

**Newburyport Conservation Commission**  
**February 16, 2021**  
**Online Meeting**  
**Minutes**

**1. Call to Order**

Chair Joe Teixeira called an online meeting of the Newburyport Conservation Commission to order at 6:45 p.m.

**2. Roll Call**

In attendance were members Steve Moore, Paul Healy, David Vine, Joe Teixeira, Ron DiCola, Dan Warchol and Carole Wagan. Conservation Administrator Julia Godtfredsen was also in attendance.

**3. Minutes**

The approval of the minutes of the February 2 meeting was tabled.

**4. Old and New Business**

**a) Plum Island Updates**

A recent storm washed away the dune between 73<sup>rd</sup> Street and 75<sup>th</sup> Street and caused damage to the infrastructure and homes. The sandbags that were installed under the Emergency Certification were destroyed. Mayor Holaday is working with State agencies on the next protective measure that might be employed. Anders Bjarngard of GZA has been hired by DOT to develop a system of driven timber piles and sandbags. The work would require an Emergency Certification, which would be followed by a Notice of Intent. Julia Godtfredsen would request written assurance from DEP that the work would be permissible.

Steve Moore mentioned that the sediment study makes no reference to sea level rise and its predictions on the length of time the deposited sand would remain in place might not be accurate. Any proposed restoration project should include a cost/benefit analysis with regards to sea level rise.

**b) Bartlet Mall Frog Pond Improvements**

The Newburyport Parks Commission and Parks Department are seeking CPA funding for improvements to the Bartlet Mall Frog Pond and the restoration of the Swan Fountain. Wendi Goldsmith and Kim Turner reviewed the history of the Bartlet Mall and described the proposed improvements for the Frog Pond. The pond is a natural kettle hole. In 1800, a ravine at the head of Green Street was filled when the promenade was created in front of the Courthouse. This shut off the source of fresh water to the Frog Pond. When the quality of the water in the pond began to decline, a fountain was installed to improve its circulation. This fountain was replaced in the 1989 by one with an increased aeration capacity. The fountain was shut off after its condition deteriorated due to the poor quality of the water. Algal blooms in the pond have become more severe in recent years and pose a health risk to people and animals.

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A study conducted in 2014 study revealed the presence of heavy metals in the subsoil and TP in the sediment. A 2017 reverse osmosis pilot project was unsuccessful due to volume of TP in the muck. Wendi Goldsmith said the heavy metals would not warrant dredging, as they are immobile and tightly bound to the organic matter and clay particles in the sediment. The algal blooms are the primary concern.

The Parks Department and Parks Commission are proposing to install a liner in the bottom of the pond to create a barrier between the phosphorus and heavy metals and the pond water. The cost of dredging would be prohibitive. The pond would be drained, and after the muck has dried, its bottom would be sculpted and capped with a geosynthetic liner. Sand and other material would be added to support aquatic plant life. Two shallow wells would be installed to irrigate the pond and maintain it at a consistent level. The fountain would be restored to aerate the water. A portion of the edge of the pond would be stabilized with granite stones and the beach would be recreated.

One CPC application has been submitted for a bathymetric survey that would map the contours of the bottom of the pond, the installation of wells and the purchase of the granite stones. The second application has been submitted for the restoration of the fountain. The purpose of the presentation was informational. Data collected during the survey would be used to develop a plan that would be submitted to the Commission for approval.

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

None

**6. Public Hearings**

None

**7. Order of Conditions**

None

**8. Enforcement**

**a) 11 76<sup>th</sup> Street**

Tom Hughes has promised to submit the materials within the next week.

**b) 5 Doe Run Drive**

Joe Teixeira recused himself from the discussion. The Notice of Violation has been prepared but has not yet been mailed.

**9. Adjournment**

Steve Moore moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:01 p.m. Paul Healy seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.