

# Commission on Conservation & Agriculture



Chairperson	Elisabeth Holder ('22)	
Vice-Chair	Brian Gartner ('23)	
Members	Michael Thomas ('20)	Kate Miller ('23)
	Jane Brawerman ('23)	James Miller ('23)
	Katharine Owens ('22)	Bob Daniels ('22)
	Barbara Schukoske ('23)	David Bauer ('22)
	Vacant	
Alternates	Ellen Lukens ('23)	Judy Konopka ('22)
Staff	Marek Kozikowski, AICP, City Planner	

## REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

**DATE:** Tuesday, October 20, 2020  
**TIME:** 7:00 p.m.

Meeting was held online. Public Access was provide by:

1. Going to <https://webex.com> and joining the meeting using the appropriate meeting number and password
2. Launching the WebEx application and joining the meeting using the appropriate meeting number and password
3. Via telephone at 1-408-418-9388 and the appropriate access code

**Meeting Number/Access Code:** 1734420035

**Event Password:** Conservation

In attendance: Commissioners Elisabeth Holder, Michael Thomas, Barbara Schukoske, Katherine Owens, Kate Miller, Bob Daniels, James Miller, Jane Brawerman, Judy Konopka, and Ellen Lukens. Marek Kozikowski, City Planner. Public In attendance: Jim Fellows.

### A. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:02pm.

### B. Accept the Agenda

Elisabeth holder suggested moving G.3 to the top of the agenda. A motion to accept the agenda with the modification made by Brian Gartner and seconded by Bob Daniels passed unanimously.

### C. Public Forum

Jim Fellows, a photographer wants to share photos of individual and community gardens throughout the city. The content could possible extend to other towns. Social media accounts could be set up and people could share their own photos. The Agriculture Committee can work with Mr. Fellows and possibly set up a partnership with the Jonah Center for this endeavor.

### D. Approval of Minutes

#### 1. Approval of Minutes from the September 15, 2020 Meeting

A motion to approve the minutes of the September 15, 2020 meeting with corrections made by James Miller and seconded by Jane Brawerman passed 8-0 (Elisabeth Holder and Brian Gartner abstained).

### E. Request for Comment

#### 1. Tall Timbers Road- Open Space Donation (Parcel 40-0057)

James Miller reported that he walked the property with Michael Thomas Chris Holden, Deputy Director Public Works. The parcel is entirely wooded with no wetlands. The parcel is already preserved as open space with not potential for development based on the subdivision approval. A motion stating that the Commission is not in favor of the city acquiring this parcel was made by Kate Miller and seconded by Michael Thomas passed unanimously.

#### 2. 148 Arbutus Street- Open Space Donation (Parcel 38-0198)

If you require special accommodations for any meeting, please call the ADA Coordinator at (860) 638-4540, (voice) or (860) 638-4812 (TDD/TTY), or the Town Clerk's Office at (860) 638-4910 at least ten (10) days prior to the scheduled meeting.

James Miller reported that he walked the property. The property contains several deer trails. The property supports wildlife and a variety of plant species. A recommendation was tabled until more research was conducted.

## **F. Officers and Committee Reports**

### **1. Chairman's Report**

Elisabeth Holder reported that the City issued an RFQ for the riverfront development master plan. She has been spending most of her time on the open space acquisitions. The Wilcox Management Plan is at a standstill.

### **2. Trails Committee**

#### **i. Trails Work at Guida and Wilcox**

Michael Thomas noted that there is increased activity of ATV use on the trails. He noted that the overgrowth was cut back at Guida and he is working on the cleanup of that area.

Jane Bowerman offered assistance with the Conservation District for the development of open space stewardship plans.

#### **ii. ATV Activity**

The Commission discussed how the gate at the Footit Street is inadequate because ATVs are just going around them. Christopher Holden noted that Public Works might be able to relocate some concrete barriers to that location to increase security of the trail entrance. Jim Miller will agreed to work with Public Works on this issue.

### **3. Agriculture Committee**

#### **i. Farmers Market Update**

No update.

#### **ii. Farm Survey Update**

Bob Daniels reported that the survey is complete. He will work with Jim Fellows on the garden project.

Jane Browerman noted that she spoke with Gabe Russo regarding the potential acquisition/protection by the city.

### **4. Outreach Committee**

The Commission discussed opportunities to engage people and put materials together that is usable for the end user. They discussed reinitiating the trails passport book and incorporating that into a possible event. The trail guide should be publicized on the City website. Marek will have a breaking news article posted on the front page.

Brian Gartner will start planning for a walk for the end of fall.

### **5. Open Space Management Committee**

No update.

### **6. Open Space Acquisition Committee**

#### **i. Pending Properties (Livingston, Mckiernan, Newfield Street, Westlake Drive, Majestic Oaks Drive, and East Street/South Plumb)**

Marek provided a brief update on each property.

#### **ii. OSWA Grant- Majestic Oaks- Wilson Property Update**

No update.

#### **iii. Sunshine Realty, LLC Property**

Elisabeth Holder notes that the open space acquisition committee met to discuss this property. The property was scored according the ranking system and scored highly compared to the properties that were evaluated this past spring. Elisabeth expressed concerns regarding acquiring the barn buildings as part to the open space as the Commission

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doesn't have the means or ware withal to maintain them. The Committee recommends moving forward the acquisition of the property.

A motion accept the recommendation of the Open Space Acquisition Committee to move forward with the process of acquiring the property made by Brian Gartner and seconded by James Miller passed 9-1 (Michael Thomas was opposed).

**iv. Millbrook Acres LLC (Parcel 40-0093)**

Elisabeth noted that the Committee discussed the potential acquisition of this parcel. The committee will complete scoring of the property and Marek was going to contact the property owner to get an idea what the price will be.

**G. Old Business**

**1. Timber Management and Southern Border Safety**

No update.

**2. POCD Update**

Marek noted that the draft 2020 POCD is published on the city website. The Planning and Zoning Commission and the POCD Steering Committee will have a joint workshop on October 28<sup>th</sup>.

**3. Criteria for Land Donations**

The Commission reviewed draft criteria prepared by Kate Miller and Elisabeth Holder for recommendations of accepting land donations.

A motion to accept the criteria made by Brian Gartner and seconded by James Miller was approved unanimously.

**4. Climate Emergency Declaration**

Elisabeth Holder noted that the document needs to be kept in mind in decision making, which includes land acquisitions.

**H. New Business**

**1. Community Service workings for trail upkeep**

The Commission discussed utilizing community service workers for assisting in the upkeep of the trails. Marek would discuss this with the Mayor if this is a program the administration would support.

**2. City Website updates (photos, bylaws, ranking documents, sustainability topics)**

The Commission discussed what materials could be added to the website to increase the exposure and transparency of the Commission. The materials would include the "binder" documents that consist of the ranking systems, bylaws, applicable state statutes, criteria for evaluating various proposals.

**I. Member Forum**

Ellen Lukens noted she spoke with Joe Samolis regarding the protection of Red Maple Swamp as open space. Joe will discuss this with the Mayor and Council.

**J. Adjournment**

A motion to adjourn made by Bob Daniels and seconded by Barbara Schukoske passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:59pm.