrs. Lyon noted a NH SeaGrant effort which is looking at the population of the green grabs and trying to find a market for them. This would be part of the commercial fishing process. The challenge is they are rather small and the meat is hard to harvest. People typically use them to make soups or stocks.

Mrs. Lyon briefly touched upon the 2015 Piscataqua Region Environmental Planning Assessment (PREPA) report which provided an analysis of questions associated with both regulatory and non-regulatory approaches to resource management. This effort also included mini-grants, Hampton was a recipient of one of those grants to explore joining the FEMA Community Rating System. They are working to update this report and will hopefully have some funding again for technical assistant grants.

She also shared the PREP "Every Drop" campaign which is looking to build a marketing campaign focused on clean water and water quality that will connect with people who enjoy the benefits of clean water such as local beer, walking along the beach. This effort also includes outreach materials for the MS4 permits particularly for pet waste through the Seacoast Stormwater Coalition.

Lastly, Mrs. Lyon touched upon a citizen science project that she is working on related to seaweed monitoring in Great Bay. Looking at the connection between the abundance of seaweed and how that relates to increasing nutrients. After a couple of sampling seasons, they will consider expanding to the Seabrook-Hampton Estuary.

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Ms. Renaud reminded the Commission that last year's contribution was a \$1,000. She noted that the Commission cannot commit to an exact amount this evening because they are waiting to hear back about supporting a tide gauge effort.

Mrs. Dionne briefly explained to Mrs. Lyon that DPW is in the process of working with two engineering firms to study flooding in certain parts of Hampton. To help with the modeling effort and in concert with UNH, they are looking to install additional tide gauges. The final scope and cost are still underway. It's possible for the Commission to provide a contribution range for the collaborative monitoring effort that will be dependent on the final tide gauge project costs which should be figured out over the next few weeks.

MOTION: Mr. Tilton moved to contribute \$500 up to a \$1,000, depending on the tide gauge project with DPW, to the 2019 Piscataqua Region Monitoring Collaborative effort.

SECONDED: Ms. Raymond

VOTE: 5-0-0

MOTION PASSED

IV. Applications

1. Gentian Rd, Meadow Pond Rd & Greene St

Town and NHDES Wetlands Permit

Owner: Aquarion Water Company

Agent: Carl McMorran and Tighe and Bond

Carl McMorran with the Aquarion Water Company and Amanda Keyes with Tighe and Bond were present to discuss the construction of approximately 1,435 linear feet of eight-inch and three-inch water main to replace the existing water main within the neighborhood of Gentian Rd, Meadow Pond Rd, and Greene St. Mr. McMorran shared that Aquarion has approximately 140 miles of water mains. This project area has water mains that are between 60-65 years old. It's been in the ground a long time and in the last 5 years, there have been 2-3 water main breaks in this neighborhood. One of the other issues is the water main is not as deep as it should be, during very cold winters they have had to add bleeders to keep it from freezing.

Ms. Keyes shared that the existing water main is an asbestos cement pipe that will be replaced with an HDPE pipe. The project includes 1,100 sq. ft. of tidal buffer impacts and 600 sq. ft. of freshwater all of which is within the roadway. There will also be some temporary impacts while the main is being replaced. When the job is complete the road will be restored.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

Ms. Renaud asked if flooding will impact the project. Ms. Keyes responded that it could and the high water table and high tides could slow the work down. She shared that the plan is to do the work in the fall. Mr. McMorran added that there are worse locations in Hampton such as the end of Perkins St.

Mrs. Dionne asked how deep will the new water main be compared to the existing.

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Ms. Keyes responded that the top of the new water main will be at 5 ft while the existing is 4 ft or less in some areas.

MOTION: Mr. Tilton moved to not oppose the NHDES Wetlands permit for the replacement of the water main in the neighborhood of Gentian Rd and Greene St.

SECONDED: Ms. Shaw

VOTE: 5-0-0

MOTION PASSED

MOTION: Ms. Swank moved to recommend the Town Wetlands Permit for the replacement of the water main in the neighborhood of Gentian Rd and Greene St with the stipulation that the Conservation Commission be notified at the beginning and end of the project.

SECONDED: Mr. Tilton

VOTE: 5-0-0

MOTION PASSED

V. Election

1. Election of Conservation Chair

MOTION – Mr. Tilton moved to recommend Mr. Diener as Chair.

SECONDED – Ms. Swank

VOTE – 5-0-0

MOTION PASSED

2. Election of Vice Chair

MOTION – Ms. Swank moved to recommend Ms. Renaud as Vice Chair.

SECONDED – Mr. Tilton

MOTION PASSED – 4-0-1 (abstained Ms. Renaud)

MOTION PASSED

2. Election of Clerk

Motion – Mr. Tilton moved to recommend Ms. Shaw as Clerk

Second – Ms. Raymond

Vote – 4-0-1 (abstained Ms. Shaw)

MOTION PASSED

VI. New Business

1. Purple Martin nesting gourds on Island Path

Mrs. Dionne shared an email from Pamela Hunt with the Audubon Society who has been responsible for the purple martin nesting gourd on Island Path. Ms. Hunt shared that the number of nesting pairs was down and it is believed to be the result of vegetation build up around the gourd. She recommended either clearing a limited area around the nesting site or relocating the gourd set-up to the salt marsh where the vegetation is always low. Ms. Hunt was looking for feedback from the Commission as to which option they preferred.

Mr. Tilton shared that he was fine with whatever they think is best as both options seemed reasonable. The rest of the members agreed that they did not have a preference for one option over the other.

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2. Annual donation to the NH Association of Conservation Commissions

Mrs. Dionne reminded the Commission that last year they donated \$200 to the NH Association of Conservation Commissions because the annual dues had become too expensive. She wanted to know if the Commission wanted to repeat that donation this year.

MOTION: Mr. Tilton moved to recommend a \$200 donation for 2019 to the NH Association of Conservation Commissions.

SECONDED: Ms. Raymond

VOTE: 5-0-0

MOTION PASSED

3. CHAT update

Mrs. Dionne gave a brief update on the current progress of the Coastal Hazards Adaptation Team. She noted that they have had three meetings to date. These meetings have consisted of organization matters, general goals, and beginning to better understand Hampton's flood vulnerabilities.

VII. Old Business

VIII. Conservation Coordinator and Chair update

Mrs. Dionne gave a quick recap of the Zoning Board's discussion on 55 Harbor Rd last week. At that meeting, the applicant was requesting relief from sections of the Wetland Ordinance. What has been challenging is there is a wetland permit process that reviews and approves work in the buffer and a variance is not required. The ZBA made a motion to grant the wetland relief with the condition that the applicant obtains an approved Town Wetlands Permit. Mrs. Dionne would like to make the recommendation that on the ZBA variance application there be a statement that alerts applicants to follow the wetland permitting process for any proposed work within the Wetland Conservation District.

Ms. Renaud supported the concept but recommended sharing this proposed change with the Planning Board and getting their support before going to the ZBA. The rest of the members agreed with this approach.

Mrs. Dionne gave a quick update on the proposed condominium project at 535-537 Ocean Blvd (Little Jack's Restaurant) and that the proposal will be before the PRC (Planning Review Committee) on March 27th.

Ms. Renaud asked how the Painted Rain Barrel Program was shaping up. Mrs. Dionne shared that the barrels were being dropped off this week and the paint order would be ready the beginning of next week.

Ms. Renaud asked about holding another Town Forest Clean-up event this spring. Ms. Dionne shared that last year they held it at the beginning of June. This seemed to be a good time of year with regards to temperature and lack of mosquitos. She shared that the first two Saturdays in June are the 1st and the 8th.

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Ms. Renaud shared that we need to do more publicity for the cleanup to get more volunteers. For the last two years the number of volunteers has been small.

Ms. Dionne asked about having prizes or incentives for things like the biggest bag of trash, most cans or strangest piece of trash.

Mr. Loiseau shared that at the beach some of the local coffee places give a free cup of coffee for bringing in a bag of trash. There was agreement that vouchers might work. There was also the idea of a prize for the biggest group of volunteers.

Ms. Shaw asked about whether the schools have community services hours. Mrs. Dionne said she would work on trying to include more students.

IX. Adjourn

MOTION – Ms. Swank motioned to adjourn at 9:03 pm

SECOND - Ms. Raymond

VOTE – 5-0-0

MOTION PASSED