

**TOWN OF CHARLOTTE  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
OCTOBER 17, 2013**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Jeff McDonald, Chair; Gerald Bouchard, Paul Landler, Peter Joslin, Linda Radimer, Marty Illick. Absent: Donna Stearns.

**ADMINISTRATION:** Tom Mansfield, Zoning Administrator.

**OTHERS:** Joann Cummings, Fritz Tegatz, Bob Hyams, Heather McKim, Charlotte Citizen, and others.

**AGENDA ITEMS:**

- **Consent Agenda: Jason and Jensa Bushey Sketch Plan letter for a 2 lot subdivision at 648 Bingham Brook Road**
- **Discussion with the Conservation Commission regarding policy and procedures for site evaluations**
- **Work Session on Revisions to Town Plan**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. McDonald, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

**APPROVE REGULAR AGENDA AND CONSENT AGENDA**

The Regular Agenda was approved.

The following Consent Agenda item was removed for further discussion:

- Sketch plan letter for Jason and Jensa Bushey for a 2 lot subdivision at 648 Bingham Brook Road.

Mr. Joslin expressed concern regarding Note 3 of the draft Bushey Sketch Plan letter regarding the Lot 2 building envelope. It should not be within the existing swale, said Mr. Joslin.

Ms. Cummings said that the Conservation Commission had requested a hydrology study for that area of the lot during the October 3<sup>rd</sup> public hearing.

Ms. Illick said that the Town maps didn't show wetlands in that location. Mr. Hyams asked if it was a 'buyers beware' situation if the wetlands were not on the Town maps.

Mr. Bouchard said that at the October 3<sup>rd</sup> hearing he had pointed out that if a hurricane, such as Irene, occurred again then that area would flood.

**MOTION by Mr. Joslin, seconded by Ms. Illick, to approve the Jason and Jensa Bushey Sketch Plan letter for a 2 lot subdivision at 648 Bingham Brook Road, with the following change:**

- **Note 3, reword to read: "Based on the Planning Commission's recommendation at the site visit it didn't make sense to put a building envelope for Lot 2 in the swale."**

**VOTE: 6 ayes, 1 absent (Ms. Stearns); motion carried.**

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

**MINUTES: October 3, 2013**

Tabled.

**DISCUSSION WITH THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION REGARDING POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR SITE EVALUATIONS**

Ms. Cummings reviewed a Conservation Commission plan to draft a site assessment document and check list to make sure that the commission provides sufficient information to the Planning Commission. Points identified included:

- Protocols for impacts to natural resources that would tie into the Significant Natural Resources Habitat map. The map needs to be updated.
- Draft review process language in easily understandable format to be approved for inclusion in the Town Plan.
- Develop a check list based on various sources to determine high public value resources.
- Provide the information to the Planning Commission prior to public hearings on applications.

Mr. McDonald said that the habitat map was not a regulatory map like the zoning map(s). Language would need to be crafted to reflect that it was a useful tool, suggested Mr. McDonald. Ms. Cummings explained that the language would allow the map to be useful as a static planning map that would authenticate the data.

Mr. Hyams pointed out that the 2008 map was an electronic database. The polygons should be updated on a semi-annual basis using all reports approved by the Planning Commission. That would update the database, said Mr. Hyams.

Ms. Cummings said that a protocol was needed so the commission could populate the database utilizing ecologist's assessments that were hired by landowners. The commission was proposing to develop a written check list so that physical assessments were done more thoroughly, said Ms. Cummings.

Ms. Cummings reviewed Land Use regulations, page 77 and page 83. There was a difference between the Land Use regulations and subdivision regulations. The commission proposed to meld it all together, said Ms. Cummings. Mr. McDonald stated that the Town Plan had to be followed. The protocols were a guide, said Mr. McDonald.

Ms. Illick reviewed Land Use regulations, page 77, A-I, that clarified what the Planning Commission does. The GSI tool was used by the Conservation Commission to gather information and request that a consultant/expert do assessment. She would like to have a demonstration of the GSI tool at a Planning Commission meeting, said Ms. Illick. Mr. Joslin added that all the data should be assessable by the public as well.

Ms. Radimer explained that the Planning Commission was not getting enough actual facts of any one parcel during the application hearing process. For example, she tried to get information on the Beldock property using the electronic map. She got to a picture on the screen and couldn't get any further data. That parcel wasn't highlighted as anything significant. It should have noted the Beldock parcel next to it, said Ms. Radimer. Ms. Cummings said that the Conservation Commission would work on a process to have that type of data on the map. Ms. Illick said that there has to be more data than just wildlife habitat, which was one out of the 9 points the Planning Commission considers.

Following further discussion, Ms. Cummings said a VNRC work shop for property developers was done and she had asked for a workshop for town committees as an educational opportunity.

Mr. Tegatz said that the Conservation Commission met monthly. There needed to be coordination to get the Conservation Commission on the front end of the Planning Commission process in order to provide information in a timely manner, said Mr. Tegatz. Mr. McDonald suggested the Conservation Commission contact staff regarding the application schedule.

Mr. McDonald said that both the Conservation Commission and Town staff needed to have a level of expertise regarding available resources, how to assess those resources, and to instruct an applicant what resources were available.

**TASKS:**

- Need to educate the Conservation Commission and Town staff to a level of expertise related to available resources and how to use tools to access those resources.
- Conservation Commission to develop informational materials and brochures re: what the Conservation Commission does, and what planning tools were available.
- Schedule a demonstration by the Conservation Commission to the Planning Commission on the use the electronic maps, GSI tools, and icons (use the McGinnis property as an example).
- Identify at what threshold at least three principles would trigger hiring a consultant.
- Updating the data base for the map in the Town Plan.
- Add disclaimer language that the Significant Habitat Map was an advisory map, not a regulatory map.

The Planning Commission thanked the Conservation Commission members for their input.

**WORK SESSION ON REVISIONS TO TOWN PLAN**

At 7:54 p.m., the Planning Commission began discussion of the proposed revisions to the Town Plan.

**DELIBERATIONS**

The Planning Commission entered Deliberative Session at p.m.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The Planning Commission meeting was adjourned at p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Kathlyn L. Furr, Recording Secretary