

New London Conservation Commission – Permit Application Sub-Committee meeting

A meeting was held on March 24, 2016, at 10:00 AM, in the Sydney L. Crook Conference Room at the New London Town Offices to discuss ways to streamline the New London Conservation Commission (NLCC) review process for permit applications related to wetlands, steep slope, shore land, streams, and alteration of terrain. In attendance were Town Administrator Kim Hallquist, Planning & Zoning Administrator Lucy St. John, and NLCC members Jane McMurrich, Andy Deegan, Mark Vernon and Mike Gelcius. The NLCC members made up a sub-committee, tasked with helping to improve the process. Mike Gelcius was installed as sub-committee Chair. Lucy St. John supplied everyone with current copies of the town ordinances, including current amendments, and the state permit application guide.

There was an initial discussion of the current process. Kim and Lucy talked about state and local procedures, and provided insight on how issues are handled. They noted that permit applications come at various times of the month, some of which are of interest to the NLCC and some not. All applications related to conservation issues are passed along to all NLCC members by Lucy St. John, for review and comments.

Since the NLCC only meets once a month, the members would like to have a process in place that would allow permits to be reviewed in a timelier manner and to give applicants faster feedback to let them know if the NLCC wants to have them, or their representatives, appear at an NLCC meeting to discuss their application. It is hoped that this would make better use of everyone's time and also allow the NLCC to spend more meeting time on NLCC related projects.

After some discussion, a plan was worked out. Applications would still be sent to all NLCC members, but the sub-committee members would review the applications as soon as they came in to see if the application warranted a site visit, clarification at an NLCC meeting, some other action, or no action. These recommendations would be passed to the NLCC Chair and to the Planning & Zoning Administrator within one week of receipt of the application. The NLCC chair could decide to hold a special meeting of the full NLCC if it was determined that the timing of the application dictated discussion and possible action prior to a regularly scheduled meeting. The sub-committee would keep a list of all the applications received and reviewed, and this list would be presented each month at the regular NLCC meeting. The list would give a brief summary of the applications and the findings of the sub-committee. It was noted that all NLCC members would still have the ability to make comments or recommendations on any applications.

The sub-committee will present the plan to the full NLCC at the next meeting. Once the plan has been finalized and approved it will be sent to the Town Administrator and to the Planning & Zoning Administrator.

The meeting ended at 11:00 AM

Following the meeting, the sub-committee members discussed a few related items. The main issue was the town's zoning and wetland overlay maps. They would like to see the wetland overlay map be updated to include streams and wetland that might not currently be on the map, and have all streams named so that there is no confusion about locations. They would also like to include information about wildlife migration and habitat issues. The sub-committee also thought it would be a good idea to make a combined zoning and wetland overlay map so that the town and permit applicants would use a single map to use for permits. The sub-committee will recommend to the full commission that a summer college intern be assigned to work on that project.