

TOWN OF SOUTH KINGSTOWN CONSERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES

A regular meeting of the South Kingstown Conservation Commission was held in the Town Council Chambers on Wednesday, May 5, 2010 at 7:00 p.m.

A. Roll Call

Loomis – present

Johnson – absent

Boardman – present

Gates – present

Dickinson - present

Flanders – present

Wettlaufer - present

B. Approval of Minutes of April 7, 2010

Mr. Nickerson stated that minutes had not been completed at this time but will be available for the next regular meeting.

C. Special Items

1. Comprehensive Community Plan Issues

Mr. Nickerson stated that, based on prior conversations with the Commission, he identified the habitat mapping, open space acquisition program, and watercourse corridor overlay district as initial items the Commission could address in response to being identified as a responsible party for those items within the Comprehensive Community Plan.

Mr. Nickerson distributed copies of the habitat mapping to members. The particular coverage has been developed through RIGIS. Members were in agreement that this information will be valuable in assessing environmental impacts from projects that come before the Commission.

Discussion ensued regarding potential development of a river corridor overlay district. Mr. Nickerson reviewed the existing FEMA 100 year flood plain maps. He stated that the Town is mandated to adopt a flood plain management ordinance prior to the October 19, 2010 effective date of the revised Flood Insurance Rate Maps.

Members agreed that a review of the FEMA map indicates that there are extensive sections of stream channels in Town that are not located within the flood plain. As such, the proposed flood plain management ordinance would regulate activities along those channels. Mr. Nickerson will continue to research examples of river corridor overlay districts. Also, staff will begin drafting a preliminary ordinance for Commission review.

Discussion ensued concerning the Town open space acquisition policy. Mr. Gates requested details regarding the weighted evaluation method used by the town in considering the significance of a particular parcel. Mr. Nickerson will make this policy document available to members for discussion at the next regular meeting.

Staff and Commission members reviewed the Comp Plan Update Progress Report provided in this months meeting packet. Brief discussion ensued regarding particular items. Mr. Flanders noted that the Plan identifies implementation of the Urban Community Forest Plan into local programs. Mr. Nickerson will discuss this matter with the project consultant and Director of Planning.

Mr. Nickerson noted that the Town continues to monitor the status of any progress regarding establishment of groundwater withdrawal regulations for the State.

D. Renewable Energy Resources

Mr. Nickerson informed members that the Town would be preparing two EECBG applications to provide solar powered lighting. One project involves the installation of lighting at the Downtown Intermodal Park while the second project addresses replacement of convention lights at the high school and Hazard School complex.

Mr. Nickerson reminded members that the Town was also a partner with the other Washington County communities in an EECBG application requesting funds to provide solar powered hot water to the various town halls within the county.

E. Tree Board

Mr. Nickerson read a letter from DEM, Division of Forest Environment, dated April 23, 2010, announcing the Town has been awarded a \$2,000 'America the Beautiful' grant to plant trees at West Kingston Park to replace dead or dieing red pines at the park.

Mr. Flanders noted that the recent sidewalk construction project has resulted in significant damage to some trees on Church St. to the extent that those trees will probably require replacement. Mr. Nickerson will research this matter including contact with the Tree Warden and Public Services personnel.

Mr. Flanders further noted that the illegal 'No Trespassing' sign at 791 Curtis Corner Rd. is still posted. Mr. Nickerson will contact the Tree Warden regarding this matter.

Mr. Nickerson informed members that staff has determined that a potentially available site at Broad Rock Middle School is preferred for the Town Tree Nursery location. Copies of the locus map were distributed to members for their information.

The Principal Planner and Mr. Flanders will schedule an on-site meeting to review the potential site.

F. Wastewater Management

Mr. Nickerson informed members that the first phase of Year 6 inspection notices have been mailed to property owners.

Mr. Loomis reiterated his position that the Town should seriously consider enrollment in the Carmody data collection program available to local cities and towns. The Principal Planner will contact the Public Services Director regarding this subject.

Mr. Gates stated that perhaps the Town could inquire into using volunteer help to perform OWTS inspection report data entry tasks. Mr. Nickerson will discuss this matter with the Public Services Director.

Mr. Nickerson provided a status of the present Community Septic System Loan Program. He noted that funds had been delayed awaiting clarification on applicability of the Davis-Bacon Act. He stated that it has been determined the Act does not apply specifically to installation, repair or replacement of OWTSs.

Mr. Loomis suggested that CSSLP funding availability policy should give preference to primary residential dwelling versus, say, those projects involving a secondary seasonal dwelling.

G. Correspondence

Mr. Nickerson summarized the following correspondence: two letters from DEM, dated April 30, 2010, notifying the Town it has been awarded grants from the Rhode Island Trails Advisory Committee for improvements to the Ed & Rush Stewart Nature Trail (\$2230) and the Old Mountain Field Nature Trail (\$2910); a DEM announcement, dated April 30, 2010 regarding public workshops related to the Proposed Cesspool Phase-out Rules.

H. Other Matters / Comments

Discussion ensued regarding the need for findings of fact to be included within stipulations forwarded by the Commission to the Zoning Board of Review. Mr. Nickerson stated that, based on his conversations with ZBR Chair Ernie George and Special Legal Counsel Nancy Letendre, it is apparent that the Board is sometimes reluctant to include a Conservation Commission recommendation into its final decision, where no justification for that recommendation is explained.

Mr. Flanders inquired as to whether the Town owns or leases its copy machines. Mr. Nickerson will research the matter and report back to the Commission. Mr. Flanders stated that the Town should print on both sides of paper to reduce the overall expense.

I. Adjournment

Loomis moved, Dickinson seconded; motion carried: "To Adjourn".

Meeting adjourned at 9:24 p.m.