

Conservation Commission Public Meeting Minutes, February 22, 2017

Present: Pat Elwell, Donna Jensen, Bob Keating, Bill Kenny, Joe Lovejoy

Also, Town Administrator, Paul Deschaine, Town Planner, Tavis Austin, Andrea Benson (Stratham PTO), Kathy Tallone (Stratham PTO), and Mary Ann Cappiello (Stratham parent)

PUBLIC SESSION

The public session was called to order at 7:05pm.

New Business

Stratham Sustainable Practices Ad Hoc Group

Andrea Benson and Kathy Tallone are leaders of the Stratham Memorial School organic garden team who have worked with UNH and UNH Cooperative Extension to create an organic garden at the elementary school, which has already been incorporated into the school curriculum.

During the summer of 2016, Benson and Tallone noticed that chemicals had been used on the school grounds in close proximity to the new organic garden. This was not in accordance with a December 2014 ruling of the school board to use non-toxic organic pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers at Stratham Memorial School. During 2014, Mary Ann Cappiello and her husband Tim Horvath met with the School Board a number of times in 2014 to drive a change in school policy that would protect children and the environment from application of chemicals on the school grounds.

Benson, Tallone, and Cappiello attended the February 15, 2017 School Board meeting to inquire with the board about caustic chemical use at the school that was apparent in close proximity to the school's organic garden. During the meeting, Principal Tom Fosher said he did not know what was applied to the grounds but will have the information for the next meeting.

Benson, Tallone, and Cappiello are seeking to create an ad hoc Stratham Sustainable Practices group to discuss what methods individuals are using that reduce environmental impacts of lawn maintenance, gardening, and household activities. The group would like to ask of homeowners, farmers, gardeners and business owners: What do they do to manage weeds and insects? How can we be more holistic? How can we reduce or eliminate the exposure of children to chemicals in the environment?

Lovejoy was in favor of the group. He stated the remaining Conservation Commissioners will be notified of the groups intention and wished to promote the groups' activities.

Deschaine noted that the Town and the School Board are independent entities with their own policies.

Minutes

Keating moved and Lovejoy seconded the motion to accept the public and nonpublic February 8 meeting minutes with suggested edits. The motion passed unanimously.

Compost Bin/Rain Barrel Sales

Kenny received notice of the annual sale of bins and barrels from the Northeast Resource Recovery Association. The Town must place its orders with NRRRA by Friday March 24. Kenny said he would forward the notice to Elwell for posting and distribution by the Con Com email blast, and posting at the library and town offices. Deschaine suggested that the notice be sent to Karen Richards in the office and she could post the order form on the Town website.

Old Business**Municipal Updates****Cell Tower at Scamman's Home and Garden Property**

The planning board did not vote in favor of the proposed cell tower at the property at 57 Portsmouth Avenue. Deschaine stated he believed that the landowner was filing an appeal with the Supreme Court. To date, the Town has not yet be notified of the appeal.

Rollins Hill Development

Austin stated that the third phase of the residential development was approved. The community well site test was passed according to NHDES standards. The back-up second well site was not tested.

Planning Board Workshop

Austin notified the commission that he would be leading a planning workshop next Wed March 1 at 7pm with the planning board. The workshop will review criteria for project approvals.

Warrant Articles

Deschaine stated that Warrant Article 11 regarding the Barker Farm easement was filed. The Select Board voted in approval of the project funding on Monday February 13.

Adjournment

Lovejoy moved and Keating seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:04pm. It passed unanimously.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday March 8, 2017 at the Stratham Municipal Center.

Respectfully submitted, Donna Jensen, Secretary