

Tiverton Conservation Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes
October 28, 2014
Town Hall, 343 Highland Road, Tiverton, RI

Chairman Ramotowski called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM.

Members Present: T. Ramotowski (Chair), P. Mellow, P. Hilton, L. Cottrell, and R. Guimond.

Members Absent: N. Cote

Also Present: S. Berlucchi (Director of Public Works), R. Hart and S. Rhys (Landfill Subcommittee).

I. Public Delegations: Mr. Berlucchi stated that he was present to speak on behalf of the Landfill Subcommittee. There is an effort underway to select a location for the recycling operation presently conducted at the landfill. The present location for recycling at the landfill will be buried under trash in the near future as the landfill is filled up prior to closure. Some people favor moving the recycling containers to a location near the entrance to the landfill off of Main Road. Other suggestions have been made, including relocating it to the DPW site (rejected because it is too congested) or relocating it to the Tiverton Industrial Park (an idea not favored by the Town Council).

The Landfill Subcommittee asked Pare Engineering to carry out a study on the best area in which to relocate the recycling effort. One area they looked at was behind the second gate at the present landfill across from the second ball field. The proposed recycling center would consist of approximately eight steel roll-off dumpsters. It would be enclosed by an eight-foot high fence. The facility would not include a compost operation for branches, leaves and lawn cuttings. The facility would be open three days a week (Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday) from 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM. Although it is an unrelated topic, the Town still also needs to identify a “storm debris” site that would require about six acres of flat, paved land. This site could be collocated with the recycling center, though the proposed landfill location does not have enough land for it.

Mr. Hart stated that the site needed to be out of the watersheds, and close to a highway. All Town owned land should be considered. Ms. Hilton suggested the Industrial Park as a possible site. There is enough room there for the “storm debris” site as well. Mr. Berlucchi stated that he would ask Pare Engineering to include that location in the mix of properties they are considering for this use.

II. Approval of Minutes: There were no sets of minutes available for approval

III. Treasurer’s Report: Mr. Mello reported that the Commission had \$694.57 left in its account for the current fiscal year.

IV. Brief Announcements: Chairman Ramotowski noted that he was preparing the schedule of meetings for 2015 and asked whether the February meeting should occur on the 17th (third Tuesday) or the 24th (fourth Tuesday) to avoid school vacation. It was the consensus of the Commission to schedule that meeting for the 24th of February.

V. New Business:

Stafford Pond: Next Steps

Chairman Ramotowski reminded the Commission that there were still several things that needed to be done concerning protection of water quality in Stafford Pond. Most of these items will require cooperation with the DEM and also with the Commission's new Town Council liaison and local House/Senate members. This will need to be pursued in the new year.

Fire Danger: Town Woods

Chairman Ramotowski was contacted by the Fire Chief regarding recent brush fires in Weetamoo Woods. Apparently, the trails are too narrow for fire fighting vehicles to negotiate, a fact that makes fighting fires in the preserve difficult. Chairman Ramotowski stated he informed the Chief that Weetamoo Woods were under the control of the Open Space Committee, and he would need to contact them about possibly widening the trails to allow access for fire fighting vehicles. It is unclear to what extent this issue impacts the portion of Fogland Beach that is under the direct control of the Conservation Commission. There haven't been any fires there (other than illegal cooking fire pits) over the past 20 years or so, although there have been rescue-related emergencies. No formal complaints regarding access to Fogland have been raised by either the Town Police or Fire Chiefs.

VI. Old Business:

Review of "Watershed Protection Overlay District" Language/Tiverton Planning Board:

There was nothing new to report on this item.

Town Zoning Ordinance for Earth Removal/Quarrying:

The Town Solicitor is drafting enabling legislation to allow the Town to regulate the operations of granite extracting quarries within its boundaries. A draft of proposed regulations for quarries was sent back to the Planning Board by the Town Council. One of the quarries (Viking Stone) received a new Blasting permit from the State. The Town Solicitor has found that the quarries, even those that did not routinely renew their licenses for operation with the Town, were not considered to be "abandoned uses", and so they can continue to operate. The Town is also investigating possible damage to residences in the Jilley Hill neighborhood caused by blasting in the nearby quarry.

Chairman Ramotowski stated that he had sent a letter to the Town Administrator requesting information related to the findings of the consultant hired by the Town to assess the possible impacts of the quarrying operations on surface and ground water quality in the Town. The Commission is awaiting a response.

Tiverton Crossings Development

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This item was continued by the Planning Board until its next regular meeting. It will be discussed in detail at a future meeting of the Commission.

Personnel Issue: Freeing up 7th Full-Time Member Position on the Commission:

Chairman Ramotowski reported that the Town Administrator had sent a letter to Mr. Grimard informing him that he was being removed from the Conservation Commission due to his absences (he had moved out of Town last December, but had never sent in a formal letter of resignation). There was no response from Mr. Grimard. In a memorandum dated 02 October 2014 to the Town Clerk, the Town Administrator ruled that Mr. Grimard was no longer a member of the Conservation Commission in accordance with section 1210(b) of the Town Charter. This decision opens up the 7th full member position on the Commission for occupancy by another person.

VII. Standing Committee Reports:

Town Comprehensive Plan Review Committee:

Ms. Hilton reported that she was working on drafts of the land use and housing portions of the Comprehensive Plan. The housing portion of the Plan covers affordable housing.

Litter Prevention Initiatives:

There was no report.

Stafford Pond Issues Update:

It was noted that the Commission's Town Council Liaison, Councilor Gerlach, was not running for re-election to the Town Council. Councilor Gerlach had been deeply involved with the Commission's efforts to protect the quality of water in Stafford Pond, and his assistance with this issue will be missed. Ms. Hilton stated that she would come up with a suitable gift for Councilor Gerlach to express the Commission's gratitude for his involvement and help with the Commission's efforts to preserve drinking water quality in the Town's two reservoirs.

Fogland Beach Issues Update:

Draft Updates for Section 54 of the Town Code:

Chairman Ramotowski stated that the Committee was still awaiting draft language from the Town Solicitor.

Landfill Issues:

There was nothing new to report.

VIII. Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 8:54 PM

Submitted by:

Dr. T. S. Ramotowski, Chairman