

## NORTH HAMPTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION

December 11, 2007 – Minutes

### 1) ROLL CALL

Present when the meeting was called to order at 7:15 p.m. was Chris Ganotis, Chair, Lee Brooks, Vice-Chair, Shirley Carter, Stanley Knowles, John Peterson, Alternate Philip Thayer and Selectmen Representative Emily Creighton. *Patty O'Connor and Peter Simmons arrived later as indicated.*

### 2) CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES – November 13, 2007

*After a motion, duly seconded, it was voted* with Shirley and Philip abstaining to approve the minutes as presented.

### 3) TREASURER'S REPORT

John reported that the William Fowler Certificate of Deposits will be renewed and a full report will be provided next month. The William Fowler LRSM CD matured and the Town Treasurer will renew it for 60 days. It was noted that the shorter term CD's offered by the banks are slightly higher in rates than the longer-term certificates.

### 4) OLD BUSINESS

#### a. Wetlands Buffer Discussion

David Kellam of New Hampshire Estuaries was present to discuss reasons why protecting the buffer is so important. *Peter Simmons arrived at this time.* He distributed literature (Appendix B) on protecting water resources, the effects of urbanization on small streams, a map of the stream buffer characterization, and reference and resource lists.

David presented the results of the study completed by the United States Geological Survey (USGS) New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) and the NHCP (New Hampshire Coastal Program) which asked "Does development affect water quality?". The survey results revealed:

- Chemical concentrations increased with increasing levels of impervious surfaces and urban land near streams;
- Aquatic insect communities were adversely affected at sites with higher levels of impervious surfaces and urban land near the stream; and
- Results show that buffers play a key role in maintaining the physical, chemical, and biological integrity of stream.

The study noted that North Hampton possesses two important watershed areas, the headwaters of the Winnicut River and the Little River. David presented the ecological linkages, storage and recharging capacity and water quality improvement as important reasons for protecting these headwater systems. He further added that, while the guideline for impervious surface area wetlands buffers is 10%, North Hampton has over 12% impervious surface, thereby adding more runoff into buffers and wetlands.

Impervious surfaces in tidal buffers were noted as a concern from the Commission. David said the tidal environment, containing both salt and freshwater, is mostly threatened by contaminants not being filtered

NHCC12-11-07  
1

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by an appropriate or effective buffer. He endorsed the Commission's efforts in recommending no increased impervious surfaces or use of contaminants on driveways near buffers, and said rivers are a bigger area than people actually see. Continued impact will affect the wildlife, vegetation, future flooding, stormwater runoff and maintenance issues.

The Commission outlined their main concerns as construction, which results in run-off to the abutting properties, the lack of adequate controls governing the remaining buildable land in Town considering that one-third of the land in North Hampton is wetlands, and potential damage to the aquifers which supply 100% of the Town's drinking water. Homes, with septic systems, built close to the aquifers increases contaminant flow and ultimately will cause potential loss of its water supply. Discussion followed regarding the invasive plant growth caused by impaired wetlands. David said phragmites thrive in degraded wetlands, and their roots produce an acid, which damages the surrounding plants. To help the Commission in improving the impact of protecting the wetlands, David recommended applying for the CTAPP program. The various setback requirements of the Town and State were discussed with the Commission pointing out that the majority of the variances granted are within 50 feet of the buffer. David provided his e-mail address for further information and contact. *Patty O'Connor arrived at this time.*

b. Colin Gagnon Eagle Scout Project status

Colin confirmed that all the trails are located within the property boundaries. The trail is marked and the few wetland crossings will be covered with a type of wooden (take out pallet) bridge. He will contact the State DES for the required permits. Colin plans to contact local lumber companies for sponsorship and/or donations for materials. He indicated that no large trees will be removed and the width of the trail will accommodate cross-country skiing.

Discussion followed regarding the high school senior seminar project. Colin will solicit seniors who may be interested in compiling a history of farms now in conservation.

c. North Hampton Forever update

- a. UCC deed – attorneys still searching for heirs.
- b. Donais parcel – closed.
- c. Jenkins easement - pending receipt of confirmed appraisal.

d. Greystone Development

The Planning Board acted on the Commission's letter at its recent meeting; requiring Greystone to 1) hire an independent entity (i.e. SELT or RCCD) to procure monitoring services or 2) the fee will be deducted from their security account.

e. Dupont parcel, Map 017, Lot 041, Parcel 003 (next to Acura)

Discussion ensued resulting from the walk at the site with the assessor. There was unanimous consensus that the lot contains mostly wetland and building on it would be very difficult without major dredge and fill permits. Members questioned the current assessed value given the amount of wetlands and offered various amount on what they felt the property was worth. The assessor indicated that wetlands are assessed at \$300 to \$1,000 per acre if encumbered. The owner will be contacted with suggestions to donate the property or reduce the price of the purchase offer.

## 5) CORRESPONDENCE

NHCC12-11-07

2

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- Zoning Board of Adjustment – 12/03/07 from ZBA regarding requirements for Commission to follow when submitting recommendations/suggestions on variance applications. Chris will respond.
- 11/15/07 UNH survey for NH Estuaries – completed and submitted to David.
- Letter from Fred Borman at UNH Coop re: tree workshops – Stanley to respond.
- Letter from Jackie Coons with \$100 donation on behalf of Clara Fowler Mixer for the William Fowler Conservation Account. John to process and respond with note of appreciation.
- Notice of Little River Salt Marsh Phase II site walk scheduled for December 18, 2007 at 2:30 p.m. in Town Office upstairs conference room.
- 12/04/08 letter from NHDES re: one year monitoring letter for Confalone property.

## **6) OTHER BUSINESS AND PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Peter provided an update about the Confalone application before Little Boar's Head Planning Board. He outlined the action taken by the Board and indicated he would keep the Commission apprised.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Janet Perkins  
Secretary