

**Hampton Conservation Commission**  
**Draft Meeting Minutes**  
**Tuesday, August 22, 2023**

**Present:**

Deborah Wrobel, Chair  
Jay Diner, Vice Chair  
Robert Fox  
Peter Tilton  
Diane Shaw, Alternate, voting member  
Katherine Desrochers, Alternate, voting member

**Staff:**

Brianna O'Brien, Conservation Coordinator

**I. Call to Order: 7:00 pm**

**II. Review Minutes**

a. July 25, 2023

Mr. Tilton MOTIONED to accept the July 25<sup>th</sup> minutes as written. SECONDED by Mr. Fox. Ms. Shaw and Mr. Diener ABSTAINED. Vote: 4-0-2

b. July 31, 2023

Mr. Tilton MOTIONED to accept the July 31<sup>st</sup> minutes as written. SECONDED by Mr. Fox. Ms. Shaw and Mr. Diener ABSTAINED. Vote: 4-0-2

**III. Applications**

a. **23 Dumas Ave NHDES Standard Dredge and Fill Application**

Applicant: Derick Hasbrouck  
Agent: Mark West  
Property Owner: Derick Hasbrouck

- Henry Boyd, Millenium Engineering, presented the project. The proposal is to regrade the backyard. Because of the regrading, the deck that is being rebuilt in-kind will not need stairs. There will also be some plantings added in the corner of the yard.
- The Commission had no questions. They were able to ask questions at the site walk with Mark West, CWS on Saturday, August 19<sup>th</sup>. It is a straightforward proposal.
- Closed to public comment at 7:04pm

Mr. Tilton MOVED not to oppose the NHDES Standard Dredge and Fill Application for 23 Dumas Ave. SECONDED by Mr. Diener. VOTE: 6-0-0

- Mr. Boyd shared an update about the clam population in the Seabrook-Hampton Estuary. He met with a scientist who looked at the clams. The die-off that Seabrook recently experienced looked similar to the die-off that Brunswick, Maine experienced in 1992. The area in Seabrook had been loaded with clams for the past 5 or 6 years, Mr. Boyd explained he could fill a pail in 7 minutes. Then in the last year, when the clams died off in large

numbers, it could take 45 minutes to fill the same pail. The clams looked alive but when you touched them, they would fall apart, and they would ooze. It was considered that the bloodworms were killing the clams, cancer and blight was also considered. It seems to be very similar to what happened in 1992 in Brunswick and no one ever figured out what happened. However, the populations of clams in the Seabrook area are healthy again.

#### IV. **Appointments**

##### a. NHDES Coastal Program Presentation on Living Shorelines and Vegetative Management Approaches

- Aidan Barry, Coastal Resilience and Habitat Specialist with NHDES Coastal Program spoke to the Commission about nature-based solutions, living shorelines, shoreline stabilization and state regulations.
- He started by reviewing the ecosystem services provided by salt marshes, including habitat, biodiversity, and their ability to help regulate climate functions.
- Just about 6,000 acres of salt marsh in New Hampshire and there is about 4,000 acres of salt marsh in the Seabrook Hampton Estuary. The State prioritizes any initiatives that maintain and preserve this habitat and also keep people and properties safe. But it is very risk prone.
- A report in 2016 that looked at shoreline stabilization and armoring throughout New Hampshire. 12% of shoreline in the state was armored with revetment, rip rap, etc. Hampton had about 19% hardened/armored shoreline.
- Consideration has to be given to all of the properties that are along the coast. There is an increasing demand for shoreline stabilization and protection. Historically, that may have been rip rap. However now, the states regulations prioritize green/vegetated approaches. A study in 2017 showed that 1 in 5 people who own shoreline property are looking for stabilization and protection options.
- Mr. Barry quickly reviewed the projected sea level rise models for New Hampshire. The most likely estimate from 2000-2050 is .5 ft to 1.5 ft of sea level rise. This means the sea level is not only increasing but it will also expand. Because of the heavy development of the coastline, this can easily lead to salt marsh squeeze, when the marsh cannot grow and expand as the sea levels rise and Hampton has the potential to lose 95% of the saltmarsh by 2150.
- Mr. Barry clarified that the emissions of greenhouse gasses is the primary reason behind sea level rise and scientists are confident that the sea levels will rise, while estimating the exact amounts is more nuanced.
- New Hampshire, and Hampton specifically, are being impacted economically by sea level rise affects on properties.
- Historically, rip rap stone walls were used to stabilize shorelines. But as the problem has increased nation wise, it has been found to not be the best solution. A hardened approach does not look at a long term scale and does not consider the benefits a healthy ecosystem can provide.
- Living shorelines are defined as a management practice that provides erosion control benefits, protects, restores, or enhances natural shoreline habitat and maintains coastal processes through the strategic placement of plants, stone, sand fill, and other organic materials, maintaining the continuity of the natural land-water interface while providing habitat value and protecting against coastal hazards. (Env-WT 602.29) They address both problems-protecting the shoreline against further erosion and enhancing the ecosystem.
- There is evidence that during major storm events, green shorelines perform better than hardened shorelines.
- Mr. Barry showed an example in Durham at Wagon Hill Farm. This example shows a hybridization with a stone toe and vegetation. He then explained a graphic that showed the range of options from green approaches to grey approaches. NHDES regulations state that a stabilization project proposal has to start on the green end of the range unless it can be proven that it will not work and then the proposal can become more hybridized as needed.
- Hampton's Master Plan mentions living shorelines 50 times. The action items state that living shorelines should be the starting point for coastal resilience land use projects. Mr. Barry highlighted that this is not just a priority at the federal or state level but it also is coming from the Town.
- Mr. Barry reviewed the state regulations. The driving factors behind the regulation is that a holistic approach needs to be taken and that abutters cannot be negatively impacted. NHDES offers a suitability model for evaluating sites. The state also asks that an applicant demonstrates how sea level rise is built into their project design.
- Mr. Tilton commented that applicants should not be directed to a design that wont work long-term and would require maintenance or replacement in the short-term. Mr. Barry responded that the suitability assessment and his work one on one with property owners helps direct people to the best solutions without exhausting their wallets.

- Mr. Barry briefly mentioned dunes. They are protected habitats and most activities involving dunes require permitting.
- Mr. Diener asked about the effectiveness of a living shoreline in a smaller space between the wetland edge and the structure. Mr. Barry answered that space can definitely pose a problem and site should be evaluated carefully but when considering the effectiveness of a living shoreline versus a bulkhead in the same place, they will both get flooded over time.
- Ms. Wrobel asked that the State look to find more success stories of living shorelines on smaller private properties to share with the seacoast community. Mr. Barry responded that there are barriers to accessibility for private property owners and the State is working to find ways to enhance opportunities.
- The Commission reviewed a permit application that recently came through the Town.
- Ms. Wrobel expressed concerns about individual properties doing shoreline stabilization work in areas when the entire area should be stabilized to increase efficacy. Mr. Barry agreed and stated that his work with the Neighborhood Technical Assistance Program (NTAP) can help by bringing neighborhoods together.

## V. New Business

### a. 2024 Budget

- Ms. O'Brien presented the proposed 2024 budget. The 2023 budget did not pass so the Commission is working with the default budget. There were several small, proposed increases from the 2022 to the 2023 budget that did not pass and are being proposed again.
- The intern's pay was proposed to be \$15/ hour from \$12/hour. The Commission moved some money around to pay the \$14/hour this year but the 2024 proposed budget will have a \$15/hour pay for the intern.
- Ms. O'Brien mentioned that her proposed wages will come from the finance department but the budget will be submitted with the cost of living adjustment that was proposed for 2023.
- There was only a small, proposed change from the 2022 to 2023 budget. \$750 was proposed for seminars and training from \$100. This is currently being proposed for 2024 because there is an increase in educational opportunities for Commission members and the Coordinator and it will be important to take advantage of them as science evolves and networking among the greater community increases knowledge and opportunities.
- Public outreach is being increased from \$xx to \$xx to accommodate new signage needs next year for the Barkley Property or any other areas that might need materials.
- Ms. O'Brien discussed the Commission's use of their 2023 budget.
- Mr. Diener asked if there is a line item for independent wetland delineation verifications. The professional services line item was discussed as was the ordinance that allows the Commission or the Planning Board to ask for a wetland verification at the applicant's expense. The Commission paid about \$750 for a wetland verification of the Liquor Commission's property earlier this year. The Commission decided to increase this line item to \$1500.
- Mr. Diener mentioned the need for a kiosk at the Barkley Property. The public outreach category was discussed again. The Commission agreed on \$1,200.

Mr. Tilton MOTIONED to submit the budget as drafted. SECONDED by Mr. Diener. Vote 6-0-0

### b. Car Barn Pond Signage

- Ms. O'Brien reviewed the estimate she received from Alpha Graphics for a sign for Car Barn Pond. They did not have graffiti-proof laminate. The total is \$270.82
- The Commission would like to look around for a vendor that has graffiti-proof laminate. The Commission mentioned several places to look into.

Mr. Tilton MOTIONED to spend up to \$500 on a sign for Car Barn Pond with graffiti proof laminate if it can be found. SECONDED by Ms. Shaw. Vote 6-0-0.

c. SHEA Photography Contest Invoice

- The Commission reviewed the \$100 invoice from SHEA for their photo contest prize.

Mr. Tilton MOTIONED to pay the \$100 invoice to SHEA. SECONDED by Mr. Fox. Vote 6-0-0

VI. **Old Business**

a. Grist Mill and Ice Pond RFP

- Ms. O'Brien announced that the RFPs would close on August 29<sup>th</sup> at 4pm. She has heard from several consultants indicating they would be submitting proposals. She would like to find a time to review the proposals with those interested by the end of next week.

VII. **Conservation Coordinator and Chair Update**

- Cell Tower proposal
  - Ms. Wrobel and Ms. O'Brien gave an overview of the proposed cell tower on Barbour Rd. Ms. O'Brien represents the Commission at the Plan Review Committee meeting (PRC) which will be held tomorrow at 2pm. She would like the Commission's input if there is anything anyone would like her to share or ask at that meeting.
  - Ms. O'Brien reviewed what has happened so far. The applicant needs several variances to move forward with the project. They were on the ZBA agenda for last week but because the application was not properly notified, the ZBA asked the applicant to continue. Because cell towers are federally regulated, they have a 150 day clock until the Town loses the ability to provide input or render a decision and it essentially becomes an automatic yes from the Town.
  - The Planning Board generally does not vote on applications that do not have their needed variances, so that also generally means the PRC process wouldn't start until that point either, but the Town cannot cancel or postpone a PRC meeting, only the applicant can. They were asked if they wanted to continue, and they stated that they did.
  - Ms. O'Brien shared that at the PRC she will be asking about the wetland delineation as it was done in the winter and the proposed project is right up against the buffer edge so she would like the delineation to be verified. There is also no wetland report, and she would like to see one.
  - There is one statement in the application that says there is no environmental impact proposed but more detail is needed. Are there any endangered or rare species in the area? There is science that indicates that radiofrequency emissions can be harmful to wildlife.
  - Ms. O'Brien would also like to know more information about the temporary impacts of the construction process.
  - Mr. Fox pointed out that it will be important to know how any fuel is stored for a back-up power source.
  - Ms. O'Brien stated she could do an NHB review to see if there are any rare or endangered species.
  - There are two other 5G towers in Hampton. This tower will be owned by a private company and carriers will rent space for their equipment. The application said there are 4 carriers planned.
  - The Commission discussed that it is odd that there isn't an environmental impact assessment done for this type of project.
- Eaton Park Flooding
  - The softball field at Eaton Park has been very wet for the past few years and virtually unusable this year. Rene, the Rec director, has been exploring options to remedy the situation.
  - Mark West, CWS, took a walk along the property to evaluate the issue. He anticipates a need to improve the drainage and redirect the water under the field back to the stream by the parking lot. The field will also need fill.
  - This project will likely require mitigation so Ms. O'Brien will work with Rene and Mark to find appropriate mitigation projects that will align with the proposed impacts. Mark has a lot of experience with mitigation projects. Ms. O'Brien will direct the efforts to work that the

Commission will want to do anyway, like the enhancement of Grist Mill or Ice Pond or vernal pool and trail restoration in the Town Forest.

- Ms. O'Brien will send out a resource to the Commission that explains the difference between NHDES permits and the type of review and of comments the state is looking for and relying on local Commissions for.
- Mr. Diener reviewed CHAT's efforts to get flood risk disclosures on real estate disclosure forms. He reviewed the legislation timeline. Chris Muns, the State Representative who will be moving this forward and has already said that this type of legislation will require an abundance of support.
- Ms. O'Brien mentioned that NHDES is offering free well-water testing for property owners with private well water supply. The workshop is September 14<sup>th</sup> at 6pm at Hampton Academy.

**VIII. Adjourn**

Ms. Diener MOTIONED to adjourn. Ms. Shaw SECONDED. VOTE 6-0-0