

**Town of Foxborough  
Conservation Commission Minutes  
October 21, 2013**

**Members Present:** Robert Boette (Chair), Eric Nelson (Clerk), Douglas Davis, Judith Johnson and James Marsh  
**Members Absent:** Allan Curtis (Vice Chair) and Valerie Marshall  
**Staff Present:** Jane Sears Pierce, Conservation Manager  
**Others Present:** See attached sign-in sheet

**Meeting Opened**

Bob Boette opened the meeting, held in the Boyden Library, at 7:00 p.m.

**Conservation Subdivision Design Workshop**, presented by Randall Arendt, FRTPI, ASLA  
Randall Arendt presented a workshop for the Planning Board and Conservation Commission, with examples of “conservation subdivision design,” together with a four-step methodology of laying out residential developments around the central organizing principle of open space conservation and natural resource protection. He began by reviewing Foxborough’s current Open Space Residential Development (OSRD) regulations, explaining that the bylaw as written puts the Planning Board in the position to turn down good proposals, adding that he had sent a detailed memo to Sharon Wason regarding his review of the OSRD.

For good conservation subdivision design, he explained that the land should tell us what should be done on a property. If a buffer is needed, that is ok; if not needed, then specify why. Many towns now mandate conservation design (which admittedly could be a “tough sell” at town meeting). He believed that the tables should be turned to make the usual comprehensive plan’s one acre lot subdivision a special permit and make conservation design a permitted use, rather than a special permit. According to the State legislature, cluster subdivisions no longer need special permits.

Mr. Arendt explained that there was no rational reason for the town’s 800 foot limit on cul-de-sacs. This limit is just a variation of 1920 subdivision regulations that required no more than 600 foot long cul-de-sacs, since this was the length of fire hoses at that time. He indicated that Foxborough’s open space criteria were demographically low (30-40%) and recommended aiming for 50% open space, not including wetlands (or allowing a certain percent of wetlands in the open space land). Also, communal wells and/or septic systems located in a common open space area with tiny lots just large enough for a house could lower road costs and only increase drain line costs. Shorter roads with “flag” (pork chop) lots save infrastructure and maintenance costs. He advised that easements are preferred to covenants or deed restrictions (as in Foxborough’s bylaw).

You can’t create a good design until you know what is on the ground, so the process should begin with a site walk by the engineer, landowner, developer and local officials, with the resources map in hand (see #1, below), often overlaid on an aerial photo. It is a good idea to invite abutters to the site walk to bring them in early in the process. The design should not include restrictions, just standards regarding the type of habitat to preserve.

Mr. Arendt recommended the following four step process:

1. Create a detailed site map, including the following two categories of resources:
  - a. unbuildable areas (i.e. wet, steep); and
  - b. areas that add value and character to the property (i.e. views, hemlock groves, barn, stone walls, etc.).

Then, on the developable land that is left:

2. Locate house sites for value, marketability, livability;

3. "Connect the dots" with streets and trails; and
4. Draw in the lot lines.

When considering a subdivision's design, a sketch plan (not a "preliminary plan"), that is conceptual and to scale, should be created. Mr. Arendt explained that preliminary plans are expensive; a 10 lot subdivision preliminary plan costs around \$50,000. A conceptual plan only costs around \$5,000.

### **Continued Hearing, Regulations for Foxborough's Wetland Bylaw (Article IX)**

**Motion** was made by Judi Johnson to continue the hearing to the Commission's next meeting on November 18, 2013; seconded by Doug Davis. **Vote: 5-0-0**

### **Conservation Rental Properties**

Jane gave a progress update, as detailed in her Manager's Report and spreadsheet of quotes, costs of actual work, etc., reviewing the following:

#### 89 North Street

1. Electrical - Webber Electric had completed all of the required electrical repairs.
2. Plumbing - Bill Murphy had repaired the plumbing issues.

#### 120 Spring Street

1. Electrical - Webber Electric completed all of the electrical repairs.
2. Plumbing - The plumbing work was finished.
3. Appliances - Al researched the costs for three appliances, advising that Sears had the best prices.
4. Carpeting - Chuck Anselone (Anselone Flooring) gave a quote of \$1,383 to install carpet in all of the bedrooms and the upstairs hall.

She advised the Commission that before the house could be rented, the back steps had to be installed and the septic system should probably be pumped. She explained that she had worked on the RFP with Bob Cutler (i.e. rearranging sections, changing dates, etc.).

The Commission reviewed how the necessary/required house repairs should/could be funded. Judi wanted to change next year's revolving account figures to allow the Commission to access rental funds earlier in the year, since there were still many outstanding repairs that were needed (in particular, the repairs needed at 89 North Street).

### **Meeting Adjourned**

**Motion** was made by Doug Davis to adjourn; seconded by Jim Marsh. **Vote: 5-0-0**

The meeting adjourned at 9:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Eric Nelson, Clerk

Draft minutes submitted by Jane Pierce: 1/16/14

Approved by Commission: 1/27/14

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### **Documents, Not Referenced Above**

1. Agenda, October 21, 2013
2. Meeting Sign In Sheet
3. Manager's Report, filed in Manager's Report binder in the Conservation Office.