

Conservation Commission Minutes
Tuesday, April 3, 2012
Town Hall Meeting Room, Old Town Rd.
5:30pm

Present: Members: Chair Ned Phillips Jr., Fred Leeder, Marea Mott, Leslie Slate, David Roosa and Donald Littlefield. Member absent: Vice Chair John Hopf. Also present was First Warden Kimberley Gaffett, Town Councilor Richard Martin, Town Manager Nancy Dodge and Terri Chmiel for the recording of the minutes.

Call to Order

Chair Mr. Phillips, Jr. called the meeting to order at 5:32p.m.

Approval of Minutes of March 13, 2012

The approval of the minutes was deferred to the May meeting.

Beach Access

Mike Shea, Highway Supervisor for the Town of New Shoreham addressed the Commission on roping for the east beaches and beach access at Grace's Cove. He informed the Commission the roping began about ten years ago in deterring people from keeping off the dunes. The Commission and Mr. Shea were both in agreement on keeping the roping and adding signage to this area. Mr. Shea acknowledged the DEM signage is available at no cost to the Town. Mr. Shea will discuss the signage with Matt Moran, who is the DEM coordinator for the Town.

Mr. Shea updated the Commission on the beach access project. John Hopf and the Highway Department have placed a couple loads of rock at Grace's Cove. A walking path and a path for drainage have been constructed at Grace's; over time the two paths may become one by letting nature take its course. Mr. Shea was thanked by the Commission for his work.

Closter, Jr. Robert. Plat 18, Lot 2-14. ADVISORY to the Zoning Board of Review for an Application for a Special Use Permit from 405 (affordable housing) and for a Variance from Section 312 (C) for construction of an attached garage.

Robert Closter, Jr., homeowner presented. Mr. Closter explained the application is before the Commission due to the Zoning Decision dated December 1, 2004 for a Special Use Permit under Section 405 Affordable Housing. The decision stipulated that "No lot shall exceed a total of 1157 square feet of building coverage without returning to the Zoning Board. Mr. Closter explained that the proposed 15'x20' addition and the increase of the front porch becomes a footprint that totals 1,494 square feet."

Mr. Leeder made a motion seconded by Mr. Slate to send a favorable Advisory to the Zoning Board of Review for an approval of the application by Robert Closter, Jr. for a Special Use Permit from Section 405 (affordable housing) and for a Variance from Section 312 (C) for construction of an attached garage.

6 Ayes (Phillips, Leeder, Mott, Slate, Littlefield and Roosa) 0 Nays
1 Absent (Hopf)

Town of New Shoreham. Plat 19, Lot 1. ADVISORY to the Zoning Board of Review for an Application for a Special Use Permit under 312 (E) and 410 Recreational Facility for construction of a picnic shelter and bathrooms.

Mr. Closter, Recreation Director for the Town of New Shoreham presented. Mr. Closter explained to the Commission the bath house is a precast structure which sits outside of the CRMC 75' buffer. Mr. Closter and the Commission discussed the following:

- No intention of removing trees along the western boundary line.
- The grill area is not part of the application.
- There is no nighttime lighting or plans for landscaping.
- The hours of operation will be dawn to dusk.
- The cleaners will open the bath house in the morning and lock up at night.
- The Conservation Commission recommends cedar shingles on the bath house.
- Numerous archeology studies of this area reported no findings.

Mr. Littlefield made a motion seconded by Mr. Leeder to send a favorable Advisory to the Zoning Board of Review for approval of an Application for a Special Use Permit under 312 (E) and 410 Recreational Facility for construction of a picnic shelter and bathrooms.

6 Ayes (Phillips, Leeder, Mott, Slate, Littlefield and Roosa) 0 Nays
1 Absent (Hopf)

Recommendation to the Town Manager regarding Sun Farm Oysters, LLC application for a new lease north of the Block Island Club.

Christopher Warfel, President of Sun Farm Oysters, LLC presented. Mr. Warfel was returning after the Commission asked for more time to research his application. Mr. Warfel addressed the Commission on the following:

- The proposed plan is compatible with the multi-use site.

- The proposed area will be in operation from Memorial Day through Columbus Day.
- The proposed area is accessible for Sun Farm Oysters, LLC summer crew.
- This is a commercial viable area for shell fishing.
- Sun Farm Oysters, LLC agreed to the option of a shorter lease.
- The proposed use does not create a hazard.

The Commission discussed the positive impacts from an environmental standpoint and addressed concerns with Mr. Warfel for disease free stock and transferring of the lease. The Shellfish Management Plan is part of the Comprehensive Plan which supports aquaculture in Zone 3.

The Conservation Commission based their decision on the scope of environmental impact and acting within the purview of the Commission. “Defined Uses” in Zone 3: “Fisheries Priority” defined as the harvest of the natural resources including but not limited to shellfish, crustaceans, and finfish, as regulated by the Town of New Shoreham. This area is also designated as a high priority shellfish stock enhancement area as well as being one of three (3) areas certified by the RIDEM for year-round shellfish harvesting. The Commission did not find any environmental issues other than a positive impact.

Mr. Leeder made a motion seconded by Mr. Slate for a favorable recommendation to the Town Manager for the application by Sun Farm Oysters, LLC for a new aquaculture lease north of the Block Island Club.

5 Ayes (Phillips, Leeder, Mott, Slate and Roosa)
1 Absent (Hopf)

0 Nays
1 Recuse (Littlefield)

Correspondence

The Commission received the following correspondence:

- Letter dated March 23, 2012 to David Beutel, CRMC from the Committee for the Great Salt Pond. (see attached)
- Letter dated March 23, 2012 to David Beutel, CRMC from The Block Island Club. (see attached)
- E-mail dated March 29, 2012 to David Beutel, CRMC from Dennis Erkan, DEM. (see attached)

Old Business

a. Discuss Tree Preservation and Protection

No action was taken.

b. Snow Fencing

The Commission set a work date for Saturday, April 7, 2012 at 10:00am to install the last four rolls of snow fencing. Mr. Phillips, Jr. will write a letter to the Block Island Times asking for donations to purchase more snow fencing.

Election of Officers

This item was tabled to the May meeting.

Adjourn

Mr. Leeder shared with the Commission:

- The Town Council approved a motion to retrofit waterless urinals in public restrooms.
- Two rare bee species were found on the island.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:37p.m. in a motion by Mr. Littlefield and seconded by Mr. Phillips, Jr.

6 Ayes (Phillips, Leeder, Mott, Slate, Littlefield and Roosa)

0 Nays

1 Absent (Hopf)

Respectfully submitted

Terri L. Chmiel

Minutes approved: June 12, 2012