Members Present: Not Present:

Michael Dionne, Chair Merry Lineweber Kevin Sullivan

Mark Jennings Michael Kirwan Barbara Soley

Jack Hackett Deborah Shigo

Staff:

Seth Creighton, Chief Planner

The chair convened the meeting at 6:30pm.

**1) Dredge and Fill Application/Wetland Permit Application:**

 a) Dewey ST/Hanson Pines Pedestrian Bridge:

The proposed replacement of the City of Rochester’s pedestrian bridge across the Cocheco from Dewey Street to Hanson Pines was introduced to the Commission by Engineer Aaron M. Lachance and Environmental Coordinator Kimberly Peace, both from Hoyle Tanner Associates. The team explained the need to replace the existing bridge and the options that were reviewed for the new bridge. The proposed bridge will reduce environmental impacts by having most of abutments located on land instead of in the river. The Commission and engineers collaborated on how to minimize impacts to the Cocheco River and maintain vegetation on the abutting dry land. The Commission felt comfortable with the bridge design and the best management construction practices being proposed

**2. Discussion**

a)Abutters (Todd and Michele Bourasso and Taryn and Hank Decken) of a proposed lot line revision (that is being reviewed by the Planning Board on Laura Drive) said they are concerned that the wetland boundaries aren’t shown correctly on the survey plans submitted to the Planning Board, the abutters offered testimony and showed pictures of the areas of concern. Mr. Creighton advised that the Commission does not have jurisdiction over this application and that the Planning Board did not have to consider any comments that may be made. Mr. Bourasso said he was here to ask the City’s environmental group to assist them with an environmental question, namely are all wetlands shown. The Commission agreed that some of the areas shown on the smart phone resembled wetlands yet aren’t shown as such on the plans; the members agreed that a site walk to view the wetlands would help. Mr. Kirwan made a motion to ask the Planning Board to continue the application until the Commission is able to walk the properties, view the wetlands, and report back to the PB as to whether there is a need for a third party wetland delineation, Ms. Shigo seconded, all voted in favor. The Commission and abutters decided February 11th at 9:00 am is when they would walk the site.

**3. Other:**

a) School and Conservation Commission Partnership –Spaulding High’s environmental science teacher Mr. Darren Scopel said he is working on applying for a grant that would help fund a collaboration between his students and the Conservation Commission. He had two ideas: 1) An interpretive trail at Hanson Pines; or, 2) A stream study.

After much brainstorming the Commission and Mr. Scopel decided that the stream study would be the first choice. Mr. Scopel said he would let Mr. Dionne know about the outcome of the grant application.

b) The owner of Wildlife Encounters, Derek Small, introduced himself and said he was present to learn what the City is doing as far as conservation/preservation. He said his business is currently located in Rochester and he is looking to expand, and may expand in Rochester if the City’s efforts match his businesses interests. He said was pleased to hear the City working on conservation/preservation.

c) A resident who lives off of Norway Plains Rd said he has interest in applying to become a member of the Commission. The Commission encouraged him to apply. (His name was not stated).

**4. New Business:**

a) Review of South East Land Trust’s (SELT) Addendum to the Baseline Documentation Report for Fernald Conservation Land, Sheepboro Rd.

Mr. Creighton explained that with SELT’s recent induction into the ranks of being an accredited land trust, they are brining all of their past projects into compliance with accreditation standards. For the Fernald conservation easement, this meant reformatting and adding language to the Baseline Documentation Report. The Commission said that they had no concerns with the document. Mr. Jennings voted to accept the document as presented, Mr. Hackett seconded, the motion passed.

b) Review of draft easement language for Gauthier Farm, Bernard Rd

The Commission began reviewing and offering suggestions on the draft conservation easement language that will apply to the Gauthier Farm once conserved. Suggestions centered around renewable energy, telecommunications, reclamation of disturbed land, disc golf course, and structures/vehicles on the land. There was much discussion regarding Tara Estates’ recent complaints regarding gunfire at the Gauthier Farm; Mr. Dionne suggested that some of the Commission members, the Police Dept, and Councilor Ray Varney meet with the Gauthier family and Tara Estates residents to discuss this; Mr. Creighton said he would arrange this meeting.

**5. Notice of Intent to Cut Wood or Timber / Intent to Excavate:**

a) Notice of Intent to Cut - Tax Map 234-18, Crown Point Rd

b) Notice of Intent to Cut- Tax Map 232-13, Meaderboro Rd

The Commission had no concerns with either of these timber harvest permits.

**6. Reports:**

a) Technical Review Group (TRG) – Mr. Jennings, the Commission’s liaison to the TRG explained the applications that are being reviewed and will be before the Planning Board that have conservation related aspects to them (wetlands, etc). Presently the Chesley Hill Rd subdivision application was being discussed and that he had requested the wetland crossings be upgraded to open bottom/live bottom culverts.

 b) Planning Board (PB)- Ms. Shigo, the Commission’s liaison to the PB explained the applications that are had been reviewed by the Planning Board and how those were voted on (i.e.- how PB supported, or didn’t support Conservation Commission recommendations). Most currently the PB voted to approve timber and excavation activity at 60 Farmington Rd (the Ridge Marketplace phase two) and that this approval is in direct conflict with the recommendation made by the Conservation Commission. She also suggested that the Conservation Commission begin updating the Natural Resources section of the City’s Master Plan.

 **7. Old Business:**

 a) Hope Farm (Peaslee Rd) Monitoring Report – Mr. Dionne informed Mr. Creighton that there is a formatting problem with electronic “monitoring report form”. He then read through the form to explain to the Commission what he wrote. Ms. Shigo asked him to add in language about proximity to wetlands and the need to implement best management practices in these areas. This report was based on last month’s site walk of the property.

**8. Review of Minutes:**

The minutes of 11/13/2016, 11/16/2017, 12/10/2016, and 1/04/2017 were reviewed. Mr. Dionne suggested Ms. Soley be noted as present on the 1/04/2017 minutes. Mr. Kirwan motioned to accept the minutes, and revision, Ms. Lineweber seconded.

Mr. Hackett motioned to adjourn at 9:04pm; Ms. Shigo seconded. The motion passed.

Respectfully submitted, Seth Creighton, Chief Planner