**Conservation Commission Meeting**

**November 10, 2014**

**Meeting Opened**: 07:05 pm

**Members Present**: Sue Foote, Dick Dodge, and Judie Walker.

**Others Present**: Paul Himmer who would like to develop Tax map 16 lot 17-20-5 located on South Main Street

*Approval of minutes from September 8, 2014*

*Motion: Dick Dodge*

*Sue Foote seconded*

*Passed unanimously*

**Dredge and fill applications/permits**:

* Conservation Commission received a copy of the wetlands permit for 126 Ocean Boulevard the old O’Keefe estate. The residents would like to replace an old chain link fence with a 6’ cedar fence. They have received a new fence permit from the Town of Seabrook for this construction. Additionally the removal of the old chain link fence was approved by the DES and the Town of Seabrook. They have attached the documents.
* Conservation Commission received a copy of an approved Shoreland Impact Permit for 77 Ocean Drive. They are impacting 3,524 square feet in order to replace existing dwelling with a new dwelling and reduce the impervious coverage. This permit expires 10/28/2019.

**Other:**

Paul Himmer has recently acquired a parcel that has wetlands on South Main Street. Paul would like to build a residence on lot 17-20-5 (252 South Main Street). The parcel is 3.56 acres in size. The land abuts South Main Street on the north, where he can access the sewer and water services, and the Seabrook salt marsh on the south. The abutting parcels to the east and west each are developed with residential houses. The parcel has a section of a hand ditched “moat” in the area near the road. There is an existing clam shell drive that abuts the ditch and runs southward towards the buildable upland in the woods at the back of the lot.

Mr. Himmer is getting ready to file a dredge and fill application and wanted to come before the Conservation Commission to discuss his options and hopefully get their support.

His options for development are:

1. Construct a driveway to the upland area in the woods which would be over 750 feet in length, and impact over 15,000 sq. ft. of wetlands. Additionally it would locate a residence in a large section of woodlands that is undeveloped and abuts the salt marsh. By NHDES current regulations, a driveway impacting wetlands to access developable uplands cannot be denied.
2. Obtain permission to fill an area near the road and utility access in exchange for deeding the back section of undisturbed woodlands that abut the Seabrook salt marsh to the Town of Seabrook for Conservation purposes.

The Commission members discussed the desire to keep development near the road and not impact the pristine woodlands abutting the salt marsh. In addition the woodland buffer provides a suitable amount of protection from sea level rise due to climate change.

Chairman Foote provided a bit of history of the “moat” area. The wetlands talked about were not always wetlands. The “moat” was not always there. Back in 1942 Mr. Henry Ouellette and Mr. Wilbur Foote (chairman Foote’s grandfather) hand dug the moat in the horse pasture and directed the seasonal stream that runs through the woodlands towards the moat on the south side. For an outlet to insure proper flooding, they also placed a culvert under South Main Street and dug a ditch in the salt marsh to the creek just west of the South Dock. Mr. Ouellette did this so that his stallion would not run away, the Stallion was afraid of water.

Sue Foote, Chair, mentioned that there are funds in the Conservation Fund dedicated towards assisting in legal and filing fees for parcels of land donated to the Town for Conservation use and would like to assist Mr. Himmer with the Planning Board Fees for lot subdivision and the Legal fees to write up the deed for the land he will donating to the town for Conservation use, if he obtains the necessary permits to fill the area near the road for lot development.

*Motion: Sue Foote to support this proposal to fill wetlands near the road for lot development in exchange for donating the woodland acreage to the Town for Conservation purposes, and to utilize the Conservation Fund resources to assist in the legal fees to transfer the sub-divided parcel to the Town.*

*Second: Dick Dodge*

*Unanimous*

* Alyson Eberhardt, Program Coordinator from UNH Cooperative Extension set up a meeting with John Starkey and Sue Foote on October 28, 2014 because UNH Coop Ext will be awarded grant funds to restore the dunes from the NH Coastal Program. They discussed the best place to restore the dunes which is located beside Harborside Park. These dunes are unique because they are owned by Seabrook, Hampton Falls, and Hampton. This is a matching grant for $75,000 for beach erosion etc. Alyson needs to raise the matching $75,000. Alyson has already received a commitment from State of N.H. for $30,000 and $15,000 from NOAA Maine Division. The Conservation would like to commit to up to $20,000 from the Conservation Commission fund to be used as match for the grant.

*Motion:* Sue Foote, Chair *To dedicate up to $20,000.00 from the Conservation Fund towards the proposed grant project intended to do dunes restoration and protection in the dune area to the north of the Harborside Park.*

*Second:* Dick Dodge

Unanimous

**Mail:**

* Southeast Land Trust sent the Conservation Commission their Quarterly newsletter for the fall of 2014 and also enclosed their 2013 annual report.
* The New Hampshire Association of Conservation Commissions send the Conservation Commission an invoice for $523.00 The Conservation Commission no longer participates in the New Hampshire Association of Conservation Commissions.
* The Conservation Commission was copied on a letter from Bernard H. Campbell who is representing the family of the late Donald Chase formerly of Hampton Falls. The family realized that Mr. Chase owned two small parcels of land on the Seabrook/Salisbury line, which happens to be adjacent to land that the Town of Seabrook owns. They want the Town of Seabrook to purchase the parcels for $45,000. The Conservation Commission doesn’t believe the land is worth $45,000 because it is land locked.

Meeting adjourned: 9:00 pm

Next Meeting: January 12, 2015

Respectfully submitted: Judie Walker, Clerk