

MINUTES OF THE NEW CASTLE CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Tuesday, April 6th, 2021 – 5:00 p.m. (Via Zoom)

Repair and replace existing stone and concrete shoreline protection at Portsmouth Yacht Club, 76 Piscataqua St., Map 18, Lot 13.

Members Present: Conni White, Chair, Lynn McCarthy, Vice-Chair, Beth Barnhorst, Tom Chamberlin, Darcy Horgan, Jim Rini.

Members Absent: Bill Marshall, Iain Moodie, Ron Pascale, Brandon Tanguay.

Others Present: Jim Cerny; Duncan Mellor, CivilWorks New England.

Chair White called the meeting to order at 5:04 p.m.

1. Applications.

A. Repair and replace existing stone and concrete shoreline protection at Portsmouth Yacht Club, 76 Piscataqua St., Map 18, Lot 13.

Duncan Mellor, Principal Coastal Engineer of CivilWorks New England, presented the application to repair existing stone and concrete shoreline protection at the Portsmouth Yacht Club. An expedited minimum impact permit has been submitted to DES. The proposed repair plan wraps around three sides of the building. The stone revetment is in good condition, and the areas that need work are the mortar stone and concrete wall under the wooden walkway. Part of this area supports the building. Mr. Mellor explained that the mortar is falling out from between the stone on the northern wall facing the river. The contractor will pull out the loose mortar, reset any dislodged stones and repoint the wall. There is a concrete slab and timber piles supporting the slab on the eastern wall. The plywood is rotting on the bottom, so Mr. Mellor is proposing to repair the concrete flow in between the wooden piles to strengthen the wall. This work will be done with a wheelbarrow.

The proposal also includes repairing or reconstructing in-kind the timber ramp that provides access to the wooden ramp on the outside of the building. Mr. Mellor expects that the ramp work will take place in the next five years, and noted that it is above the highest observable tide line (HOTL). All work will be done at low tide with walk-in access, and will be within the existing footprints. The materials used will be mortar, concrete, stone and timber, and no soil materials will be used.

Ms. Barnhorst asked about leaving the plywood in place. Mr. Mellor explained that they will leave the existing timber piles and will pour concrete in between.

Chair White inquired about how the plan deals with rising sea levels. Mr. Mellor presented graphics showing the sea levels over the years along with tide station data. His findings indicate that sea level rises have varied over time, and are driven by other cyclical factors such as moon phases and planet

orbits. As such, the sea level rise should not necessarily be expected to keep increasing. Mr. Mellor noted that the repair work is estimated to last 25 years, and it is predicted that there will be 1.9 inches of sea level rise during that time. It will be necessary to reevaluate the sea level rise in the future.

Ms. Horgan asked how concrete will be brought down into the work area. Mr. Mellor explained that the concrete will be transported using wheelbarrows and five gallon buckets. There will be no need to use silt fencing because all work will be done in the dry.

Mr. Rini asked about the voids underneath the building, and if a pump truck would be needed to add concrete to these spaces. Mr. Mellor responded that this project does not require large volumes of concrete, so a pump truck will not be needed.

Ms. Barnhorst motioned that the Conservation Commission recommend to NHDES the repairs per the plan set submitted by CivilWorks of New England, dated March 8, 2021, for the Portsmouth Yacht Club at 76 Piscataqua Street, Tax Map 18, Lot 13. Ms. McCarthy seconded. Ms. Barnhorst, Ms. McCarthy, Mr. Chamberlin, Mr. Rini, and Chair White all voted in favor. Motion carried unanimously.

2. Presentation by Jim Cerny on New Castle properties most affected by a big storm (as shown on new FEMA maps).

Jim Cerny presented a slideshow showing the projected sea level rise in several areas around New Castle, using the new FEMA flood maps. He noted that we are very close to a 100 year flood shown on the current maps. Mr. Cerny stated that it is not a question of what will get flooded, but rather when areas will flood. He added that 44 properties in New Castle have flood insurance.

3. Update on dock applications.

Ms. Horgan explained why the language in Section 6.3 of the Zoning Ordinance is being changed. The Planning Board needed to change the dock ordinance language because it is all outdated and has been superseded by the State. The Town no longer has authority over docks and cannot enforce the Ordinance as is. The only power New Castle has is vested in the Conservation Commission to review applications and make recommendations to NHDES. Ms. Horgan pointed out that the ordinance update specifies that the Conservation Commission will hold a public meeting for dock applications, so all comments from the public will be taken into account and shared with DES.

Chair White noted that if a dock application comes before the Conservation Commission, it will not change what the Commission does except that the agenda will go out earlier to allow public notice. She and Ms. Horgan emphasized that the Commission needs to continue to stay in its lane.

Ms. Barnhorst pointed out that it is not the Commission's responsibility to notify abutters of dock applications. She also wondered if there is any way for a dock applicant to be required to pay for a soil scientist or some other professional. Ms. Horgan confirmed that the Commission is not required to alert abutters for a public meeting. The DES is required to alert abutters of any dock application,

and a copy of the application is available at the Town Hall. The public meeting must be posted in two places in Town, which are the Post Office and Town Hall, and put up on the Town website. She stated that the Planning Board can hire an outside engineer, but the Conservation Commission is not authorized to do so. Chair White added that the applicant already uses an engineer, and it is the job of the DES to look into the site and bring in another expert if there are questions about any aspect of an application. Ms. Horgan urged residents to vote in support to approve the amendment to Section 6.3 of the Zoning Ordinance.

4. Announcements.

Mr. Rini announced that Green Waste Day will start in May and end in November. It typically falls on the third Saturday of the month. Volunteers are always welcome.

5. Approve minutes from December 2020 meeting.

Chair White made a motion to approve the December 2020 minutes as submitted. Ms. McCarthy seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

6. Adjourn.

Ms. Barnhorst moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Chamberlin seconded. The motion carried, unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 6:43 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Meghan Rumph
Secretary