



TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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DRAFT Minutes of the June 24, 2014 Conservation Commission Meeting

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bob Brown (Chairman), Mike Gelcius, Laura Alexander, Emma Crane, Andy Deegan, Ruth White, Terry Dancy, Dan Allen, Rick Anderson

MEMBERS ABSENT: John Clough

Chair Brown opened the meeting at 8:30am.

Minutes of May 21, 2014

Chair Brown noted that he had sent a couple of changes to Ms. Heath that had to do with names of individuals.

IT WAS MOVED (Emma Crane) AND SECONDED (Laura Alexander) to approve the minutes of May 21, 2014, as amended. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

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

Ms. St. John noted a permit by notification that came in for a seasonal dock. The applicant asked that the Conservation Commission sign off on the permit so it could be expedited by DES in 10 days rather than the usual 25. Ms. St. John explained the plans for the dock and no one thought it was an unusual request. The Conservation Commission decided to sign off on the permit.

Ms. St. John shared that she had previously sent the board a permit by notification application for consideration, that some training was being made available, that an intent to cut application had come in, and there would be two tree-cutting applications on the next Planning Board agenda. One is for the Stotz property at 947 Forest Acres Road. The other is on Lakeshore Drive. Both are dead trees and are safety issues.

Renewable Energy as it Relates to Assessment of Homes

Chair Brown said in a past meeting, Mr. Deegan had raised an issue about the use of renewable energy resources on one's home and if their assessment is increased because of this. Mr. Deegan said he spoke with Bill Spear, a professor at Colby-Sawyer College and the Chair of the Energy Committee, who said he spoke with the Town's Chief Assessor, Norm Bernaiche about this matter. He found that although it isn't an official policy, these sorts of items are not counted as value when they are assessing a home. If this should change, perhaps they would want to bring a warrant article to Town Meeting to prohibit penalizing people for trying to take energy-saving measures with their homes.

Chair Brown said he spoke with the Selectmen the previous night about their upcoming land acquisition project. The Selectmen seemed to be interested in the project and asked that they be kept in the loop. It was noted that the owner of the property they hope to purchase and get an easement on, was currently cleaning up the property and removing his private items and debris. Mr. Deegan said this effort was costly, was being paid for by the property owner, and was not yet completed.

Mr. Deegan explained that the owner had said he would sell the property at 75% of its value. He explained there were groups of people who were already willing to spread the word and educate people about the property and what the Town is trying to do with it. This would hopefully help with fundraising efforts.

Mr. Deegan said Ausbon Sargent's first easement ever was on Burpee Hill, called the Bohannen. There is a requirement on the easement that the view be kept open. The land has just been bought by another owner who wants cows, owned by the Pattens, to pasture on the property to open the view. The easement says fences are not allowed, but fences are needed to enclose the cows. The Land Committee at Ausbon Sargent has met and

thought this was an acceptable change to the easement. If they amend the easement, the Town of New London also has a say in it because they are the back-up easement holders after Ausbon Sargent. The fencing would only be allowed for agricultural reasons and cannot block the view of the lake. If the fencing is down by the tree-line, it would be OK. Chair Brown thought this was a reasonable request.

IT WAS MOVED (Dan Allen) AND SECONDED (Terry Dancy) to amend the easement to include usage of fences, as explained by Andy Deegan. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY. Mr. Deegan abstained from voting.

Working Group Report – Rick Anderson

Mr. Anderson said they should keep the group's recommendations and reports on the table. He also noted that the Lake Sunapee Watershed Committee has been meeting and generating a matrix comparison of the towns on Lake Sunapee, including New London. They will be meeting with all the area Planning Boards to see about aligning regulations where they are able to. They hope to develop a shared compliance resource over time.

Trails and Projects

Chair Brown said they had planned to reimburse Mr. Platt for his time spent at the Phillips Preserve tour, but Mr. Platt said it was a learning experience and wouldn't be sending a bill.

Ms. White asked if there had been any thought of removing sign #1 at Low Plain because it is "trip-able" and wondered if it could be put up higher or on the gate. Mr. Gelcius suggested putting it on the kiosk.

Trail Adopter Reports

Chair Brown said a few of these have been coming in. Mr. Deegan said there have been some issues with trails but adopters have taken care of them on their own.

It was noted that Mark Vernon has been doing a lot of trail work since he has retired. They may work together with Mark in the fall to repair the Crockett Bridge. They have four days in October with the Merrimack County Department of Corrections and perhaps it would be a good task for the workers to carry the lumber into the woods the half mile in to the bridge.

Chair Brown said their trail worker, Tom Coverdale, is doing a great job and is really into the work. They discussed the New England Forestry Property, which is under easement with Ausbon Sargent. There are sections of the Yellow Trail that are really grown in and the brush needs to be cut. The question was what are they allowed to do since it isn't the Town's land. He emailed the person responsible and has not yet heard back.

Mr. Allen said the flowers have been blooming. Last year they counted 80 Lady Slippers and this year there are even more.

Ms. White said at Low Plain they have a "Don't Pick the Lady Slipper" sign and wondered if similar signs on the Main Land near the Allen Trail would be needed. Mr. Allen said people aren't picking them so didn't see a need.

Mr. Allen spoke with a trail user who was very angry about the possibility of the Norman Trail not being available to her in the winter time if it was reserved for skiers only. A friend of his suggested making a wider trail to share it with walkers and skiers. Ms. White thought this might be a better option than adding a new trail as it is a wet area. She thought at the end of the year they could have their trail worker create some funny, temporary signs in the snow along the ski trail to discourage walkers who are still walking on the ski trail. Mr. Allen thought a sign out at the roadside that says "Cross-Country Ski Trail – Groomed" might deter walkers from using the trail.

Chair Brown said Tom Coverdale and his wife have been enjoying the trails and he is working weekends and afternoons. He has expressed interest in making this a long-lasting relationship with the Town. So far, it is going very well.

Chair Brown said UNH Cooperative Extension looked at their website and came back with some positive remarks and suggestions. They found it to be a model website. Kudos went to the work Bob Crane had done in the past and the work Rick Anderson had done most recently.

Mr. Anderson asked if there had been any interest from the public in joining the Conservation Commission. Chair Brown said he had heard nothing about new appointments but he did see an ad in the Kearsarge Shopper and on the Town's website advertising several vacancies. Mr. Anderson said he and his wife are planning on relocating at the end of the year and would work to identify possible replacements for things he is involved in, namely website work.

The next meeting of the Conservation Commission was scheduled for July 16, 2014.

**IT WAS MOVED (Emma Crane) AND SECONDED (Laura Alexander) to adjourn.
THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 9:32am.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristy Heath, Recording Secretary
Town of New London