

Biddeford Conservation Commission

Thursday, February 16, 2023

6:05 -

Attendees: R. Rhames, D. Rioux, E. Heumiller, M. Lowell, M. Atlas, P. Robbins

Guests: G. Mitchell, E. Freeman, C. Ohman, T. Carter

1. Meeting Called to order at 6:05pm
2. Welcome Peter Robbins to the Commission
3. Consent Agenda
 - a. No adjustments to the agenda
 - b. 1.26 minutes will be approved at the next meeting
4. State of the Budget
 - a. Mark Ward has been paid in full for all open invoices
 - b. Fiscal Budget
 - E. Heumiller – if we want to have special research projects performed, they could be additionally funded as long as we apply by the time the budget is requested (the budget is currently being requested)
 - D. Rioux – Motion to request a \$5,000 budget 6:10p
 - Amendment – M. Atlas: *The Biddeford Conservation Commissions requests a \$5,000 budget to put towards community programs and research that supports, and informs the Biddeford Conservation Commission and supports the work to educate and provide consultation to the City Council and Planning Board on developments and decisions that relate to natural resources and Conservation.*
 - Vote on amendment – 6:14p – unanimous
 - Vote on motion – 6:14p – unanimous
5. New Business:
 - a. Chapter Review
 - Chapter 10 Recreation & Open Space
 - The current acreage and percentage of conservation land are from 2021, so those will increase with the new changes to Clifford Park and Maine Water land
 - On percentages noting private and public lands would be helpful
 - There is a public boat launch listed on (page 10-4) that we are unclear about
 - Clifford Park Map shows developments that have not yet been reviewed by the Planning Board (page 10-9)
 - Chapter 14 – Marine Resources
 - With the Saco being a tidal river, we have a lot to consider
 - By September of this year there will be a Climate Action Plan that will feed heavily into this chapter
 - Including biodiversity would be helpful
 - Could we consider somehow referencing the bodies of water that feed our marine resources
 - Agriculture & Forestry
 - Christine is soliciting feedback on this section

- How do we best do this and what timeline (ideally before the end of the first week of March)
- New farmers market?
- The city is doing an informal audit of agricultural businesses
- City is considering a hierarchy of uses for our rural lands (inspired by Portland's Working Waterfront uses)
 - Working Landscape
 - CONservation
 - Low-Density Housing / Essential Services
 - Recreation
- C. Ohman is looking for heavy input from the BCC on this chapter
- Is the city open to setting a % goal for targeting working farmland, or supporting young farmers in finding land and keeping farmland active
- Most important part is protecting the land base.
 - Land use and development are the biggest threat
 - We need to set policies and strategies that protect land use
- Consider adding sugar maple industry
- Project Canopy (public works dept has a tree inventory, 6 years old at this point)
- b. Thatcher Carter; Municipal Policy Associate at Maine Farmland Trust
 - Updateign the 2011 "Cultivating Maine's Agricultural Future" Guide
 - Why Should Municipalities protect farmland
 - Climate resilience benefits
 - Local benefits
 - Economic benefits
 - Maine has lost 10% of its farmland in 7 years
 - Cost of Community Service Study
 - Farms generate less tax revenue, they require less for public infrastructure so they are financially beneficial for municipalities (\$.37 vs \$1.16 for every dollar of tax money collected cost for every tax dollar)
 - Scarborough has done a semi-recent Cost of Community Service Study
 - How can municipalities protect farmland
 - Inventory/information gathering
 - Helps inform policy
 - Local Farm Surveys
 - Farm & Farmland inventory
 - Helps facilitate access
 - Agricultural Commissions
 - Advisory role to council
 - Identify issues and concerns
 - Provide input to other committees
 - Hold local forums, if there's interest take it to the Council
 - Municipal Planning and Land Use
 - Comprehensive Plans
 - Integrate agriculture into multiple chapters
 - Land Use Ordinances
 - Flexible and good definitions

- Leave room for income diversification
 - Set backs
 - Agricultural overlay districts with ordinance restrictions
 - Allow agricultural businesses
 - Right to Farm ordinance
 - Right to Farm Law
 - Letters required of farm adjacent projects that disclose limitations to use (?)
 - Special Development Fees
 - Transfer fees
 - Permanent Agricultural Conservation Easements
 - Municipal Tax Programs
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- c. LD2003
 - Moving quickly through the necessary channels
 - City is monitoring state level discussions
 - Hoping to prepare and be consistent with the law on July 1, but can be slowed if need be
- d. Newtown Road
 - Fire Substation Commission
 - Waiting on a soil study
 - Emhiser update: put the station at a 1-mile radius of the intersection of Pool St and Newtown Road (logistically based suggestion)
 - Considering 79 newtown road, but still waiting on an environmental review
 - Another location on Pool Street, privately owned
 - Coastal Oaks – waiting on wildlife study and road record
 - Mobile Home Park Overlays
- e. Clifford Park Order –
 - BCC represented their opinions
- 6. Old Business –
 - a. Website updates
 - Video is in progress
 - Add resources like “what to look for in a development in your area”
 - Thatcher Brook
 - Is there a summary of the project?
 - Do we have an idea of the cost to repair? Helpful education tool to see the cost of undoing damage
- 7. Other Business –
 - a. Cumberland County Soil & Water Conservation District “From Lawns to Landscapes”
 - b. Community Engagement events – R. Rhames has a Saco Valley Land Trust
- 8. *Motion to Adjourn – 8:22p R. Rhames*
 - a. *Second – 8:22p M. Atlas*
 - *Unanimous*