

OFFICIAL CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

October 8, 2015

S. Couture called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

Attendance: Steve Couture, Chair; Cindy Robertson Vice-Chair; JoCarol Woodburn, member; Phil Fitanides, member; Deborah Miville, alternate

Excused: David Hess, member; Todd Lizotte, alternate; David Ross, Town Council Rep.

Public Input

None.

Meeting Minutes

C. Robertson motioned to approve the meeting minutes for September 14, 2015. Seconded by P. Fitanides. Motion passed.

Appointments

a. Dan Tatem, Stantec, Merrimack Riverfront Trails System

Other

a. Merrimack Riverfront Trail System Project

i. Stantec Additional Design Scope and Fee (Ag Bridge and Trail Width) and Authorization for Additional Services

D. Tatem: I want to go over the scope change first. We gave you the list of work to be done. Steve asked for a breakdown for the extent of the work. There are a lot of details on the agricultural bridge that we had to do that weren't included in the boardwalk bridge. There are different footings and geotechnical. We are only charging you for thirteen hours of the twenty-six we spent on it. We have to do a whole separate set of specs just for the bridge because the standards and criteria are different. On the letter I gave to Steve on the 24th, the agricultural bridge was estimated at \$5,720. With this very detailed breakdown, it comes out to \$5,841 so it's pretty close to what we estimated prior. For the trail redesign, we had to change all the details from 12-foot to 8-foot. We had to redesign our detail sheets. We had to show revised plans for the wetlands permit. We don't have to reapply for the permit but we had to show them revised plans. The site plan shows all the detail changes and all the drafting that had to be done. Radii had to be changed, buffers had to be changed. That's the additional time we did. On a separate

note, I'd like to explain that when we met with the Wetlands Bureau they requested a function value assessment (FVA), which wasn't in our scope. It cost us about \$3,000 and we didn't charge you for that. We took money from other places so we could be extremely efficient. We had that extra product to produce and we rushed to get it done. We had to do extra drilling for the farm bridge because now it's not only for pedestrians, it's a vehicle-loaded bridge, and we didn't charge for that either. These two changes with the agricultural bridge and trail were big changes and we can't absorb these costs because we've already pulled from other budgets to cover the costs of the things we didn't charge you for.

S. Couture: Thank you for providing the additional detail. I want to open this up to everyone if there are question on the additional fees. I will say the two significant changes weren't anticipated or communicated at the time of the bid. It is what it is and now it's the basis of our Moose Plate grant application. The 12-foot to 8-foot was on us. We were given an opportunity and we didn't decide until later, so we take some blame. We pushed really fast on this because we thought we had to, and when you push really fast, things like this happen. That's my perspective.

C. Robertson: I am not really versed in what goes into these plans, and what's required. I appreciate your explanation. It makes a lot of sense to me. We changed our minds and sometimes there are penalties for that, so that's alright, that's on us. I appreciate you coming in to explain those changes because now it makes more sense to me.

D. Tatem: I want you all to understand that for the \$11,000 in changes, we've really spent about \$18,000. I like this project and I like working with you and I'd like to work with you again, so I appreciate that.

P. Fitanides: What part does the Town Engineer play in this?

S. Couture: That's up to us what role he plays. We have a contract. It's up to us to decide if we want the Town Engineer to assist or participate, but we went into this and signed a contract not knowing we were going to have a Town Engineer.

P. Fitanides: He's a water and dam expert and he's making almost a \$100,000 per year.

D. Miville: Could he have been able to do what Stantec is doing?

S. Couture: Certainly not in this timeframe and I don't know what access he has to CAD, and certainly a lot of this is outside his expertise.

D. Tatem: For this project you need a licensed structural engineer, geotech engineer, and wildlife and wetlands guys. There are probably twenty people working on this project.

J. Woodburn: It sounds like you've done all you can do.

S. Couture: We did need this done fast because our deadline was tight before it changed to next year. That impacted our costs. I know Dan has put in the extra time and I really do appreciate the explanation. With that, I have an authorization for additional services here.

C. Robertson motioned to authorize payment for the additional design costs related to design changes requested for the agricultural bridge and reducing trail widths from 12 feet to 8 feet in the amount of \$11,456. Seconded by D. Miville. Motion passed.

P. Fitantes: How much more additional money will we end up spending on the project?

D. Tatem: As long as the scope doesn't change, zero.

P. Fitantes: So this extra money is partly because of us rather than something that you overlooked in your projection?

D. Tatem: Right, this isn't because of something we overlooked and if there was something we did overlook, we wouldn't ask for money for that.

S. Couture: While Dan is here, we have an invoice for \$60,262.63. This is our second invoice since June.

C. Robertson motioned to authorize payment of an invoice from Stantec for the Merrimack Riverfront Trail Design in the amount of \$60,262.63. Seconded by J. Woodburn. Motion passed.

i. Bridge Design Selection

D. Tatem: I have some pictures. Signage will be based on what you like the look of. I personally like the rustic, state park trail signs with wood. You could also get metal. There is very little maintenance. Ron, our trail guy, says the biggest problem with signs is vandalism. If you want to do the signs yourself, I can remove them from the bid.

S. Couture: I don't feel like we need a contractor to design and put the signs in. For us, it was more about the locations we were thinking you would design.

C. Robertson: We have an Eagle Scout that just did a kiosk for us. We have plenty of kids looking for work.

D. Tatem: We designed some “pull-off” areas with benches. If you want, you can have someone else build the benches and not contract them out. Our trail guys said that at that stop you might want to put a reader board up with history and information. We can have the contractor build these gravel pull-offs and you can put in the signage and benches and it will save you money.

S. Couture: Right, we could have a fundraiser or have the Scouts do some projects.

P. Fitanides: I have some experience with benches like the ones on the Marginal Way in Ogunquit. They are made to withstand all the elements. I can get some pictures.

D. Tatem: There are other areas where you can put directional signs for the trails. You could also put lengths and distances there and we can provide those if you want to do that. We can put “do not enter” signs in front of the abutters’ private property. We can do signs that tell people where there are wetlands, so that they stay on the boardwalk. You could even do an informational board about the wetlands and the RTE species you have in there.

S. Couture: Could we do a small bump out between the wetlands boardwalks?

D. Tatem: Yes, if you want to do that we can do an 8-foot by 16-foot bump out. We can also do a bigger bump-out that looks out over the field. We have the larger bump-outs on the river. You could also come up with names for the trails. There is also a potential picnic area if you want it. It’s all grass there and you could put a picnic table there yourself. It’s up to you.

S. Couture: Could you leave it on the plan, but make a note that says something like “to be done by others”? We want to provide our own benches, but we don’t want to forget where.

D. Tatem: Yes, definitely. I will put a note so that contractors know it’s not part of the bid. The agricultural bridge is designed to withhold a truck, car, or ambulance, so if you want to haul a picnic table out there or get there for an emergency, you have that option. I have the answers to your questions on the bridge. Can they be delivered whole? Yes. Maintenance on the steel bridge is practically none. The Glulam 40-foot bridge is about \$34,000 and the steel is about \$55,000. However, the warranty on the steel bridge deck is really good, so when you compare the value of the two it’s very similar. If you are concerned about maintenance, I’d stay with the steel. The handrail looks better on the Glulam, but we can come up with something fancier for the handrail on the steel bridge if you want. We can do a Trex cover on the handrails.

P. Fitanides: I’m against Trex because it gets wood rot.

S. Couture: I've worked with it before and it still looks great after twenty years. I like the idea of the no maintenance. Remember we have a \$50,000 grant for this trailhead.

D. Tatem: The Glulam supports will be higher than the steel so it will be more site work, so the cost may even out. It's something to think about.

S. Couture: Are people comfortable with the steel option with ironwood, weathered steel finish, with a wood deck and Trex on the handrails?

Consensus to choose the steel bridge option with ironwood, weathered steel finish, wood deck, and Trex on the handrails.

ii. Bid Delay to 2016

D. Tatem: Just so you understand what's happening, we sent out a set of plans for a job in Goffstown. We actually mailed the plans for free to contractors. Normally, they pay \$50 for it and pick them up from our office. We mailed them for free because we are trying to get bids and they are so busy. We only got four bids. Everyone is too busy. Because of that, if you went out to bid tomorrow you wouldn't get many bids and you will pay premium dollar. If you wait until January, they will be looking for work for the summer and you will get more bids.

iii. Kiwanis Presentation – October 21

S. Couture: On Old Home Day we got asked to present at a Kiwanis meeting. Kiwanis has been a supporter of the project. Cindy and I will go and present.

D. Tatem: What do you want from us for the meeting?

S. Couture: It would be nice to have a color plan, something showing the boardwalk, and something showing what the bridge will look like.

D. Tatem: OK. I can do a full size plan. I can do a color vertical one and three pictures. I will find a picture of a bridge similar to what you've chosen, a picture of what the agricultural bridge looks like, and one similar type of boardwalk. I will email pictures to JoCarol. I can get them to you by Monday or Tuesday.

iv. Public Informational Meeting – October 26

J. Woodburn: Do we have time for a press release?

S. Couture: We could send something to Alyssa from the Banner. We should do abutters letters. We should do everything we did for the Clay Pond meeting.

b. Pinnacle Update – Kiosk and Locke Dedication

S. Couture: The kiosk is up. At some point we need to put some information in there, some maps and historical info. That's a good winter project for us. The granite bench that Diane Boyce donated is also in place. In our P & S agreement there is supposed to be a plaque to Bud Locke. Carolyn will talk to Kathie Northrop about it to get that done. It will go on a rock.

c. Clay Pond

i. LCHIP Site Walk

S. Couture: We have an LCHIP application in for the Heroux property. We have a site walk scheduled for next week. It's Tuesday at 9:30am. I may not be able to make it, but maybe Dave Hess can or someone else as back up.

C. Robertson: Let me know if you need someone and I can see what I can do.

ii. Forestry Options

S. Couture: I contacted Swift Corwin. I'm trying to understand how the forestry would work with the estimates and how much timber they would take. It looks like they won't recommend the timber cuts until next summer. That area is slated for some forestry activity that will also curb the ATV use. I'll follow up with that if you are all comfortable with that.

iii. Gate Update

C. Cronin: Last time I talked to Blue Ribbon was before the last meeting and they said they would be installing sometime this month. I emailed them last week to see if they could give me an estimated value so I could do a consent agenda item for Council. I haven't heard back, but I can ping them again. I'm sure they have been very busy.

d. Budget

S. Couture: We aren't doing any warrant articles this year or CIP requests. They have a proposed budget for us. It's \$1,300, which is \$48 more than last year. I don't see a need to ask for anything more at this point. We still have our Conservation Fund.

C. Robertson motioned to move forward with the proposed budget. Seconded by J. Woodburn. Motion passed.

C. Cronin: I did have a discussion with Christine from Finance a while back because there was a question about if there was a way to track money for specific projects. She created a code to

associate things with the Merrimack Riverfront Trails, so any invoices or deposits associated with that project I can add that “MRT” code and run reports on it. The thing is it’s not its own account line; it’s just informational for us. She also set up a line for stewardship fees so we can see how much is coming in for those.

e. Old Home Day Debrief

S. Couture: Thanks to Deb for taking the lead in the morning and helping with set up. One lesson learned is we need to provide our own tent and table, but Parks and Rec has some we can borrow. We just need to make sure we ask them. Bear Paw was there and said they got a lot of foot traffic. It was good. A lot of people asked questions about existing properties. They were excited about the Merrimack Riverfront trail.

D. Miville: There were no negative comments. Everything was good.

S. Couture: We need to get information out there about properties we have and the trails that are available.

f. Other Business: Invoices, Correspondences, etc.

i. WB Mason Invoice for Easels - \$92.04

S. Couture: Do we want to keep these easels?

C. Cronin: They aren’t what I thought they were.

S. Couture: Then we can return the easels to WB Mason and order something else if we intend to use them for a long time.

ii. Naturesource Communications Invoice - \$700

S. Couture: They worked on the LCHIP application for the agricultural bridge. They did a really good job. She gave some perspective that we would not have come up with on our own. It’s a very competitive grant.

J. Woodburn motioned for payment of an invoice from Naturesource Communications dated September 29, 2015 for grant writing services in the amount of \$700. Seconded by C. Robertson. Motion passed.

Motion to pay \$55 for registration of one Conservation Commission member to attend the November 7th meeting of NHACC. Seconded by C. Robertson. Motion passed.

S. Couture: Pike got their permit and they have to pay us \$17,855. The storage facility on Hooksett Road got their permit. We received a check for \$10,000 for the Head’s Pond

stewardship fee. Planning Board is seeking comments for a proposed Merrimack County Savings Bank where 28 Bypass intersects Hooksett Road.

Consensus to send no comment to the Planning Board for the Merrimack County Savings Bank plan.

S. Couture: We have the permits for the Merrimack Riverfront Trails project. Any other business?

C. Cronin: I just have a couple updates for you. Dave Therrion, the abutter to the Merrimack Riverfront Trails, has yet to sign the temporary construction easement. I got the quote for the medallions and Clay Pond signage. For 100 medallions and seven Clay Pond signs plus the design charge the total is \$620.65. Two meetings ago you authorized up to \$300 for this, so I don't know how you want to proceed. Jo Ann said that we should look at the State Prison in Concord because they make signs, so I can look into that. Next week Dean Shankle and Jim Donison are going to talk about the proposed Clay Pond parking area on Chester Turnpike and see if they think it's a good idea to bring to Council making that an emergency lane. We have another Eagle Scout that wants to do a kiosk at the Merrimack Riverfront trails. His name is Oliver Mack, Jr. and he would like to come to the next meeting to talk about that. Lastly, I went to the NH Active Transportation Conference. I made a copy of the poster and brought that and flyers and they put those out. I went to their keynote speaker, who is a professional in rail trails, and that had a lot of information that may be good to know for our upcoming library meeting.

C. Robertson motioned to adjourn at 6:06pm. Seconded by D. Miville. Motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn Cronin

Assistant Planner/Conservation Commission Staff Support