

**CONCORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION
MINUTES
Regular Meeting
April 10, 2013
Second Floor Conference Room, City Hall
41 Green Street, Concord, NH**

Attendance:

Members present at the meeting included: Jim Owers; Tracey Boisvert; Pam Hunt; Kris Tardiff; Rick Chormann; Karen Rose; Chris Kane; Jan McClure; Gloria McPherson, City Planner and Rebecca Hebert, Senior Planner, attended the meeting.

J. Owers, Vice Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:00.

1. Minutes:

The Commission reviewed the minutes of the March 13, 2013 meeting. K. Tardiff moved to accept the minutes of the March 13th meeting with a few minor corrections. P. Hunt seconded the motion; the motion passed unanimously.

The Commission reviewed the minutes of the March 20, 2013 meeting. K. Tardiff moved to accept the minutes of the March 20th meeting with a few minor corrections. R. Chormann seconded the motion; the motion passed unanimously.

2. Wetlands Bureau:

R. Hebert said that there were no new wetlands applications to review this month. She distributed the following correspondence from the Wetlands Bureau:

- Letter to Drake Petroleum Company, Inc. regarding approval of the Alteration of Terrain Permit for the new gas station at 1 Whitney Road;
- Letter to John Magee of New Hampshire Fish and Game regarding the Wetlands Dredge and Fill Permit of Concord Power and Steam, LLC; and
- Letter to Kim Tuttle regarding the Wetlands Dredge and Fill Permit of Concord Power and Steam, LLC.

3. Other Business:

a. Northern Pass update from the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests

Jack Savage of the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests was present to update the Commission on the status of Northern Pass proposal and permits and to answer questions about the project. He provided a brief summary of the project and its general impacts to the state. The Concord Planning Board submitted comments to the City Council stating that the proposed route should stay within the existing corridor and that the line should be buried. The Commission made a broader statement that it did not support the project. Mr. Savage suggested that the City consider how the project

will affect Concord including impacts to natural resources and the viewshed. He explained that the height of the proposed towers would be taller within the right of way between Franklin and Deerfield in order to achieve the required separation for the high voltage line. Mr. Savage suggested that if the Commission wanted to become more specific about their concerns, they could consider submitting comments as part of the environmental permitting process.

Mr. Savage explained that the project will need a Presidential Permit to cross the Canadian border and will also need an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The EIS is still in the early phases and there is an opportunity to submit comments to help define the scope of work. He said that the project will also need a Special Use Permit for impacts to the White Mountain National Forest.

Mr. Savage explained that the Forest Society's position is that the organization opposes Northern Pass project as proposed, with 1,100 towers across 180 miles of New Hampshire's landscape. He said that the New Hampshire Site Evaluation Committee (SEC) will also need to issue a certificate for project. The SEC recently denied a site for wind towers in Antrim and did not issue a certificate. He explained that this was the first time the SEC denied a certificate to construct a wind farm primarily based on the visual impacts.

The group discussed the permitting process and asked if the route could change as a result of the permitting. Mr. Savage said that the route could change as part of the permitting. He explained that the Forest Society would like to see the line buried within an existing transportation corridor. Similar Hydro Quebec projects in New York and Maine are proposed to be buried. Mr. Savage explained that the rates are higher in New York and there is more incentive to bury the lines when the end users are paying more for the electricity. The group also asked if there were established methods for evaluating the visual impacts to properties. He said that studies have shown that the tax benefit to communities may be half what Northern Pass has estimated due to the loss in property value along the corridor. The Town of Deerfield has completed a study to review the fiscal impacts of the project. The City may want to establish a committee to study specific impacts to Concord. He also suggested that if the Commission has questions, to ask Northern Pass directly, they may be willing to come to a meeting to discuss the line through Concord.

b. Acidotic trail race at Winant Park discussion of race course

Rich Lavers was present to discuss the proposed trail running race course for an upcoming fundraising event at Winant Park. He explained that the event was sponsored by the Acidotic Racing Club to raise money for the Emerson School for Preschoolers. R. Hebert said that the Commission discussed the race a few months ago and approved the use of trails at Winant Park, but did not want the race course to use the "unofficial" singletrack trails. She explained that these trails are not mapped or maintained by the City and typically lead to private land. She said that she is comfortable with all aspects of the event, but wanted the discussion of the singletrack trails to come back to the Commission for review. Mr. Lavers explained that he wants to use the singletrack only on city-owned property to create loop trail. He would also use the singletrack trail that runs parallel to the Langley Parkway extension right of way. He explained that the use of the singletrack would greatly improve the race course.

K. Tardiff moved to approve the singletrack trails on city property at Winant Park as presented to the Commission tonight. The discussion ensued regarding granting permission to hold the event annually without having to return to the Commission for review. The group felt that the Commission may want to

review the impacts to the trails after the race and decided not to grant permission for races to be held annually. K. Rose seconded the motion; motion passed unanimously.

4. Open Space:

K. Tardiff moved to enter into a nonpublic session for the discussion of possible land acquisitions in accordance with RSA 91-A:3, II(d). C. Kane seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Following the discussion, the Commission moved to exit nonpublic session and seal the minutes. The motion was duly seconded and passed unanimously.

R. Hebert said that the Triacca closing will be on Thursday and Five Rivers Conservation Trust is hosting a celebration at Dimond Hill Farm at 6:00 on Thursday night.

5. City Council/Planning Board Action:

R. Hebert updated the group on the proposed budget. She said that the budget has been reviewed by the City Manager and the Program Change Requests (PCR's) including the \$4,000 for the easement stewardship intern and \$40,000 from the Forestry Trust for the open space and outdoor recreation plan have been approved by the City Manager with the change that the easement monitoring intern be paid for through the revenue from the conservation lease payments in the reserve account.

6. Easement Stewardship/Monitoring:

R. Hebert said that she monitored the Emmons property last week and the property was in good condition. She will resend the list of easements that need to be monitored to Commissioners.

7. Reports:

R. Hebert said that the Trails Committee did not meet in March and she did not have a report at this time.

R. Chormann said that the UMLAC is hosting a talk by David Stewart-Smith on the mapping of the Merrimack River at St. Paul's School.

R. Hebert distributed the forestry report from FORECO.

R. Hebert said that she spoke with an individual who was interested in volunteering on the Contoocook and North Branch Rivers Local Advisory Committee. He will be submitting a letter of interest to the City Clerk's Office. It was suggested that the City's website include a space to advertise volunteer opportunities.

R. Hebert said that she attended a meeting on the detection of the Emerald Ash Borer in Concord. The infestation was discovered at a property off of Hall Street and the entire county will be under quarantine. The state agencies have a plan for preventing the spread of the insect and they are in the process of implementing the plan. C. Kane offered to volunteer to help with the inspection of trees. R. Hebert will forward contact information.

R. Hebert said that the members of the Concord Skyhawks Airplane Club have been working with a nearby property owner to lower noise level of planes. The neighbor complained last year when members of the club started flying planes with larger and/or noisier engines. The club has established a noise control policy and used noise meters to measure sound at the neighbor's property and at the flying site.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 PM.

A TRUE RECORD ATTEST:
Rebecca Hebert, Senior Planner
Secretary pro-tem