

CENTER HARBOR CONSERVATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2023

Commissioners present: Maureen Criasia, Chair
Karin Karagozian
Don Carey
Mark Hildebrand

Absent with Notice: Harry Viens, Selectmen’s Representative
Barbara Picard, Volunteer Clerk

Attending from the Public: Catherine Halsey, Center Harbor resident

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 8:00 am by Chairman, Criasia.

Approval of Minutes: A motion was made to approve the draft meeting minutes of November 16, 2022 by Mark Hildebrand, seconded by Don Carey. All in favor.

Introduction of Public Attendee: Chairman Criasia introduced Ms. Halsey to the Commissioners.

Old Business:

- a. Update on Bean Road Condominium Project in Moultonborough – Commissioners Hildebrand and Carey led the discussion and updated the Commission. Meetings of the Moultonborough Planning and Zoning Board continue to be held in conjunction with this project, attended by Commissioners Hildebrand & Carey. The number of allowable “units” (based on wetlands and other density related criteria) has dropped from an initial 60 units to a current 42 units. This translates to 21 buildings total, each containing 2 units, that will be constructed in 2 phases. A petition by the property owner to obtain a waiver from the wellhead radius 200’ setback for density determination failed. Legal oversight and representation continue by both municipalities and the abutters to the project parcel. Ms. Halsey asked questions and a map and other project info was provided to her for clarification.

Commissioner Carey explained that the next step planned was to “draw down” the two community wells that have been drilled on site and to conduct water testing, including static testing. The Commission continued to express its ongoing concerns re: degradation of groundwater and well water quality with large groundwater withdrawal generated by these wells, due to the permanent contamination of the stratified drift aquifer by PFAS and other contaminants stemming from the old dry cleaners and gas station on Route 25 in Moultonborough.

Other ongoing concerns expressed by the Commission during this discussion stem from unrealized regional impact of the project on the village community, traffic patterns & congestion, and the infrastructure impact and strain on an aged & aging public septic system / possible leakage from the nearby septic retention ponds.

Commissioner Hildebrand requested that Chairman Criasia reach out to Selectmen's Rep. Viens for a municipal update, i.e., does the Town have a long-range plan in place to continue to address this project. Chair Criasia agreed and will request Selectman Viens provide an update to the Commission at its next meeting.

- b. NHDES Groundwater Protection Ordinance Review Status – Commissioner Hildebrand reports that no further discussion on this topic by the Planning Board since their initial discussion at their meeting in October 2022. Chairman Criasia suggested that she and Commissioner Hildebrand hold off on any ordinance review plans, awaiting future direction from the Planning Board.
- c. 2022 Conservation Commission Annual Report – Chairman Criasia reported that the final version of the report is currently posted on the Town's website on the Conservation Commission webpage, pending its official inclusion into the Town Report.

New Business:

- a. Review of State of NH 2023 Environmentally Related House & Senate Bills/HB 592 Status – Chairman Criasia provided an update to HB 592. As an individual and not on behalf of the Conservation Commission, she reached out to Barbara Richter at the NH Assoc. of Conservation Commissions, Andrea Lamoreaux at NH Lakes, and State Representative Tom Ploszaj, expressing her concerns about a potential passage of this bill. (She encouraged other Commissioners to consider using this approach in the future.). Due to the overwhelming opposition to this bill throughout the state, it was voted "Inexpedient to Legislate" during a February 8th Executive Session hearing.

Chair Criasia circulated the most recent NH Lakes Advocacy Alert (2/10/23) and NH Assoc. of Conservation Commissions' handout "Tips on Writing Letters to Legislators". She requested that Commissioners review the alert and earmark any bills they felt the Commission should take a position on. The Commission saw none at this juncture, and thought it was best to wait and see which House Bills passed and advanced to the Senate. The Commission considered following the guidelines as set forth in the "Tips" handout, and decided they were preferable to a pre-designed letter template, as was previously discussed.

- b. Review Proposed Project Plans – TML 215-32 – The Commission reviewed proposed project plans for a house, and a driveway over non-designated wetlands (wetlands crossing) off Keewaydin Road. Chairman Criasia noted that the wetland complexes on this property have been professionally delineated. She explained that due to the wetlands crossing depicted on the Existing Conditions Plan, the applicant would have to

apply to the Zoning Board of Adjustment for a Special Exception under Chapter 10:7 of the Zoning Ordinances, and the Conservation Commission would be required to submit written comments to the ZBA prior to its hearing. Commissioner Karagozian mentioned that a portion of this property bordered Route 25b, and suggested that the driveway cut could be made there, possibly avoiding the wetlands in their entirety. Chair Criasia will stay in touch with Code Enforcement Officer Bill Doucette going forward regarding this project.

Additional Business:

- a. Notification by New Hampshire Electric Coop (NHEC) 2023 Online “Opt-Out” Available – Chair Criasia circulated an email to the Commission dated February 6, 2023 from Seth Wheeler at NHEC, informing the Commission that the 2023 herbicide treatment online opt-out form is now available on the NHEC website. He asked if the Commission would help to “spread the word”. Because the Commission has a section of their webpage dedicated to NHEC Vegetation Management, Chair Criasia will update the section and include the links Mr. Wheeler provided. Once the letter from NHEC that specifies the lines being treated in 2023 is sent to the Town (arrives approx. April 1st), it will be posted on the Town’s website under “News and Announcements”.

Other Business:

- a. Potential outreach projects with local conservation partners update –
 1. Lakes Region Conservation Trust – possible vernal pool workshops are on hold as LRCT attempts to identify a workshop leader.
 2. Squam Lakes Conservation Society – Chair Criasia is in preliminary discussions with SLCS’ Stewardship Director re: possible guided hikes in Center Harbor Woods & Belknap Woods.
 3. Squam Lakes Science Center – Chair Criasia has spoken with Emma Erler from SLSC about the possibility of cosponsoring a pollinator presentation.
- b. Nelson Marsh Conservation Easement – SLCS has taken a Conservation Easement on the 40-acre Nelson Marsh in Holderness & Center Harbor; a 10-acre portion of the property is part of the Hale Swamp Prime Wetland Complex in Center Harbor, adding to the tally of permanently conserved land within the town. Chair Criasia will add this announcement to the News section on the Commission’s webpage.

Public Input: At the conclusion of the meeting, Ms. Halsey expressed an interest in joining the Conservation Commission. She described the Commission as a “strong and pretty passionate group that wants to maintain the integrity of Center Harbor’s shorelines and woods”. Chair Criasia will follow up with Ms. Halsey after the meeting.

Adjourn: Hearing no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 9:11 am.

(The next scheduled meeting of the Conservation Commission will be held on Wednesday, May 17, 2023 at 8:00 am)