

**CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

STEPHEN WASHBURN, CHAIRMAN  
CATHERINE WALSH, VICE CHAIR  
CARLY ROCKLEN, TREASURER  
JOHN GEAR  
HEATHER MILLER  
PETER BAMBER



**ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNER/  
CONSERVATION AGENT**

HOLLY JONES, MSCI

**OFFICE MANAGER/SR. ADMIN. ASST.**  
LYNN MARCHAND

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**Joint Conservation Commission and Board of Selectmen Hybrid Meeting  
November 30, 2021**

**7:15 P.M.**

**Town Hall, Selectmen's Chambers and via GoToMeeting platform**

**Present in person: Stephen Washburn, John Gear, Peter Bamber, Catherine Walsh**

**Present remotely: Carly Rocklen and Heather Miller**

**Also Present: Holly Jones, Environmental Planner/Conservation Agent and Mr. Paul Halkiotis,  
Planning Director.**

The November 30, 2021 meeting was conducted in a hybrid manner with members meeting in Town Hall in the Selectmen's Chambers and remotely via the GoToMeeting software.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Stephen Washburn at 7:15 p.m. Ms. Jones introduced each of the Commissioners participating in person and remotely.

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**1. Discussion of CPC (Community Preservation Committee) application and financing recommendation for future Riverfront Park in South Norwood; request for Selectmen's approval on Saint Street Lot Project**

Ms. Jones thanked the Selectmen for meeting them that evening. She said the Saint Street lot was purchased in 2019 with funds from CPC funds. The Town has undertaken a planning process to design a vision for what is currently a vacant, wooded/forested area of land to become a resource for more people in the Town. The Conservation Commission has submitted a proposal to the CPC for funding to move forward with the permitting and construction phase of the park and they are seeking the support of the Selectmen. She displayed a visual of the final concept design of the Riverfront Park. She outlined the proposed features including several stabilized soil accessible paths which will be ADA compliant/wheelchair accessible, parking and handicapped parking, boardwalks, (near the school) an outdoor classroom and nature playground with benches and picnic tables, and signage to help connect it to nearby Endean and Elliot Field to direct people who may be walking from parking or the trail areas.

Ms. Walsh commented on the community engagement and they received substantial feedback and comments about what they wanted in the park. Other Commissioners underscored Ms. Walsh's comments. One of the Selectmen asked for more details about the community engagement process. Ms. Jones said they had conducted three virtual meetings for community members, advertising through direct mailings as well as neighbors going door-to-door, at the scheduled clean-up at the site on Earth Day, there were lawn signs at the end of the 3 Saint St. Entrances as well as Endean and Elliot parks, a QR code which took you to a short survey for folks that couldn't make it to meetings, 1 in-person meeting at the existing outdoor playground at Elliot Park, and the preliminary design meeting with the Commission and Selectmen. Ms. Donahue compliment Ms. Jones and the Commission for their outreach noting that they sought input from the people that lived there, from Town residents, the Trails Commission, from

bicyclists, and from Town Depts. and Boards. Ms. Jones noted that the CPC funding included monies specifically for the outreach which made it possible. Ms. Donahue also noted Mr. Halkiotis' contributions on the many technical issues involved. Mr. Halkiotis stated that Ms. Jones is currently seeking a conservation restriction which will restrict what the property can be used for (passive recreation in this case). Wildings Trust, a private non-profit, will hold and enforce the conservation restriction in perpetuity. CPC funding included the cost for Wildings Trust. It is a one-time, \$10,000 endowment. He explained that the law is written in a way that the restriction applies even to the Town and the Town is not allowed to police the restriction on themselves and that's why a third party had to be brought in. Ms. Jones said another service that was provided by Wildings is the documentation of the existing conditions of the park so they can see if there is any encroachment or other issues. She said they will likely take pictures again after construction is complete. Phase III would be the Hawes Brook bridge as the Commission does not yet own the property on the opposite side. Mr. Halkiotis discussed the financial information related to the park stating they had applied to the CPC for 1.6 million dollars to turn the conceptual design to construction drawings and the actual construction of the park. He outlines some of the work involved including removing invasive plant species, adding native plantings, planting of nuts, berries, bushes, and trees in order to provide forage and habitat for wildlife and as part of the elementary school outdoor education. He noted that currently you cannot access the property from the river due to a steep drop and heavy vegetation so the clearly would provide visual access to the river and a small portion of the area will be graded down to also provide physical access to and from the river and allow canoeing and fishing. Signage will also be part of the construction which will include a history of the property. Ms. Jones added that there were discussions between herself with the General Manager, the Treasurer, and Mr. Halkiotis about alternative funding including some funds from CPC, some from grants, general fund monies, and some from bonding. Mr. Mazzucco said they would be putting together several different models of funding.

**MOTION: Ms. Donahue made a motion to approve the request.  
Motion was seconded by Mr. Lane.**

Mr. Plasko asked if they had thought about how to move forward if they do not receive all of the funding and who would maintain the park. Ms. Jones discussed the different financial options and the possibility of a friends group to be in charge of maintenance, which would be comprised of some of the neighbors that spearheaded the purchase of the park as well as some help from DPW.

**The Chair called for a vote. The Motion passed unanimously.**

## **2. Naming of future riverfront park. request for naming approval**

Ms. Donahue said she had asked around and everyone she asked responded that they would love for the park to be named after Bernard Cooper, the (late) former Assistant Town Manager and she nominated him for the park to be named after him.

**MOTION: made by Ms. Donahue to name the park, in some fashion to be determined, to be named Bernard Cooper or Bernie Cooper Riverfront Park**

**Motion was seconded by Mr. Plasko.**

**The Chair called for a vote. The Motion passed unanimously. 6-0**

The Conservation Commission also took a (roll call vote).

**The Motion passed unanimously.**

**The Chairman adjourned the meeting.**

**Next virtual meeting: December 1, 2021 at 7:30 p.m.**