

MINUTES OF THE NEW CASTLE CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Tuesday, July 6th, 2021 – 5:00 p.m. (Macomber Room)

Move driveway, restore placement of old driveway, and review planting bed in wetland buffer zone at Nicole Beurang, 320 Portsmouth Ave., Map 14, Lot 13.

Members Present: Conni White, Chair, Lynn McCarthy, Vice-Chair, Beth Barnhorst, Iain Moodie, Jim Rini.

Members Absent: Tom Chamberlin, Darcy Horgan, Bill Marshall, Brandon Tanguay.

Others Present: Nicole Beurang, David Borden, Jim Burns, Tracy Degnan, Mary Pat Gibson, Jim Manning, Jean D'Arc Mayo, Dave McGuckin, Barbara Moore, Bill Stewart.

Chair White called the meeting to order at 5:01 p.m.

1. Applications.

A. Move driveway, restore placement of old driveway, and review planting bed in wetland buffer zone at Nicole Beurang, 320 Portsmouth Ave., Map 14, Lot 13.

Prior to the meeting, Conservation Commission members participated in a site walk with Jim Manning and Nicole Beurang, homeowners at 320 Portsmouth Avenue, and Russ Bookholz, Town Building Inspector. Ms. Beurang and Mr. Manning plan to use permeable pavers for their driveway, which will be repositioned to meet the new location of the garage doors. They already have a state permit. Mr. Bookholz explained during the site walk that they will also need a dredge and fill permit to dig up the existing dirt driveway. Ms. Beurang and Mr. Manning also have a planting bed in their yard that is less than 18 inches tall. They do not use fertilizer on the bed.

Mr. Bookholz requested that either Mr. Manning or Ms. Beurang meet with him to go over plans as a condition of approval. Mr. Bookholz would review with the applicants the percentage of the lot which is impervious or pervious. The applicants will submit a landscape plan as well. Conservation Commission members discussed various options for a permeable driveway. Mr. Moodie noted that there is no silt protection around the area right now. He would like to see silt sock used in the area toward the water while work is being done.

Mr. Rini made a motion to recommend approval of a landscape and driveway plan to be developed by Russ Bookholz, in conjunction with Jim Manning and Nicole Beurang of 320 Portsmouth Ave., Map 14, Lot 13, contingent upon the installation of silt sock for protection on either side of the driveway. Ms. McCarthy seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

2. Announcements.

None.

3. Approve minutes from June 2021 meeting.

Mr. Rini made a motion to approve the June 2021 minutes as submitted. Ms. McCarthy seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

4. New Business.

a) Replanting at Town Park near Coast Guard Station.

Dave McGuckin, Town Selectman, explained how over the last few months, he had discussions with the Great Island Garden Club, who expressed interest in clearing invasive plants near the entrance to the Coast Guard Station. The Select Board thought this was a good idea, and Selectman McGuckin took the lead on the project. Volunteers ripped everything out over the course of a few days and brought the plant materials to Fort Stark, where it will be burned this winter. However, the State (NHDES) should have been notified about the plans given the proximity to the shoreline. Other plants were inadvertently cut down besides invasives. Selectman McGuckin stated that the plan moving forward is to cut the stumps down close to ground level and to replant in the area sometime in the fall. The Select Board are working with the New Castle Garden Club on a list of appropriate plants to replant in this location.

Barbara Moore, new President of the Garden Club, shared that the Club wants to do what is right to preserve the area. Mary Pat Gibson, another Garden Club member, spoke about how the field area by the Coast Guard station entrance has been used much more during Covid, and she felt it would be a good idea to clear the dense section in front of the foundation pad that contained bittersweet and sumac. 11 volunteers completed the work over the course of two days. Ms. Gibson requested that the Club have flexibility in terms of what to replant in order to prevent erosion and keep the river clean. She suggested planting native bushes along the parking lot. Ms. Gibson added that she is sensitive to putting in large trees in the area, and did not feel that it would be feasible for the Garden Club to install larger trees.

Chair White stated that she can ask Eben Lewis of NHDES to look at the site in-person to determine what could be planted there. Bill Stewart, Town Selectman, stated that he talked to Mr. Lewis (NHDES), who felt that the Garden Club and Select Board acted in good faith. Mr. Lewis requested the area be restored. Selectman Stewart explained that the purpose of the vegetation is to handle some runoff and provide stabilization of the bank. Mr. Lewis would like to have some native plants put back in, although he did not specify the size of the material. Ms. Barnhorst asked what would be done with the stumps. Selectman Stewart responded that the plan is to cut them to the ground because they are a safety issue.

David Borden, 40 Walbach Street, wondered if there is a way to avoid miscommunication in the future. Chair White responded that the Select Board needs to come to Mr. Bookholz as the

Building Inspector and Code Enforcement Officer if any work is going to be done within 250 feet of the shoreline. The Select Board also should have notified Tracy Degnan of the Rockingham County Conservation District so she could mark the area as one of the places on the Island where she sprays for invasives.

Chair White liked the idea of adding trees versus shrubs in the designated area, as trees would hold the bank in more. She has spoken with Mr. Bookholz about potentially adding five native trees. Mr. Borden requested that the Garden Club work together with the Conservation Commission on future plantings for the area. Commission members discussed the pros and cons of trees versus shrubs at the site.

Jean D'Arc Mayo spoke and requested permission to plant a second chestnut tree in line with the existing one, which she was responsible for. She stated that she would not be asking the Town for any money. Selectman Stewart felt that this was a great idea and requested that Ms. Mayo bring it before the Select Board.

Chair White concluded that members from the Garden Club, Conservation Commission and Select Board will get together to plan for plantings in the area. Jim Burns, another Garden Club member, stated that the Garden Club will cut down the remaining stumps to ground level.

- b) Application for Coastal Resiliency Grant to do a hydrology study of Lavenger Creek, Pit Lane A & B and Wentworth A.

Chair White explained that with climate change, as Lavenger Creek fills more, it is important to ensure the water is flowing properly in the culvert across from Pit Lane. This has been identified as a high priority area for NHDES.

Tracy Degnan of the Rockingham County Conservation District (RCCD) discussed the Coastal Resiliency Program with DES, which works to protect buffers against rising water levels. The RCCD is already working on restoration in the surrounding wetland area and getting rid of phragmites. An engineer would do wetland delineation, elevations, and a culvert analysis that would look at the impact of a culvert and how to stabilize the road. The RCCD would perform an alternatives analysis and conduct some outreach about coastal resiliency and the hydrology of Lavenger salt marsh and the surrounding wetlands. The RCCD is willing to write a grant and be the administrator, with the support of the Conservation Commission and the Board of Selectmen. Ms. Degnan explained that the RCCD would have a 4:1 match in-kind or volunteers. The Town would need about \$2,500 in grant money and \$5,000 in-kind.

Ms. Degnan stated that the idea is to have the analysis done for the Pit Lane side so that if the Department of Transportation ends up elevating Wentworth Road to deal with flooding in the future, they will have good maps and hydrology information to look at a potential connection to the culvert that is no longer on the Wentworth Road side. Ms. Degnan would like a letter of support from the Conservation Commission. Selectman Stewart noted that the Select Board is in support of this as well.

5. Adjourn.

Mr. Rini moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. McCarthy seconded. The motion carried, unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 6:09 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Meghan Rumph
Secretary