

CITY OF LACONIA
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
OF SEPTEMBER 16, 2009
Final Minutes approved on October 21, 2009

6:00 PM, CITY HALL, ROOM 200A
SECOND FLOOR OF CITY HALL
45 BEACON STREET EAST

Present: W. Kalin, M. Schulz, Co-Chairs; L. Morin, H. Martin, D. Anson, T. Paddock

Staff: K. Snow, Zoning Technician

Guests: D. Williams, Russ Thibeault

Call to Order: W. Kalin called the meeting to order at 6 pm and let the public know we would start the meeting with a slide presentation by Russ Thibeault on the Perley Pond and the Perley Oak.

Presentation on Perley Oak by Russ Thibeault: R. Thibeault showed the slide show he put together on the Perley Pond and the Perley Oak. He said that the pond and tree have co-existed for some time and that he feels there is a delicate balance there now and doing anything could disturb that and put the area in danger. He agreed that the tree should be left alone. The slide show was over at 6:15 pm.

Perley Oak –Public discussion on Perley Oak:

Public: John Millar, of 1090 Main Street, said that he feels the tree and pond should be left alone. He has lived here for some time. He used to snow blow the pond in the winter so kids can skate. He sees the turtles in the spring. He requested that the area be left alone.

W. Kalin said he has walked the rest of the site and that the entire area is very nice, not just the area with the pond and tree.

He mentioned that he had been in touch with someone about the carpenter ants which were found on the tree. They will evaluate and see if something needs to be done. He said the Con Com will continue to investigate that portion. That would be for localized control only. He added that he did not see ants on Sunday when he was there.

Jack Polidoro stated he had a few questions for the Commission. He asked if there is a plan to formalize Con Com's position with City Hall. He said he anticipated that funds will be allocated to maintain the area and W. Kalin said that Con Com has funds to take care of what needs to be done this year and will budget for next year as well.

W. Kalin said we are currently looking at the cost of treatment for the ants as well as the type of treatment. Pruning is more of a delicate issue. Even the dead limbs have a beauty and this must be very selectively done. J. Polidoro suggested we look into someone doing this pro bono.

W. Kalin said at this point we are looking at minimal pruning of the tree and the ant control, if needed. He said he feels the budget should handle this.

Joyce Donahue said if there is an economic concern she feels the tree deserves an outreach. She said we need to dignify this tree and that cost should not be an issue. She stated that she feels if a cry went out people would contribute. W. Kalin said he feels optimistic about the people assisting. J. Donahue said this issue has opened her eyes. She said she would like to purchase the slide show that R. Thibeault presented. She added that she is glad that the City Council, and Armand Bolduc, watches the city's pennies.

Armand Bolduc said he is here representing City Council. He said that Parks maintains the area and has always done what is needed for the tree. He added that he feels Mother Nature should take care of this herself. He said he feels even pruning can cause tree to die quicker and said that the City Council feels the tree should be left alone, and we should just maintain the surrounding area.

Motion: M. Schulz made the motion to leave the tree as is for now. The motion was seconded by D. Anson and all voted in favor.

Discussion on the wording of the motion and recommendations ensued.

D. Anson said if we treat for ants we need to make sure the chemicals used will not be harmful to the tree and the pond as it flows into Opechee. W. Kalin said the use of chemicals would be limited and would be injected into the hole only.

Minutes: The minutes of the September 2 meeting will be discussed at the Con Com meeting of October 7, 2009

New Business: Tobias Paddock introduced himself to the other Commission members

Liaison & Sub-Committee Reports: None

Planning Board Liaison – T. Paddock: He updated the board on Impact Fees

Permit Sub-committee – W. Kalin, M. Schulz: No permits

Other Business: M. Schulz asked how the interviewing process had gone for the Con Com technician position and K. Snow let the board know that a possible candidate had been found.

D. Williams said she had interviewed at the City Council meeting and should be hearing soon if she was appointed to the Con Com.

K. Snow said she would let Marie Bradley know to put a representative for the Con Com on next City Council agenda to give their recommendation on the Perley Oak.

H. Martin agreed and said she felt she couldn't give her opinion. She said she didn't think the public should have been in attendance at the board discussion.

W. Kalin said a decision was basically already made by the city. L. Morin said here tonight because the Con Com had agreed to this session and it had been publicized already.

M. Schulz said the one thing that happened is that the city put up signage at Perley Pond. That is the biggest thing that came out of this.

Armand Bolduc said that the Parks Department has the budget for this. D. Anson said we cannot commit to money when we don't know how much it is. He said he felt that this conversation should have been held in private.

L. Morin asked if the money for water testing went before City Council for approval and was told no, it was in the budget.

M. Schulz said this ended up way out of proportion. L. Morin said the immediate concern was for liability, and that is what Jon Martin had given his opinion based upon. He had not at that point done a thorough inspection of the tree, but had offered to take a more in depth look at it for us. Then the City Council got involved. UNH recommended against fertilizing, doing basic maintenance, and pruning by professional arborist.

Tobias Paddock let the members know he is a member of the planning board. They have been dealing with developers asking for extensions because of the economy. The pace has slowed down. We are now trying to phase projects so we are not left with cleared space and nothing going in.

Kyril Mitchell is now the Planning Board chair so he was asked to step in. He has a degree in Architecture and urban planning. He moved here in 1989 and has a varied background.

D. Williams said she walked Jewitt Brook near the Boys & Girls Club. There was not a lot of trash to pick up but the retaining wall is in bad shape. One yard has none. She said she would be afraid to put students in there, as she is afraid the wall would fall.

The commission members introduced themselves to T. Paddock.

D. Williams asked if anyone went to the Gilford meeting about the clean up on Liberty Hill as this will impact Jewitt Brook. It was mentioned that D. Hanley had probably gone and we could contact her for information.

D. Anson mentioned the meeting on 10/1 to kick off the Winnepesaukee Watershed Management Plan. This now incorporates Gilford, Laconia, and Meredith. They will present to the public what is going on, so they will be informed and can get involved. They submitted a grant application for more money in the next funding round to get a grant to include Center Harbor and Moultonboro. They plan to incorporate the communities around the lake. He said the State knew this was going to be done and they encouraged them so they will hopefully be ok. They are making progress. The meeting will be at 6pm at Prescott farm on Thursday 10/1.

T. Paddock asked if it were possible for someone to speak to A. Bolduc before the City Council meeting and get a clear interpretation on what the Council means by maintenance.

L. Morin said she spoke to the Sun about the article that was written and told them that there were things that weren't accurately reported. She feels that this would not have happened if there had been a Con Com Technician for the media to deal with. D. Williams said she spoke to J. Polidoro on this and he asked why a retraction wasn't printed if the article were incorrect.

Adjournment: The motion to adjourn was made by H. Martin, with the second by L. Morin. All voted in favor and the meeting was adjourned at 7:45 pm.