**Rochester Conservation Commission**

Minutes of the September 23, 2015

Public Hearing and Regular Meeting

*Approved 10/28/15*

Members Present:

Deborah Shigo, Chair

Michael Dionne, Vice Chair

Merry Lineweber

Mark Jennings

Roger Burkhart

Michael Kirwan

Kevin Sullivan

Members Absent:

Jack Hackett

Staff (Absent):

Seth Creighton, Chief Planner

**The chair convened the regular meeting at 6:30 p.m.**

**Minutes**: The regular meeting minutes of August 26, 2015 were reviewed. A motion was made by Mr. Jennings and seconded by Mr. Kirwan to approve the minutes with minor changes. The motion carried unanimously.

**1) New Business:**

None

**2) Notice of Intent to Cut Wood or Timber/Intent to Excavate:**

 **a. Notice of Intent to Cut – Tax Maps # 256-61-8 thru 19,22, and 23:** The Commission didn’t have any concerns.

**3)** **Discussion:**

* 1. **The Ridge Development – Phase II:** Mr. Creighton gave the Commission a recap of the discussions held at the Manager’s meeting and the Planning Board meeting. He informed them the City Manager wants the Commission to comment on the proposal regardless of what the City Council will think.

Ms. Shigo gave a recap of the site walk; she said the wetland habitat is good; the stream is very functional and had a lot of flow during a dry season. Mr. Jennings explained there are 8 acres of wetland and wetland buffer impacts however; the applicant is only focusing on 2.6 acres of wetlands.

Ms. Shigo explained the way mitigation works and how this development is in the Cocheco River watershed and how mitigation is most likely required.

The Commission and Staff discussed the City’s Conservation Overlay District’s rules and the goals outlined in the Natural Resource Chapter of the Master plan, and how this proposal does not adhere to the intent of either. Mr. Jennings suggested that the development be kept more toward Rt 11 so as to allow for a greenway/natural area at the rear of the property, that would tie in nicely with the conservation land on Waterstone’s land to the north. Mr. Sullivan said that the developer should redesign to avoid stream impacts. Mr. Dionne agreed, adding that wetland impacts should also be minimized. There was discussion about what to make for a motion. Mr. Sullivan motioned that the Commission not support the proposal, and that the plan would be considered if it was redesigned with minimal wetland impacts and no stream impacts; Mr. Dionne seconded; all voted in favor; the motion passed unanimously.

* 1. **8,000 sq. ft. next to Wal-Mart in Phase I:** Mr. Jennings and Ms. Lineweber explained how wet the land was years ago. Mr. Creighton informed the Commission that the City doesn’t have any jurisdiction via local ordinances because it’s less than a half acre, however, he did state that the Commission can provide comment to NH DES via review of the DES wetlands application. The Commission indicated that this wetland had nearly no functions and values, and may not be a wetland, and thus would not oppose the proposed fill, as long as the mitigation occurred in Rochester.

**4) Non-Public Session pursuant to RSA 91-A: 3 II (d):- (if necessary), Discussion of acquisition of real property and/or recent site walks and LACE sheets.** At 7:20 pm a motion was made and seconded to go into non-public session. The motion carried unanimously. At 8:50 the public session resumed.

**5) Other:** Ms. Lineweber explained that Strafford County Conservation District (SCCD) is closing and suggested that Mr. Creighton contact them to see if the Commission would be able to get any books or other resources.

The Commission asked what would happen to Conservation Easements that were held by SCCD. Mr. Creighton explained that Attorney General would ask the community to take over the easement.

The Commission discussed attending the NH Association for Conservation Commission’s annual meeting and conference. Ms. Shigo motioned to use the commission’s funds to send the members to this meeting; Mr. Kirwan seconded; all voted in favor.

**6) Adjournment:** *At 8:54 pm. A motion was made Mr. Sullivan and seconded by Mr. Kirwan to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.*

Respectfully submitted,

Seth Creighton,

Chief Planner