

RYE CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Natural Resource Inventory Work Shop
Tuesday, April 14, 2020
1:00 p.m. – Via ZOOM

Members Present: Chair Suzanne McFarland, Vice-Chair Sally King, Jaci Grote, Heather Reed, Danna Truslow, Karen Oliver and Jeff Gardner (was not present during roll call)

I. Call to Order

Chair McFarland called the work session to order at 1:06 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Alternates Karen Oliver and Danna Truslow were seated. (*quorum present*)

II. Right to Know Law during State of Emergency

Statement by Chair McFarland:

As chair of the Conservation Commission, I find that due the State of Emergency declared by the Governor as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and in accordance with the Governor's Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, this public body is authorized to meet electronically.

Please note that there is no physical location to observe and listen contemporaneously to this meeting, which was authorized pursuant to the Governor's Emergency Order. However, in accordance with the Emergency Order, I am confirming that we are:

*Utilizing Zoom for this electronic meeting. All members of the Commission have the ability to communicate contemporaneously during this meeting through this platform, and the public has access to contemporaneously listen and, if necessary, participate in this or by clicking on the following website address: www.zoom.com
Meeting ID: 918-0590-9281 Password: 038701*

We previously gave notice to the public of the necessary information for accessing the meeting, including how to access the meeting using Zoom or telephonically. Instructions have also been provided on the website of the Commission at town.rye.nh.us on the Conservation Commission page and click on agenda for this meeting.

In the event the public is unable to access the meeting, the meeting will be adjourned and rescheduled.

Please note that all votes that are taken during this meeting shall be done by roll call vote.

Attendance by Roll Call:

- Suzanne McFarland
- Heather Reed
- Danna Truslow
- Jaci Grote
- Karen Oliver
- Sally King

(All members noted that there was no one else present in the room with them for the work session.)

III. Approval of Minutes for April 7, 2020

Motion by Jaci Grote to accept the minutes of April 7, 2020 as written. Seconded by Heather Reed.

Roll Call: Karen Oliver – Aye; Jaci Grote – Aye; Danna Truslow – Aye; Heather Reed; Sally King – Aye; Suzanne McFarland – Aye

Motion passed.

Note: Jeff Gardner joined the meeting at 1:12 p.m.

IV. Natural Resources Inventory (NRI)

Homework for the members from the last meeting was to review the NRI's of other towns for discussion at this meeting.

❖ Epping

Likes:

- Demographic data
- Incorporation of relevant reports in one place
- The overall description and short history in the beginning made the document more interesting and tied in the rest of the document.
- Section on stormwater management
- The conversational tone in which it was written was not overly complicated. Terms used were very understandable. It explained why the information given was important as to how it effects the Town and what it does with regard to resource protection.
- After each resource feature there was a description and recommendations immediately following, which could be used as action items. This allowed for someone to pull out a particular section without having to read the whole document.
- Section on beneficial insects
- Fisheries section also included
- Overall easy to read
- Included threats to water resources

- Inclusion of natural communities; plant species and rare animals
- Detailed information about the town's conservation land
- Link content to the specific page
- Large section on invasive species
- Identified areas of highest ecological value, including local, regional and State
- Overall recommendations at the end of document, such as; working with surrounding communities to identify and conserve wildlife corridors.

Interesting Note: Page 33 states that a Natural Resource Inventory has to be done for subdivision or site plan approval.

Dislikes:

- Several typos
- More figures could be included
- Text heavy
- Dates were used (outdated)

❖ **Campton**

Likes:

- Content was good
- Embedded maps were helpful
- Tables in the habitat descriptions made it easy to read (page 20-23)
- Historic and Cultural Resources Section had a link to the Historic Society webpage which may be an easy way to cut material if the document gets too cumbersome.
- Good section on conservation land
- Outlined different ways land is protected (conservation techniques)
- Tables for conservation land were easy to read.
- Included potential water contamination sources and management risks
- Included protecting groundwater

Note: Page 2.1 and 2.3 - For watersheds and surface waters there was an explanation, chart and a map without recommendations. With this document, a reader would have to go to the end to tie it all together with recommendations.

Dislikes:

- Format was difficult
- Was not very detailed
- Covered a lot of information in a shallow way
- Not reader friendly and hard to follow
- Front page was too busy
- Table of Contents did not have page numbers
- Could not click on a link to get to a section

❖ Moultonborough

Likes:

- Nicely laid out
- Introductory language talked about what the report is for and how it is to be used (Executive Summary)
- Listed priority conservation
- Residential stewardship and public education section
- Stated “Prime Wetland” designation

Note: Rye’s NRI is being written for the residents of the community and will be used as a tool for the Conservation Commission, as well as the Planning Board, Zoning Board, Board of Selectmen. It should be a working document that will change every two to three years.

The text was quite extensive with explanations for some terms. Rye’s document may need some technical detail in some areas. Reports could be referred to for some of that explanation instead of including it in the NRI.

Dislikes:

- Too much like a technical consulting report
- Was not an approachable document
- Was too complicated and would not draw in a reader
- Disclaimers and data limitations should be at the end of the document

Jeff Gardner left the meeting at 1:35 p.m.

❖ Washington

Likes:

- A lot of detail but did not overwhelm the reader with data
- Wetlands section was good
- Includes forest, soils, streams and estuaries
- Information and content are very good
- List of goals at beginning
- Historical features data
- Value for each resource
- Dam section was good
- Tax parcel overlay

Dislikes:

- Should have more pictures
- Text heavy – too wordy
- Long document

Note: One of the NRI's had a link that did not work, which is important to keep in mind because this is a working document.

Rare and uncommon plants and animals should have a link to show what the plant/animal looks like.

The Town of Washington's NRI had the tax parcel overlay, which may be a value to residents who want to identify their own property. It will also show developed and undeveloped areas.

❖ **Any other towns**

None

V. Discussion on Rye's Master Plan – Chapter 7 – Natural Resources

Member Reed stated that this chapter mirrors what the Commission is discussing right now. A lot of data can be pulled from this chapter. Also, included in the chapter is a Climate Adaptation thread, which would be helpful for the Commission to look at (Recommendations for Climate Adaptation Actions). She noted that the language throughout the chapter was easy to read. There was also a piece on the historical and cultural data.

Member Oliver agreed it was a great chapter. It was educational and she liked how it was broken out into different sections; such as, watersheds and different water areas.

Member Reed pointed out that the chapter had a section called 'NH Wildlife Action Plan' which addressed types of habitat. She reiterated that a lot of information they are trying to gather for the NRI is already in this chapter.

Chair McFarland commend that the Town of Hampton has a chapter like this in their master plan. They are trying to formulate an inventory from that chapter.

Member Grote asked why this chapter could not be referred to as Rye's NRI. She worries about having the same information in too many places, as each document needs to be updated and there could be conflicts. She asked how the documents would be managed.

Chair McFarland explained that the master plan is not as flexible with the ability to change things. There should be a smaller document so that as new science becomes evident it can be imbedded into the NRI. New information will be put into the NRI first because the master plan is not updated as often.

Member Truslow suggested that the detail in Chapter 7 of the Master Plan could be made more readable and could refer to the NRI once it is updated.

Member Oliver clarified that Member Truslow is saying that the Master Plan would change and have less detail. All the detail may more appropriately belong in the NRI. The Master Plan would have to change at the same time the NRI was created.

Chair McFarland noted the Master Plan has been voted on and adopted.

Member Grote expressed her concern with the Town having so many documents that have to be amended and changed over the years because they are all hooked together. In most cases, zoning and land use regulations are driven by statutes that can change. She suggested the Commission look at Rye's Land Use Regulations and Chapter 7 when drafting the NRI. Speaking to Member Truslow, she asked if what they are saying is the Master Plan is the policy document and the NRI is the document that contains the information that supports the policy. She asked if the NRI is the document that changes.

Member Truslow stated that both documents change but having it in the master plan is like enabling legislation. If it is in the master plan and it is a goal, then it can be done. The data can be referred to in the NRI and summarized in the Master Plan.

VI. Draft Outline Review and Discussion

Member Reed presented and reviewed an outline that she has been working on for Rye's NRI.

Goals:

Member Reed presented goals listed in the outline that were based off Washington's NRI.

- a. To promote the conservation, protection and responsible management of the natural resources of the Town
- b. To protect and enhance the ecological integrity of the Town's diverse natural communities and wildlife habitats
- c. To protect the Town's water quality, wetlands and aquifers
- d. To protect the natural ability of the landscape to withstand flooding, thus reducing the risk to residential and recreational areas
- e. To protect and help sustain small farms in the present and in the future
- f. To protect the productive capacity of forest land for its current and future benefits
- g. To maintain recreational opportunities through protection and connection
- h. To protect the Town's historic sites and rural landscapes. (not buildings)
- i. To sustain the quality of life and rural character of the Town.

VII. Next Steps

- Members to work on 'Purpose and Goals' for the next meeting
- Review Chapter 7 of the Master Plan
 - Some of the goals may be appropriate to incorporate in the NRI
 - Follow the premise that the Master Plan is the policy document
 - Note information that may be too detailed for the Master Plan and may be more appropriate for the NRI
 - Consider things that should be included in the outline

VIII. Bills

- Eversource – Goss Farm - \$19.34
- RCCD – West Road Acquisition - \$1,972

Motion by Jaci Grote to pay the bills for Eversource and RCCD. Seconded by Sally King.

Roll Call: Heather Reed – Aye; Karen Oliver – Aye; Danna Truslow – Aye; Jaci Grote – Aye; Sally King – Aye; Suzanne McFarland – Aye

Motion passed.

Adjourn

Motion by Jaci Grote to adjourn at 2:25 p.m. Seconded by Sally King.

Roll Call: Danna Truslow – Aye; Karen Oliver – Aye; Heather Reed – Aye;

Jaci Grote – Aye; Sally King – Aye; Suzanne McFarland – Aye

Motion passed.

Respectfully Submitted,
Dyana F. Ledger