

Minutes
Watertown Conservation Commission
Philip Pane-Lower Hearing Room
Wednesday, October 5, 2016
7:30 p.m.

Conservation Commission Members Present: Marylouise Pallotta McDermott, Charles C. Bering, Leo G. Martin, Patrick Fairbairn, Louis Taverna, Maria P. Rose

Commission Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Christopher J. Hayward, Susan C. Jenness (Adopted 11.2.16)

Pallotta McDermott chaired.

1) Minutes from July 13, 2016

Motion: Martin made a motion to approve the minutes of the July 13, 2016 meeting. Taverna seconded the motion.

Vote: A unanimous vote was reached adopting the minutes of the July 13, 2016 meeting.

2) Follow up on July 2016 Discussion - How might the Conservation Commission play an advisory role in projects outside of jurisdictional areas.

Over the summer, a meeting was held in the Planning Office to discuss how the Conservation Commission might play a role in projects outside of their jurisdictional areas. In attendance at the meeting were Steve Magoon, Director of Community Development and Planning, Gideon Schreiber, Senior Planner, Mike Mena, Zoning Enforcement Officer, Chris Hayward Conservation Agent, Marylouise Pallotta McDermott, Chair of the Conservation Commission and Patrick Fairbairn, a member of the Conservation Commission.

Commission Discussion

Pallotta McDermott turned the floor over to Fairbairn to begin the discussion.

Fairbairn said that the Planning Department was very happy about getting input from the CC and very open to the idea of discussing how CC may be able to help them in the master planning process for future developments.

Fairbairn explained that the CC is very short staffed and that they should only become involved in a limited capacity on issues around natural and recreational resources. He agreed to share a draft job description for a replacement member of the CC to assume a role specifically designed to function with the master planning process, along with other duties as needed by the now short staffed CC.

After reviewing the job description written and shared by Fairbairn, Rose said that the work load was extremely ambitious for one person to be responsible for all of the tasks listed.

Martin recommended that the Planning Board contact the CC for advisory support when they are needed.

Martin asked Hayward if it were possible for the CC to initiate the search for a new member. Rose suggested that Hayward run the idea of searching for a new CC member by his department and get some feedback in time for their next meeting.

Fairbairn asked CC members to spend time over the next two months to come up with a job description that everyone agreed upon.

Pallotta McDermott asked CC members to submit modifications to the job description written by Fairbairn to the Conservation office.

3) Agent update on various permitted projects and other issues regarding the CC.

Hayward said that the Dealtry Pool project is almost ready to come in for a Certificate of Compliance and that they only have a few things left to take care of. Hayward said he plans for the project to be on the agenda for the November 2, 2016 CC meeting.

Hayward reminded CC members of the free Open Meeting Law trainings that they had been emailed about earlier that month that were being offered by the Attorney General's Office during October. Hayward pointed out a local session that was scheduled to take place at the Watertown Free Library on October 27, 2016 in the evening.

In response to some questions that came up in a discussion around Open Meeting Laws, Hayward highlighted some aspects of the laws for the members of the CC. He cautioned them to be aware that all items that are going to be discussed and voted on by the CC are required to appear on an agenda and posted in accordance with Open Meeting Laws.

He explained that this legal procedure allows for members of the public to have an opportunity to comment and participate in what is meant to be a public process if they choose to do so. He also explained that if CC members ever wanted to discuss something along the lines of a workshop or training that someone had attended that was not an item published on an agenda, as long as no voting or endorsements of any kind were taking place, an impromptu discussion may be able to take place without violating the Open Meeting Laws.

Meeting adjourned.