

Biddeford Conservation Commission

Thursday, September 15, 2022

6:05 PM - 8:39 PM

Attendees: C. Gastelum, R. Rhames, D. Rioux, B. Hadler, E. Heumiller

Absent: M. Atlas, M. Lowell

Guests: M. Grooms (City Planner; Staff Liaison), Mark Ward (Consulting Ecologist)

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1. Meeting called to order at 6:05 PM
 2. Meeting minutes discussion
 - a. R. Rhames requested printed materials to be on-hand for future meetings
 3. South Street Village (SSV) updates from Planning Board (PB) meeting - C. Gastelum
 - a. Discuss acreage
 - b. PB is requesting site law approval
 - i. To be determined if this is for any/all land owned or the proposed "front half" to be developed at this time
 4. R. Rhames motion to table approval of the minutes at 6:18 PM
 - a. Second by D. Rioux
 - b. No discussion
 - c. Unanimous approval
 5. Mark Ward joins to quickly talk through SSV draft report
 - a. MW met w/ environmental consultant from SSV in August (Mr. Lima)
 - b. Highlights from the draft report
 - i. Forest cutting activity 2017-2020 has majorly altered property
 - ii. Measured buffers mostly fall short of requirements
 - iii. Vernal pools - revisited two sites, there is cutting in and around sites and cuttings have been dumped in the pools
 - iv. MW is confused by the survey data provided; the summary did not include where it took place and the acreage does not coincide with tax maps
 - v. MW recommends a summer visit to evaluate plants
 - vi. R. Rhames identified that the setback for Thatcher Brook is inadequate
 1. MW unsure whether additional cutting is happening along the brook
 - vii. R. Rhames requested the mention of prior clear-cutting fines be included in the report
 - viii. Discussion of the "impaired urban stream" status of Thatcher Brook
 1. Sunlight will increase temperatures and less oxygen will be able to dissolve (MW)
 2. DEP monitors periodically, though the stakeholder process is not clear on its affect

- ix. The vernal pool report seems lacking
 - 1. The application should contain egg mass test information, but it does not
- x. Cutting creates habitat for invasive species to thrive
 - 1. E. Heumiller suggests the current invasive species be cataloged to create a baseline for measuring future impact to the site as well as to request suggestions for mitigating spread of invasive species
- xi. MW inquires about what Wetland Delineation has been done, and would like to see maps.
- xii. R. Rhames suggest Mr. Lima should evaluate rare plants
- c. M. Grooms explanation of DEP site law review to be initiated
 - i. This is a 6-month +/- process
 - ii. Any BCC requests should be sent to developers
 - iii. The back parcel of the property is under common scheme, the city has no purview over how DEP handles review
 - iv. M. Grooms notes the DEP should evaluate the property beyond the borders of the proposed development for broader ecological impacts
- 6. Mark Ward left at 7:05 PM
- 7. Summary of Hidden Hills (HH) updates from 9/14 PB meeting
 - a. M. Grooms notes that some info is still missing from applicant
 - b. PB took no action
 - c. City lawyer asked to weigh in on the net land density calculations
 - d. The nature of the project has changed since the original application, now is a 55+ community
 - i. Suggested this will reduce traffic and wildlife interactions due to lifestyle differences in older populations
 - e. R. Rhames recaps the initial clear cut discovery on SSV properties
 - f. C. Gastelum to request the develop provide a more detailed vernal pool report
 - i. BCC would like to request the PB request funding (from applicant?) for independent analysis
 - g. M. Grooms suggests the SSV applicant speak w/ BCC
 - i. B. Southwick suggested an offsite meeting
 - h. Discussion of next steps for Hidden Hills
 - i. C. Gastelum to request independent vernal pool report
 - ii. C. Gastelum to request wetland delineation maps
 - iii. C. Gastelum to request a rare plant evaluation to be done
 - i. R. Rhames discusses agricultural soils and development
 - j. Motion to approve next steps for HH by R. Rhames
 - i. Second B. Hadler
 - ii. Unanimous vote
- 8. Discussion of Winding Creek Development (WC)
 - a. Introduction to Nathanael Beisiegel, StopWestbrook.com organizer
 - b. Current status of WC by C. Gastelum
 - i. Land swap to be put into easement if approved

- ii. Waiting on PB to approve the BCC letter send to City Council
 - iii. BCC understanding is that City Council will be doing a follow up discussion of WC
 - iv. BCC's opinion is that the current land swap and development is in opposition to Dube's original intention of the land swap
 - v. B. Hadler inquiring about next steps
 - vi. C. Gastelum suggested to write a letter to City Council to request a CC review of the land swap w/ BCC serving as advisory council and PB in attendance
 - vii. D. Rioux motion to write letter with BCC recommendation that the city not move forward with the land swap, and discuss the development in depth
 - 1. R. Rhames second
 - 2. Unanimous approval
9. Discussion of BCC website content updates
- a. BCC to perform independent reviews of initial draft suggestions
 - b. E. Heumiller to begin scheduling 1-on-1s with BCC to review feedback prior to making edits and writing/collecting content updates
10. BCC email status updates
- a. R. Rhames still unable to access his city email
 - i. To schedule time with Jerry prior to next meeting on 10/20
 - b. D. Rioux to set up his city email before the next meeting on 10/20
11. Discussion of next meeting
- a. C. Gastelum will not be in attendance
 - b. R. Rhames to write the agenda for the 10/20 meeting
12. Discussion of Biddeford Neighborhood Groups
- a. R. Rhames posed concerns over host locations and purpose of the groups
13. Meeting called to a close by C. Gastelum at 8:39 PM