

Newburyport Conservation Commission

February 19, 2013

City Council Chambers

Minutes

1. Call to Order

A meeting of the Newburyport Conservation Commission was called to order by Chair Joe Teixeira at 6:30 p.m.

2. Roll Call

In attendance were members Joe Teixeira, Paul Healy, Steve Moore, Doug Muir, Mary Casey and Jim O'Brien.

3. Minutes

Steve Moore moved to approve the minutes of the January 15, 2013 meeting as submitted. Doug Muir seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

4. General Business

Jon Higgins, Bartlet Mall Frog Pond Phosphorous Removal Project

Informal Presentation

Jon Higgins said phosphorus is often responsible for algae blooms such as those that often occur in the Frog Pond at the Bartlet Mall. After World War II the use of phosphorus increased, which resulted in a change of the geochemistry of some water bodies and led to algae blooms. He has developed a system called the P-Pod that he would like to demonstrate in the Frog Pond. The P-Pod is a device that captures phosphorus and removes it from water bodies, which should result in a reduction the amount of algae blooms. The demonstration would refine the scope of work and cost estimate for a larger-scale removal of phosphorous at the Frog Pond. Mr. Higgins said the system does not use any harsh or toxic chemicals and is less disruptive and less costly than dredging. He is requesting that the City pay for the laboratory fees for the demonstration and his firm would cover the cost of labor and materials. Walt Thompson of the Bartlet Mall Commission said students from the high school have been studying the quality of the water in the Frog Pond. E Coli has been found and there should be health concerns about events such as the canoe tilt that takes place during Yankee Homecoming. The Bartlet Mall Commission is in favor of the pilot demonstration. The item is to be discussed at the February 21 meeting of the Parks Commission. Mary Casey said it does not seem that the device would create any environmental concerns. If the City decides to spend the \$2,000 that has been estimated as the cost of the pilot demonstration, Mr. Higgins would then be required to file an application with Conservation Commission.

Plum Island Jetty

Joe Teixeira said the repair work is expected to extend 700 feet along the jetty and funds are being sought for additional work. The project is on track be completed by the March 31 deadline, although the contractor has asked the Mayor's office to be allowed to increase the frequency of truck traffic.

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Plum Island Update

Joe Teixeira said he spoke with Tim Tracy, who said during the recent storm the water flowed over the mats and under his house, but the mats survived well.

Whittier Bridge

Doug Muir asked that an update on the Whittier Bridge be added to the agenda for an upcoming meeting.

Sea Level Rise Meeting

Joe Teixeira said a second meeting on sea level rise has been scheduled for Thursday, February 21 at the headquarters of the Parker River National Wildlife Refuge.

5. Certificates of Compliance, Requests for Determinations, Requests for Minor Modifications

None

6. Public Hearings

Steve Moore moved to open the public hearing. Mary Casey seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

American Yacht Club

115R Water Street

Amend Order of Conditions

Bill Decie appeared for the applicant. He said the Yacht Club had previously received approval for the repair of a damaged bulkhead. The existing timber bulkhead was to be replaced by sheet piles. The project was delayed and in the interim the cost of sheet metal rose greatly. The plans for the wall have been revised, with H-piles and timber lagging being used in place of the sheet piles. The means of construction is the only change in the project. The new wall would be constructed in the same location as the original. The Army Corp. of Engineers has approved the work.

Steve Moore moved to close the public hearing. Paul Healy seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

7. Orders of Conditions

American Yacht Club

115R Water Street

Amend Order of Conditions

Paul Healy moved to accept the Amended Notice of Intent. Steve Moore seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

8. Adjournment

Steve Moore moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:45 p.m. Doug Muir seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.