

**CITY OF NEWARK
DELAWARE
CONSERVATION ADVISORY COMMISSION
MINUTES**

June 9, 2020

MEETING CONVENED: 7:05 p.m. Council Chambers

MEMBERS PRESENT: Co-Chair Bob McDowell (presiding), Beth Chajes, Helga Huntley, Mary Clare Matsumoto, Bob McDowell, Robyn O'Halloran, Sheila Smith

ABSENT: Chair George Irvine, Kismet Hazelwood

STAFF: Nichol Scheld, Administrative Professional I

Mr. McDowell called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM MAY 12, 2020

Mr. McDowell asked for the approval of the May 12, 2020 meeting minutes.

Ms. Matsumoto stated on page two the sentence should read, "Mr. Spadafino explained that the committee also discussed the removal of invasive species. He believed that the removal plan could possibly take up to two or three years".

Ms. Matsumoto questioned on page five if the last paragraph under Mr. Hurd's presentation where it stated Mr. McDowell asked about shade trees. Ms. Smith clarified the paragraph in question was in the correct location as the discussion was about adding green infrastructure to the building plan that Mr. Hurd was discussing. Ms. Smith stated she asked Mr. Hurd to address trees and then Mr. McDowell asked the question.

Dr. Huntley asked to include the names of the individuals she suggested for the NET commission to Mr. Fortner to be entered into the record. Since the individuals were not named at the May meeting, the minutes were not reflected to include their names. Dr. Huntley listed her recommended members as follows:

- Cristina Archer
- Michael Chajes
- Jeremy Firestone
- Steven Hegedus
- Willett Kempton
- Ajay Prasad

MOTION BY MS. MATSUMOTO, SECONDED BY MS. SMITH: TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS AMENDED.

MOTION PASSED. VOTE: 6 TO 0.

AYE – CHAJES, HUNTLEY, MATSUMOTO, MCDOWELL, O'HALLORAN, SMITH.
NAY– 0.
ABSENT– IRVINE, HAZELWOOD.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

3. CURTIS MILL PARK – SHELIA SMITH

Ms. Smith requested assistance with a project she had started two years ago as a result of a complaint received by the Delaware Ornithological Society. The complaint was about goose chasers and if geese chasers were violating the migratory bird treaty. There has been a mixture of migratory and non-migratory geese population.

A connection within the Department of Agriculture which oversees the migratory bird treaty was contacted. The representative stated that the use of goose chasers was not illegal, but some groups disagreed with the practice.

Ms. Smith then contacted Tim Filasky, Director of Public Works and Water Resources. She stated that Mr. Filasky advised there was some type of algae issue at the Newark Reservoir. To counteract the algae problem, the City engaged the use of geese chasers in an attempt to reduce the amount of time and population of geese that congregate in the area.

Ms. Smith also spoke with the Parks and Recreation Department to discuss the pond's edge. She felt that grasses along un-mowed edges would deter the geese from gathering or possibly gather in less numbers. Ms. Smith added that the geese need quick access for safety from predators.

Ms. Smith noted the four pond locations: Curtis Mill Park, the water facility, White Clay Creek and Mill Race Trail. Ms. Smith made a proposal to Mr. Filasky to let the natural vegetation grow and also add additional vegetation. She met on-site with representatives Kelly Gill (Xerces Society, a national insect conservation group), Bill McAvoy (Delaware Fish and Wildlife), and Jim White, Delaware Nature Society.

The plan was to start with one pond by applying the following protocols:

- Reduce pond edge mowing
- Identify and control invasive plants
- Establish "mowed strips" for visitor comfort
- Plant trees or shrubs to eliminate space requiring management

Ms. Smith stated that the plan would help raise the profile of the project so that it would not just be her trying to communicate with the community about the execution of the plan.

Mr. McDowell voiced support for the plan and believed it could be joined with Reforestation Day to include the purchase of the plants as needed. He suggested to do one entire pond as a visual demonstration to show the goal of the plan.

Ms. Smith explained that she has a verbal agreement with Mr. Filasky to execute the plan on two edges of a pond. Dr. Huntley was concerned that implementing the plan on just two edges of a pond would not show the effectiveness of the plan. Without the other edges altered, the geese could relocate

to the unaltered parts of the pond. Ms. Smith agreed but noted Mr. Filasky would first make sure that the proposed plant material could be positively managed.

Ms. Smith and Mr. McDowell agreed to make the plan part of the Reforestation Day program and to use CAC funds to purchase the plant materials. After further discussion, it was agreed that it did not have to be decided at this meeting. Ms. Smith would like to have Tom Zaleski, Parks Superintendent, Certified Horticulturalist, on board. Dr. Huntley did not believe they needed to postpone the decision. Ms. Scheld reminded the commission a notice of the vote needed to be advertised prior to the actual vote.

Ms. Matsumoto asked if Ms. Smith had a cost estimate. Ms. Smith did not. Ms. Smith had assumed she would use \$300 of her own funds to purchase the plants. However, more funds would help grow the project into a larger scale.

Dr. Huntley suggested taking a vote to state the CAC agrees to take on the project and then determine what financial contributions could be made in the future with proper notice. Ms. Matsumoto agreed to donate her time with the plantings.

Mr. McDowell suggested Ms. Smith, with the support of the CAC, research plants, species of plants and cost for plant material for further consideration at the next meeting. Ms. Smith stated she would advise Mr. Filasky and Mr. Zaleski the CAC would facilitate the plan.

4. MONTHLY CONSERVATION ARTICLE WITH THE NEWARK POST – SHELIA SMITH

Mr. McDowell praised Ms. O'Halloran for her June article posted in the Newark Post. Mr. McDowell wanted to review the roster for the remainder of the year. Ms. Smith stated she would be covering invasive species for July and Mr. McDowell for August.

Dr. Huntley stated the Newark Post editor provided preferred guidelines for articles not to be written in "first person" or "second person". She felt Ms. O'Halloran's article was a strong argument from an "I" and "We" perspective which was better than a factual third person perspective. Dr. Huntley questioned if they will be continued to be allowed to submit articles in such a fashion.

Ms. Smith stated she had not received any feedback from the editor. She believed the "rules" previously provided by the Newark Post were just suggestions. Ms. Smith also praised Ms. O'Halloran for reporting on work done by University of Delaware students.

Mr. McDowell added the trees and whips planted on Reforestation Day at Reed Park were doing very well. He will be adding upcoming events and items in his article.

Ms. Smith reiterated the list of upcoming articles:

- July – Invasive Species, Shelia Smith
- August – Reforestation, Bob McDowell
- September – Recycling, Helga Huntley
- October – Stormwater/Runoff, Beth Chajes
- November – Sustainability Updates; Helga Huntley

- December – Health Effects of the Environment, Robyn O'Halloran

Ms. Smith offered to help Dr. Huntley with the November article if needed. Ms. O'Halloran stated her topic may change as she just submitted an article this month pertaining to health effects. Dr. Huntley believed it would be appropriate to move the update of the Sustainability Plan in January because as that is when the last published update was done.

5. PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT REPORTS

Ms. Smith received the plant list for the Rodney Project. She had contacted Joe Spadafino, Director of Parks and Recreation, regarding the tree ordinance. Ms. Smith believed the trees along Hillside Road at the location of the Dickinson Project within the fenced property were not being protected. Mr. Spadafino explained those trees were being removed.

Dr. Huntley asked if anyone had an update to Planning Area 7. Ms. Matsumoto stated it did not pass and the land would not be considered for annexation at this time.

Ms. Smith asked if Ms. Matsumoto knew why the City decided not to move forward. Ms. Matsumoto stated the vote was 3 to 4 and one comment was the City did not need to have two different types of residents. If the vote passed, the annexed area would have to provide their own snow removal, trash service, street repairs and be managed by a homeowners association.

Ms. Matsumoto thought some were concerned about the impact on current residents. Some residents did not want the area to be expanded and some residents did agree to the expansion.

6. OLD/NEW BUSINESS

Dr. Huntley stated nothing had changed with proposed rewrite of the animal ordinance. The next step was to meet with the Mayor and City Solicitor to discuss the parameters of points to rewrite.

Dr. Huntley requested a few months to work on the topic. Ms. Smith asked if the ordinance referred to animal control. Dr. Huntley answered she wanted to focus on the parts of the ordinance pertaining to prohibiting bird feeders or habitats for wild animals.

7. NEXT MEETING – JULY 14, 2020

Ms. O'Halloran would like to discuss Community Day at the July 14th meeting. She had previously told Dr. Irvine she would take on the program, but she did not know all of the specifics regarding that day.

8. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Nichol Scheld
Administrative Professional I

/dmp