

CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEETING

January 9, 2019

PRESENT: Bob Boynton, Chairman, David McTigue, Vice Chairman, Karen Miller, Jack Messe, Matt Oliveira, Michael Bara, Kleta Dudley (SoRLAC Rep), Lori Rautiola

Public: Jim Coffey, Jeanne Cunningham, Debbie Deaton, Bert Hamill

The meeting was called to order at the Town Office on January 9, 2019 at 7:30 p.m.

Committee Reports:

New Business: Debbie Deaton, Land Use Clerk, Jim Coffey and Jeanne Cunningham (Board of Assessors) and Bert Hamill (Planning Board Chairman) were present to discuss the Town's tax maps. Jim stated the Town's tax maps are inaccurate and the research that was just done by the Conservation Commission on the Stone's Landing parcel is proof. He continued stating this is just one parcel in town and questioned how many more properties are being assessed for the wrong amount of acreage. He noted a few years back he took the Town's database and matched it to some software that was used for regional planning and for towns and this also proved the discrepancies on the Town's tax maps.

Debbie stated she spoke with Tim Fountain from CAI Cartographic and he quoted \$130,100 over the course of three years (\$43,366 per year) to fix and put the tax maps in GIS form. Bert Hamill mentioned at the last Planning Board meeting David Lage mentioned he would like to see a cost analysis submitted and Bert agreed. Bob stated the Planning Board should make it a part of the Capitol Plan. Bert stated that is not in the Planning Board's purview, adding a separate committee should be formed consisting of members from different Boards and concerned citizens. He continued stating Selectman Veaser didn't feel it would be a benefit to the Town. Debbie stated every department would benefit from having the tax maps updated with GIS and georeferenced and Bob agreed.

Bob gave a brief overview of the Stone's Landing parcel. He stated in 1986 Maurice Stone sold/gave .75 acre of his 1.5 acre parcel of land to DePlante and .75 acres to the Town of New Ipswich. The Town plot cards show and describe this; however, the tax maps were not accurately updated, creating the issue for the assessors. Bob continued stating due to the tax map inaccuracies, the owner of lot 13/75 has been paying taxes on land that doesn't belong to them. Debbie explained the process of how and when the tax maps are updated.

There was discussion on map 12/106 (the parcel where bridge was installed off River Road). Bob noted map 12/109-1 does not exist and needs to be taken off the tax map. Bert commented the last owner of the property had a survey done of map 12/106 which showed that parcel having road frontage where the bridge is located. The tax maps showed there was no road frontage on this property. He continued stating the owner did have permission from the State but did not have Town approval from the Building Department, Zoning Board or Planning Board. Bert reported he has been in contact with the owner's engineer with regards to what needs to be submitted to the Town for approval but has not received any response.

Bob displayed a map on the TV showing parcel 12/106 and stated it would be nice to protect some of the land along the River. He continued stating it may be worthwhile for the Commission to contact the owner

and explain the benefits of having a conservation easement on their land and/or selling a portion to put into protection.

Bob questioned if the Selectman had been made aware of the issues and discrepancies on the tax maps and Debbie stated the Assessors have made suggestions and had given them the quote back in 2017. She continued stating the last Chairman, Frank Danisienka reported to the Select board he had found 384 errors just in one section of one map. Jeanne added the Assessors have gone before the Selectmen for the last five years and also had Cartographics come to give a demonstration.

There was discussion on GIS and Bert questioned how accurate the sources were. Bob stated they are geo-referenced and are very accurate. Bert cautioned the accuracy of GIS. There was also discussion on whether or not there should be something added to the warrant in March. Karen noted the public would need to be educated before it goes on the ballot and Bob agreed.

The public left the meeting.

Bob asked members if they felt it would be worthwhile to contact the owner of lot 12/106 in regards to protecting the land and members agreed it would be. Some members agreed it would be a good idea to move forward with the tax maps and try and get the Selectmen on board with the Departments that need it. It was mentioned again that more information regarding the tax map discrepancies needs to be made available to the public. Bob asked Lori to check with the Town Administrator first, and post the tax map discrepancies document on the website and town Facebook page.

Bob questioned if the Commission would be willing to donate funds towards improving the tax maps. Matt stated he would not have an issue and Karen agreed.

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori Rautiola,
Secretary