



CITY OF CONCORD

New Hampshire's Main Street™

REPORT TO THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Beth Fenstermacher, Assistant City Planner, on behalf of the Conservation Commission

DATE: July 31, 2017

SUBJECT: Establishment of a Conservation Stewardship Trust Fund

Recommendation

Approve the resolution establishing a Trust Fund for the Stewardship of Conservation Easements and Conservation Land

Background

The City is often granted conservation easements by landowners obliged to mitigate for impacts to natural resources, or land is donated to the City for conservation purposes. For easements required by the NH Department of Environmental Services (DES), the City is mandated to annually monitor the land and report to DES, and, if necessary, enforce violations. To meet this commitment, the City incurs the costs associated with the management and stewardship of this land. These costs can include monitoring, staff and volunteer training, landowner communication, enforcement, reporting, surveying, boundary marking, conservation education, etc.

The collection of stewardship fees is a regular practice in the monitoring of easements in general. When the City purchases land for conservation purposes and the easement is held by a separate entity, such as Five Rivers Conservation Trust or Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests, the City contributes a stewardship fee to the land trust held by those organizations for these same purposes.

The Conservation Commission has considered establishing a stewardship fee requirement as the number of easements they have been asked to accept has increased. While a policy has not yet been enacted, two separate entities have recently offered for the first time to contribute stewardship fees to the City along with conservation easements that are being granted to mitigate impacts to wetlands and wetland buffers. The Conservation Commission wishes to take this opportunity to establish a Stewardship Fund to cover the cost associated with conservation land stewardship. The Stewardship Fund would ensure that contributions are utilized for the designated land stewardship purposes.

Discussion

Upon the City Council's authorization of this resolution, the Conservation Stewardship Fund will be established. A consent report to accept and transfer funds into the Trust Fund has been submitted separately for City Council approval.