



City of Rochester Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes

Wednesday December 20, 2023

Rochester Police Department (2nd Floor)
23 Wakefield Street, Rochester, NH

(These minutes were approved on January 24, 2024)

Attendance

Presence	Commission Member	Notes	Members of the Public
Present	Mike Dionne, <i>Chair</i>		
Present	Kevin Sullivan, <i>Vice Chair</i>		
Absent	Mark Jennings		
Absent	Merry Lineweber		
Present	Dan Nickerson		
Present	Dylan Dowe		
Present	Dennis Raymond		
Present	Renée Mclsaac, <i>Planner I</i>		

1) Call to Order:

Mike Dionne called the meeting to order at 6:36pm.

2) Approval of Minutes:

- a. Review Meeting Minutes of November 15, 2023.
- b. Review Site Walk Minutes of November 18, 2023.

Kevin Sullivan motioned to approve the minutes of November 15th and 18th as written. Dan Nickerson seconded the motion; the motion passed unanimously.

Chair Mike Dionne motioned to move the BCM Environmental & Land Law business to the next item of discussion. There were no objections.

3) New Business:

- a. BCM Environmental & Land Law – Gonic Dam and Sawmill Dam Removal

Tara Kessler of BCM Environmental & Land Law introduced herself as representing Gosport Properties LLC, the owner of the Gonic Dam. She thanked the Conservation Commission for their letter of support for the Aquatic Resources Mitigation (ARM) Fund application. She explained that the ARM Fund Review Committee recommended establishment of a restrictive covenant for a 100-foot-wide riparian buffer along approximately 1,500 feet of river. (This would be measured 100 feet landward from the existing highwater mark. Once the dams are removed it is expected that the portions of the riverbed will become exposed and will vegetate. This will serve to further buffer the river from the uplands.)

To ensure development restrictions are followed, a second party is needed on the restrictive covenant. The property owner would like to know if the Conservation Commission would agree to serve as this second party. (The State of NH would be a third party to these restrictions.)

Commission members asked how the proposed area is accessed and if it required passing over another property.

Tara Kessler explained that there is a parking lot associated with the parcel and an existing trail that leads to the river.

Kevin Sullivan asked if the public could use the parking lot to access the river.

Tara Kessler replied that if that was a condition by the Conservation Commission, it would need to be negotiated with the property owner and specified in the restrictive covenants. She explained that any restrictions established will run with the land in perpetuity.

Mike Dionne asked how the City's sewer line is being treated during the remediation.

Tara Kessler indicated that scour protections would be established and designs are currently under review.

Renée McIsaac asked if the request was solely for the Conservation Commission to serve as an interested party and monitor for encroachments.

Tara Kessler confirmed this was the case.

Kevin Sullivan asked what the development value of the restricted area would be.

Tara Kessler stated that this would be calculated at a later date.

Mike Dionne asked Renée McIsaac if the City's Attorney would need to be consulted.

Renée McIsaac confirmed that the City's Attorney would be involved in the review of any legal documents.

Dylan Dowe motioned to continue work on developing restrictive covenants agreeable to associated parties. Dan Nickerson seconded the motion; the motion passed unanimously.

4) NH DES Applications:

- a. Alteration of Terrain applications under review by NHDES:
 - i. 324 Blackwater Road; Tax Map 264 Lot 11; File Number 20231109-223
 - ii. Rochester Elementary School; Tax Map 227 Lot 35 and 36; File Number 20231114-230
 - iii. 797 Portland Street; Tax Map 108 Lot 50; File Number 20231120-233
 - iv. 17 Sterling Drive; Tax Map 208 Lot 18; File Number 20231129-241
- b. Wetland Permit applications under review by NHDES:
 - 797 Portland Street; Tax Map 108 Lot 50; File Number 2023-03125

Commission members did not have any comments regarding the applications listed above.

5) Notice of Intent to Cut Wood or Timber:

Intent to Cut 19 Old Gonic Road: Tax Map 131 Lot 10; 23-389-07-T
Dan Nickerson did not have any concerns with the above notice.

6) New Business:

- b. Set Goals for 2024
The following were briefly discussed as considerations for the coming year.
 - Participating with a booth at the Lilac Family Fun Festival;

- Furthering work with the New England Mountain Bike Association;
 - including a possible trailhead kiosk that mentions the Conservation Commission;
 - working to increase access at Champlin Forest;
- promoting public access conservation areas suitable for recreation;
- Exploring other potential points for accessing the Cocheco River for paddling.
- Establishing a Scholarship.
- Exploring the possibility of high school students recording some drone images of conserved properties for public outreach.
- Re-evaluating properties previously considered for conservation.

Commission members will continue to consider other potential goals for 2024.

c. 2024 Taking Action for Wildlife Webinar Series

Renée Mclsaac suggested members consider signing up for the series.

d. NHDES Climate Action Plan Public Feedback

Renée Mclsaac suggested members review the plan and consider signing up for one of the planned meetings.

e. Potential Conservation Property

Conservation members briefly discussed the property. Renée Mclsaac will reach out to the property owners and invite them to the next scheduled meeting to discuss potential options.

7) Reports:

a. Technical Review

Renée Mclsaac gave a brief overview of recent projects reviewed.

b. Planning Board Review

Renée Mclsaac gave a brief overview of recent projects reviewed.

c. SELT Monitoring Report

Renée Mclsaac will set a reminder for the springtime to check the site for encroachments.

8) Old Business:

Renée Mclsaac shared a draft postcard for reaching out about the planned river clean-up event.

9) Adjournment.

A motion was made by Dan Nickerson and seconded by Dylan Dowe to adjourn at 8:00pm; the motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Renée Mclsaac
Planner I