



TOWN OF
NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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Conservation Commission
Meeting Minutes of the May 18, 2016
8:30 AM

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bob Brown (Chair), Mark Vernon, Ruth White, Michael Gelcius, Dan Allen, Andrew Deegan, Tim Paradis, Michael Kennedy

MEMBERS ABSENT: Laura Alexander, Shawn Costello

STAFF PRESENT: Lucy St. John (Planning & Zoning Administrator)

OTHERS PRESENT: Maggie Ford (interested resident)

Call to Order: Chair Brown called the meeting to order at 8:30 am.

Roll Call: Chair Brown called the roll.

Chair welcomed Ms. Maggie Ford to the meeting. She has a general interest in the Conservation Commission.

The board welcomed their newest member Michael Kennedy to the board. Each member introduced themselves.

Approval of Minutes:

IT WAS MOVED (Michael Gelcius) AND SECONDED (Mark Vernon) to approve the Subcommittee minutes of May 12, 2016 the Low Plain site visit, as circulated. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Planning & Zoning Administrator's Report – Lucy St. John

Ms. St. John gave a brief update. She also spoke to the board about the two previous tree cutting applications that had the site walk just recently.

Tree Cutting Applications Review

Rockhart and Lamson – The PB approved the application contingent upon the Conservation Commission recommendation. A site walk was done and a couple of the CC members attended.

Mr. Vernon asked if there was a difference with cutting a live tree vs a dead tree in the regulations.

Ms. St. John answered, there is language in there about keeping dead trees and to try keeping them because of the wildlife habitats, however most people come in because of concerns about dead trees falling.

Mr. Gelcius gave a report about the two site walk visits. The root systems are being left and no great concerns were founded.

Messer Pond Association – Ms. St. John had met with John Doyal of the Messer Pond Association and gave her permission to post their study. That information is on the May 24th Planning Board agenda

attachment list for the review. They are possible going to be at the June 14th meeting to give an overview, discuss some of the general recommendations and ideas of possible changes, etc.

Mr. Paradis added that the projects are much broader than realized.

NH Covert Project – Is largely funded by Fish & Game and administrated by the Extension Service at UNH. Mr. Vernon gave a report of his time. It was a three day workshop. The cost was \$50 including lodge and food. The themes were Wildlife Habitat Improvement and Forest Stewardship. The take away message was that 80% of NH land is privately owned. To achieve and improve wildlife habitat and forest stewardship, we need to work with private land owners. Half of the attendees were land owners. Part of the deal for this is to commit 40 hrs. of volunteer work over the next year. A map of 2015 Highest Ranked Wildlife Habitat by ecological condition was passed around. A link of this map will be available on the CC website soon. He rated the program a nine out of ten.

Chair shared his experience he had when he attended two years ago. He was pleasantly surprised. He was impressed with the well planned curriculum.

Easements and Land Acquisitions

- *Pleasant Street* – Chair Brown gave a brief about the two warrant articles for two parcels (Pleasant Street East/West) that are partially under an easement presented at the annual town meeting and approved; to get Mr. Kennedy up to speed. He explained how the Environmental Evaluation Survey has been completed except the reviewing of the claim copy of the deed. And that the time frame, in which to get a clean deed, has taken more time than the board anticipated and that the closing date has been extended.
- *Clark Lookout Expansion* – Located off exit 12, next to the park & ride lot. Negotiations have been going on for nine years. The purchase and sales agreement needs to be signed by the other party. Once signed, a deposit will be given. A survey is still needed, then either an annexation or sub-division goes before the Planning Board.
- *List* – Over 50 parcels are on the list. There are two significant funds: Land Acquisitions Capital Reserve & Mary Haddad Trust. Time to review and send out letters. Working with Asbon Sargent is key component in helping both the land owner and the conservation.

Mr. Kennedy asked if the fund grows from the tax payers contributions.

Chair said the investments are usually in bonds. He explained how requests were started and that they became less.

Ms. White shared that many people would prefer to fund after a land acquisition/ easement is made, however, these are large funds and accumulation takes time.

Chair spoke about how The Forest Society recommends every community set aside 25% of their open space in the form of conserved land. New London is at 17%-18% of conserved land.

Mr. Deegan arrived at 9:40am.

Trail Maps/ Updates

- *Hospital Trail* – Mr. Vernon gave a brief background of the project, its location and its desirable aspects. The three parties (Hospital, Town and Eversource) are all in agreement and the legal documents are almost ready.
- *Trail Patch Program* – Ms. White shared her conversation she had with Scott Blewitt (Recreation Director). Mr. Blewitt will help with sharing this program with others. He has different summer

programs for children. Chair shared how the board is trying to promote this program and how the program works. The Patch Program card are in the trail map display case here in the lobby of the Town Office and at the Information Booth. Details of this program and the card can be found on the Conservation website.

- *Trail Maps* – The board discussed how to keep up with restocking the trail maps. Updates and facelifts have been done by Owen Krol, a graduated CSC student, last year and he will be able to help this year too. He will be working on the overlay project too.
- *Trail Adopter List* – Chair explained how the trail adopters are assigned to different trails and give a report of hazards and repairs needed. For five years, we have had two trail interns. A CSC student helped for three years and the past two years a Sunapee teacher has been working the trails. The trails are in need of their yearly upkeep & repairs.
- *Trail Worker List* – The PD had two people work for the Conservation on Saturday & Sunday. A lot of work was accomplished at two of the trails. Another person will be working 20 hours from June to September.
- *The Bog* – The maps are being used quite often and are replaced twice a week. Ms. White will be checking the trail markers.
- *Low Plain* – Chair gave some back ground of the Low Plain project. Chair met with Leo Maslin (Licensed Professional Forester) who has agreed to head the Stewardship Program Project, Matt Tarr (Co-operative Extension) and Tim Fleury (NL Forester) about six weeks ago to revisit the initial tour that was done two years ago. Then another meeting was held for a review of beaver habitat, general wildlife habitat, cutting out diseased trees and a harvest. Neighborhood awareness is key to a successful plan. The person at Fish & Game has been contacted. Everything being done has to be in line with the Fish & Game and the Forestry Plan.

Ms. White reported that a dog was in the pond and the geese were upset. She suggested posting new signs around the duck side. Wood ducks get spooked easily and will not nest. Nesting season should have their own signs explaining briefly why to keep them leashed and not enter those area to deter dog owners from letting their dogs wander.

- *Phillips Memorial Reserve* –The Phillips Harvest is the first town property to be designated as a certified tree farm. This same application (The American Tree Farm Certification) that was given to the Phillips would be another positive step for the Low Plains project.

Chair shared the pass issues of the gate locks.

This spring, Scott Brown donated 100 native Hazelnut seedlings. Stakes will be used to identify them when planted. Department of Public Works has done a great job mowing the field.

- *KKC Trail* – Mr. Vernon asked about the problems at hand with the beavers. Chair gave an over view the trail and how much management and maintenance that has been done. He explained how for two years they received help from the Beaver Deceiver from Vermont for this trail and Low Plain. The device is to help move beavers to other larger streams to maintain narrow streams water flow. Unfortunately the device they put in this Brook is not working properly. There are concerns when flooding occurs and the quality of the water.

Other Business

- ✓ The Town Nursery needs to be worked on. A few of the Elderberry and the American Cranberry trees have been planted at Clark Pond. Dept. of Public Works will be getting some of the plants for their use.

- ✓ Lagoon Closure – Signs have been posted for the closure.
- ✓ The Elkins Fish & Game Scholarship - Mr. Gelcuis explained the program and where the camp is located. They got involved in 1993 to sponsor children camp funds and one of the lodges. Over the years, 121 children have been sponsored and this year six children are being funded.
- ✓ Fly Fishing on the Common is this Saturday. Rods and reels are donated. This programs shows children how to cast. As a follow-up on June 4th, an event will be held for the children to show them some outdoors activities at the New England Outing Club, a wildlife reserve in Hillsborough. The confidence level for these children are being built and their appreciation for the outdoors grows. A lot of organizations have helped to keep this program going.

The next meeting of the Conservation Commission would be held on Wednesday, June 15, 2016 at 8:30am.

Motion to Adjourn

IT WAS MOVED (Mark Vernon) AND SECONDED (Michael Gelcius) to adjourn the meeting. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

The meeting adjourned at 10:13am.

Respectfully submitted,

Dianne Richtmyer, Recording Secretary
Town of New London