

City of Laconia
Conservation Commission
Wednesday, November 17, 2021 - 6:00 PM
City Hall in the Armand A. Bolduc City Council Chamber
Draft Minutes

11/17/2021 - Minutes

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Dean Anson called the meeting to order at 6:00pm

2. ROLL CALL

Lisa Morin, Dean Anson, Wesley Bates, Deb Williams, Mike Foote

3. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

The Commission saluted the flag.

4. RECORDING SECRETARY

Taylor Daigle, Conservation Planner Technician

5. STAFF IN ATTENDANCE

Dean Trefethen, Planning Director

6. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

6.I. Minutes 11/3/21

M. Foote motions to accept the minutes of the 11/3 meeting as presented. D. Williams seconds. L. Morin abstained from voting due to absence from the previous meeting. All vote in favor.

7. OLD BUSINESS

7.I. Natural Resource Inventory 2021

M. Foote discusses the interest from the MPSC about making sure the master plan chapters are concise and include reference links to supporting sites/documents, such as to the NRI and regional management plans. D. Anson and L. Morin suggest reaching out to the chair and vice chair of the MPSC to discuss what they want to see in a master plan chapter. T. Daigle will reach out to them about setting up a meeting time to discuss this and get general ideas from them. It is also suggested that there should be a chapter dedicated to climate change actions. The Commission decides to dedicate the next Conservation meeting to reviewing the NRI, on 12/1. T. Daigle will research the previous goals of the natural resources master plan chapter and the 2009 NRI and determine which of these goals were met.

7.II. Green Space Dimensional Requirements

D. Trefethen addresses the Commission regarding the Master Plan Steering Committee's (MPSC) discussions about changing dimensional standards, including green space, to get their input on the idea. The focus of the conversation is on the CR, RS, and RG zones. There is also discussion

regarding the role of green space requirements in limiting density in these areas. For instance, many properties need green space relief from the ZBA in order to add an ADU to their lot. D. Trefethen explains that currently, applicants come in for a building permit and may be denied if they already meet/exceed their green space standard and are then directed to apply for relief from the ZBA. Often times this discourages them, and the application is withdrawn.

D. Anson poses the question of if this will be fair to people with more restrictive resources, such as wetlands, on their land and D. Trefethen states that the buffers for natural resources are not changing with this ordinance review.

M. Foote discusses that a change in dimensional requirements for green space would reduce the number of non-conforming lots that need relief from the ZBA/Planning board. This is an opportunity to encourage/increase density in an area that is supported by infrastructure and largely non-conforming to green space standards. This method could increase density without impacting open space.

W. Bates asks what kind of reductions the MPSC are considering. D. Trefethen responds that they are looking at 45-50% (from 60%) in RS, 30-35% (from 60%) in RG and some amount of decrease in residential requirement for CR, perhaps to 40% (currently at 60%). D. Anson asks if there will be a public hearing on this. D. Trefethen says yes, at the Planning Board level, and perhaps at City Council. L. Morin expresses some concern over halving the requirement in RG.

The Commission discusses the hardships related to real estate, land values, and workforce housing in the area and the role of infill in reducing the housing anxiety in the area. D. Trefethen continues to discuss the overall goal of these possible dimensional changes. There is mention of the nearly 0% vacancy rate in the city. He states that if these dimensional changes are implemented and if they saw an additional 80-100 dwelling units within 3-4 years, then the effort would be very successful in addressing density/housing.

L. Morin asks if the city infrastructure, such as stormwater systems, could handle this increase in density. D. Trefethen explains that it would likely not be overwhelming, but any additional dwelling unit is reviewed by DPW to ensure so. L. Morin asks about the potential to phase these changes, and D. Trefethen will consider this with the MPSC. D. Anson asks if affordable housing requirements could be tied into this. D. Trefethen answers that this would not be the most effective path to address the issue but agrees something should be looked into for this.

D. Anson asks how many properties these changes would realistically affect? D. Trefethen and T. Daigle will research this using ZBA applications to get an idea of how many would have benefitted from these proposed changes. D. Anson asks if there will be some type of build out analysis for these changes. He asks for a potential visual showing the possible changes in square feet of green space in each zone being considered. T. Daigle will look into options to show this. D. Williams states she might have push back on the numbers for the CR zone but not RS and RG.

8. NEW BUSINESS

8.I. 39 Reagan Way

The applicant addressed the Commission regarding the project and property. He explains that he wants to put a 20x20 ledge pack parking area, approximately 10 feet from the edge of the pond on his property. This will be to park 2 cars in the winter. The applicant mentions that the contractor plans to use a silt fence as erosion control for the project. The commission asks if there are any outlets from the pond, and the applicant answers no. M. Foote discusses the practicality of the project and motions to support the plan with the following two recommendations:

- The applicant should edge the parking area to avoid future erosion issues with the ledge pack
- The contractor should use silt sock for the project rather than silt fence.

L. Morin seconds the motion. All vote in favor.

9. NEW HAMPSHIRE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES APPLICATIONS

10. OTHER BUSINESS

T. Daigle informs the Commission that NHDES has proposed some changes to the RSA's regarding compost facilities. The public commenting period has opened, and she will share the link to the proposed changes with the Commission

10.I. Budget Update

The most recent expenditure report is shared with the Commission.

11. LIAISON AND SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

12. STAFF REPORT

13. ADJOURNMENT

M. Foote motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:00pm. D. Williams seconds. All vote in favor.

DRAFT