

**Minutes**  
**Northampton Conservation Commission**  
**Hearing Room 18, City Hall, Northampton, Mass.**  
**January 14, 2016**

Members	Present	Time
Kevin Lake, Chair	X	
Mason Maronn		
Tim Parshall		
Tricia McGovern	X	
Jack Finn	X	
t.b.a.		
t.b.a.		
Staff	Present	Time
Sarah LaValley	X	
Aleta DeLisle	X	

<i>Meeting Opened At:</i>	<i>By:</i>
5:35 p.m.	Kevin

<i>Minutes Approved:</i>	<i>Motion By:</i>	<i>Second By:</i>	<i>Unanimous:</i>
n/a			

**Order of Business:**

**Updates and Planning for 2016**

- Multi-Use Trails and Conservation Areas
- Conservation Restrictions
- Comprehensive Surveys
- Discuss Removing Requirement to Permit Hunting at Abuza Section of Fitzgerald Lake
- Review and Approve Changes to Land Use Regulations to allow Primitive Camping at Elwell Island
- Invasives Removal and Habitat Creation Projects
- Sign LAND grant agreement for Rocky Hill Connector

Bob Zimmerman, BBC, appeared before the Commission to discuss his concern with hunting on a portion of the Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area. Bob asked the City to revoke the requirement allowing it due to safety issues and not well marked trails. Bob noted there isn't any public access to the hunting area and hunters have been seen in the wildlife blind. Bob stated that the status of Fitzgerald Lake is a conservation area and since there's no trapping of beavers due to flooding that hunting should not be allowed either.

Wayne Feiden, Director, Office of Planning and Sustainability reviewed the history of why hunting was permitted on a portion of it noting that it's not a deed restriction but is

appended to the deed and that the Conservation Commission should have the final say. Wayne noted that the rules would need to be amended and a hearing held and then it would go before City Council for approval.

Kevin stated that hearings have been held in the past regarding hunting on conservation areas and the Commission does allow it on Rte. 9 Broad Brook and at Rainbow Beach. Jack stated that other locations could be looked at as conservation commission land grows. Tricia stated that she doesn't think it should be allowed at Fitzgerald Lake but the Commission should look at locations where it could be. Upon motion by Kevin and seconded by Jack the Commission voted all in favor to request that the City Council give the Conservation Commission sole authority to approve or deny hunting on the Abuza property.

Wayne Feiden, Director, Office of Planning and Sustainability updated the Commission on land acquisitions and conservation areas including the following:

-Wayne stated that Conservation Restrictions will be put on the Duroin parcel and two Gleason properties that were acquired. Conservation Restrictions will be put on a Saw Mill Hills parcel that was acquired and one that is being acquired. An APR will be put on a parcel of land acquired from Peter Baye in the Meadows. MCCC has an APR on Sheldon Field owned by the Recreation Dept. Near Sheldon field, the City acquired land from Jasinski with the understanding that he can farm corn on it for a certain period of time.

Wayne asked the Commission for authorization to purchase a piece of land off of Old Ferry Road from the Bobala family for \$30,000. The property will be licensed to a farmer for 18 years to coincide with the length of the Jasinski license, at that time the City will investigate whether the property is needed as an expansion to Sheldon Field. Upon motion by Tricia and second by Jack the Commission voted all in favor to approve the acquisition.

Wayne reviewed the Historic Meadows property and prior acquisitions and stated he has an offer on another parcel there.

Island Rd. parcel – Wayne will go back to City Council to switch the APR for a local APR since the state didn't approve an APR on that property.

Wayne reviewed the completed bike path in the Broad Brook Coalition Conservation Area and is applying for a grant to extend it further north.

Wayne noted that CPA funding requires that a Conservation Restriction be placed on land which doesn't allow homeless people on the property so the City is being more aggressive with that matter and noted the more informal places that exist.

Wayne reviewed the open space leased to farmers noting the Agricultural Commission urged the Conservation Commission to renew the leases including the following:

- Bleiman land - the City owns and leases five acres with the condition that the licensee mows any area not farmed.
- Elwell - the commission leases a parcel. The lessee has done maintenance work crediting the lease amount.
- Wayne stated that they are trying to work with River Run to do a Community Garden (without success) and wants to look for a farmer for the ¾ acre piece.
- The lease on a parcel farmed by Parsons at Mineral Hills will be up in one year. The Commission briefly discussed that this farmer uses herbicides and has received prior complaints from neighbors over it's effects.

Wayne discussed a parcel on Ventures Field Road that is owned by the state that will be brought before the Council for a portion that will be sold to the City and the State will hold the APR. The rear of the land will be used as farming and possibly a trail. Upon motion by Kevin and seconded by Tricia the Commission voted all in favor to file legislation to the State to let the State sell to the City.

Upon motion by Tricia and seconded by Jack the Commission voted all in favor to approve renewing all the leases with the exception of the Parson's lease which the Commission will hold a future meeting to discuss further.

Executive Session under MGL C 30A §21(6) to 'Consider the Purchase, Exchange, Lease or Value of Real Property' for interests in conservation lands.

By roll call vote, the Commission entered into Executive Session at 6:50 p.m. By roll call vote, the Commission adjourned Executive Session and returned to Regular Session at 7:15 p.m.

Upon motion by Kevin and seconded by Jack the Commission voted all in favor to modify land use regulations to state that camping is prohibited except with written permission and to allow primitive camping at Elwell Island at a designated campsite. A hearing will be held in the future.

Sarah stated that she received a Hannum Brook Bi-Annual Evaluation Update regarding the Northampton Landfill.

Sarah stated that she issued an Enforcement Order on Brierwood Drive due to the ATV use. Sarah noted that they may need to do future replacement work and they will follow up with a restoration plan.

Staff is working with Laurie Sander's (Rediscovering Northampton) for her recommendation and how to proceed.

<i>Meeting Adjourned:</i>	<i>Motion By:</i>	<i>Second By:</i>	<i>Unanimous:</i>
7:30 p.m.	Kevin	Tricia	All in favor