

RYE CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Monday, March 21, 2022
5:00 p.m. – Rye Town Hall

Members Present: *Chair Suzanne McFarland, Susan Shepcaro, Jaci Grote, Heather Reed, Mike Garvan, and Alternates Jeff Gardner and Karen Oliver*

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair McFarland called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m. and led the pledge of allegiance.

II. PUBLIC HEARING

The purpose of the hearing is to discuss acquisition of a Conservation purchase of 3.6127 acres of land at 0 Pioneer Road, Map 022, Lot 073 owned by David M. Junkins, Trustee of the Grace L. Junkins Trust.

At 5:03 p.m., Chair McFarland opened the public hearing.

Sandra Chororos, resident, reviewed the map showing the location of the parcel.

Chair McFarland explained this is an estate. The heirs do not live in Rye and they are selling the property.

Member Garvan noted that the property the Commission is purchasing is contiguous with conservation land at Seavey Acres, which is 58-acres. There is also a town owned piece contiguous with Seavey Acres of about 11-acres. With the acquisition of this property, the Town will have the entire northern shoreline of Berry's Brook, with the exception of a 1+/-acre lot that has an existing home that is owned by the Junkins. This will give control over possible pollution and provide access recreationally to the public. He pointed out that there are also many wildlife reasons, as he has seen nesting geese and ducks, and migratory geese and ducks in both the fall and spring. There are deer in this area. There has also been reports of coyotes on the greater Seavey Acres.

It was noted that Seavey Acres is Tax Map 022, Lots 74 and 69. Lot 73 is contiguous with Lot 74.

Member Garvan also noted that the State stocks over 5,000 Brown Trout in this area every year. It's a popular fly-fishing site. It's fly-fishing only in that area with a single hook, no bait and no lures. He continued that there might be some access to the property through the right-of-way, as Lot 72 (with the existing house) does not go all the way to Brackett Road. However, if the new owners of Lot 72 post their land, it would be very difficult for fishermen access.

Chair McFarland pointed out that the highest observable tide line is on the other side of the stone wall, which is the property line.

Member Grote asked if there is a plan for trails.

Member Garvan commented that he thinks they should plan for trails.

Member Oliver stated that this particular property was rated as one of the most important conservation parcels.

Chair McFarland noted that it's one of the sixth contiguous prioritized habitat block in Rye and is recognized by the State. It's part of the wildlife corridor.

Member Garvan shared water resource maps with the group. He pointed out that it's part of the estuary and priority protection area. It's an interesting and valuable piece of property.

Member Grote stated that the Conservation Commission has posted the Natural Resource Inventory (NRI) on the town's website. The NRI was done for conservation land and it also addresses wildlife corridors. It's a good resource for the reason why conservation exists.

Chair McFarland noted that the NRI is for the whole town, including the Isles of Shoals.

Ms. Chororos asked if there is any interest in opening up the water side to kayaking and things of that nature.

Chair McFarland replied that they have talked about that.

Member Garvan stated that he thinks they would need some sort of boardwalk.

Member Gardner pointed out that it's a tricky place to kayak because it only sees water at high tide for a couple of hours.

Member Garvan stated that he thinks a kayak could be launched from the State right-of-way off Brackett.

Member Oliver pointed out that people can get there by canoe and kayak from the Odiorne Bridge. She stated it's worth mentioning that the acquisition of this property is the kind of thing that happens when people pay attention and work hard.

Member Shepcaro commented that without Member Gardner's help, the RCC wouldn't have been able to seize this opportunity.

Member Oliver stated that with the way the market is now, this was one of those things where there had to be people doing things on an as needed basis.

Chair McFarland pointed out that the Conservation Commission found out about the property on the weekend. They went to the Select Board on Monday, wrote the purchase and sale on Wednesday and found out on Friday. It went very fast.

Member Grote noted that all of this was possible because the Town has confidence that the Rye Conservation Commission will buy property that is significant and meets the conservation mission of the Town. The town's people support this through bond articles, so they should be thanked as well.

The Commission agreed.

Ms. Chororos asked about the next steps moving forward.

Chair McFarland explained that the Select Board approved the purchase. The RCC walked the property with the Select Board. A public hearing is now being held and then RCC will close on the property. By the end of April, it should be conservation land. After that time, RCC can start the process of deciding what to do with the property.

Member Grote pointed out that RCC always tries to make sure the public knows about acquisitions through the newsletter and Rye Magazine. They will also invite the public to walk the land with RCC.

III. OTHER BUSINESS

Chair McFarland reported that the trail is finished at Cedar Run. The plaque will be ordered and the rock is coming. She suggested doing a Cedar Run Trailgate before Brown Lane Farm.

Member Grote agreed.

Member Garvan pointed out that it's unbelievable how many deer are at Cedar Run. During the first work party there were about twenty deer charging by. He suggested that this would be a good place where dogs should be leashed during nesting season.

The Commission agreed. This will be addressed at the next monthly meeting, so other commission members and the public can weigh-in on the topic.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Jaci Grote to adjourn the public hearing at 5:26 p.m. Seconded by Karen Oliver. All in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,
Dyana F Ledger