



TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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APPROVED Minutes of the May 15, 2013 Conservation Commission Meeting

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: Dan Allen, Sue Clough

OTHERS: Bob Crane, Lucy St. John (Planning & Zoning Administrator), Steve D'Angeli (Trail Intern), Jerry Gold (New London Resident)

Chair Brown called the meeting to order at 9:00am. He turned the meeting over to Ruth White, the Conservation Commission member who spear-headed the patch program.

Patch Program Ceremony

Ms. White had several patches to award to individuals who had earned them by hiking all the trails in New London. Ms. White explained that this was the second time they have awarded patches to individuals and she encouraged more people to hike the trails.

Patch recipients were:

Bev Payne and her dog "Buddy"

David and Celeste Cook and their dogs "Gilbert" and "Sullivan"

John and Dorleese Stewart and their dog "Samara"

Fred Sladen

Sally Wilkins and Manfred Wiese earned patches as well, but were not at the meeting.

Some hikers noted that a few of the trails were hard to navigate. Ms. White suggested they send an email to Mr. Deegan with specifics and they would work to fix problems. Chair Brown said volunteerism is difficult to find but noted this was the time of year that they can work on the trails. He showed the meeting attendees the plastic blazes that they would be using instead of painted blazes.

Ms. White took a photo of those who received patches.

Lucy St. John – Planning & Zoning Administrator

Ms. St. John introduced Charlie Hirshberg from CLD Engineering who was there with property owner, Phil Miller. Mr. Miller's property is on Pike Brook Road and they would like permission to cut some trees. Mr. Hirshberg explained that King Hill Brook is mapped as a wetland and has a 100' setback. This setback encompasses almost 90% of Mr. Miller's property. Any cutting on the property would fall into the wetland buffer. The property is also a lakefront lot and the brook has a flat gradient, so the 250' shoreland buffer also encompasses most of the lot. Many trees on the lot are dead or close to being dead. They have a State permit to cut some trees within the 50' setback and if cut, they would meet all the point requirements for New London's ordinance. The regulations for the town require an "OK" from the Conservation Commission to cut.

Mr. Hirshberg explained that there is one available parking space for the four-bedroom home which is located across the road on a neighbor's property. There is no easement for this arrangement. It was noted that Pike Brook Road is very narrow and doesn't offer enough width for on-street parking.

Mr. Hirshberg showed the Conservation Commission members a map of the property, pointing out the delineated wetlands, the brook and the various setbacks surrounding the lot. The concern is that parking is needed. Mr. Hirshberg was proposing a 28' x 30' area for parking. They would maximize the distance from the

wetland and would stay out of the drainage pattern of an existing culvert. They would like to take 16 trees down, five of which are 2" in diameter or under. Mr. Hirshberg said that they had to go to the Planning Board to get a cutting plan approved. He noted that Ms. St. John had also gone out to look at the trees they wish to cut. Mr. Hirshberg said they also will need to go to the ZBA because they are within the 100' buffer. They are not impacting wetlands but are within the 100' buffer. Their ZBA hearing is the following Monday.

Mr. Deegan asked if the driveway would be crushed gravel. Mr. Hirshberg said it would be gravel with a stone drip edge. Runoff will go into the ground around the perimeter. Mr. Dancy said it seemed there were a lot of trees on the property and didn't think they would meet any objection with their wish to cut. He noted that the regulations were there to make people come into the Conservation Commission in an effort to prohibit them from cutting live trees and after the fact claim that the trees were dead. This has happened before.

Mr. Anderson said as long as the points were sufficient, they generally don't say no to these kinds of requests. They just want to make sure people don't clear-cut.

IT WAS MOVED (Laura Alexander) AND SECONDED (Andy Deegan) to approve the tree-cutting request for Mr. Miller on Pike Brook Road. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Colby-Sawyer College – Kelsey Field Upgrades

Mr. Arsen Hambarzumian of Nesra Engineering was there to explain the project. He was accompanied by Bob Procott, a wetlands scientist from Rutland Consulting Services, who is assisting in the project.

Mr. Hambarzumian explained that the entrance to the field would be a gravel drive off of Seaman's Road. They would like to replace the natural turf with astro turf. They would also like to build an 8-lane running track around the field that includes space for shot-put and high-jump events. Erosion control would include a bio-sock, or hay bale or silt fence if preferred by the Conservation Commission. 90% of the site would be protected by these measures. Lighting, press box and bleachers are not included in this plan but are hoped to be added in the future. A 5' walkway is planned to be included around the field which would all be surrounded by a 4' black vinyl coated chain-linked fence. Two small retaining walls are proposed, but may be eliminated if the grade is smaller than 3:1.

Mr. Hambarzumian said the field is relatively flat but will slope to .75% to the sidelines. The track pitches inward at 0.9% onto the turf field for infiltration. Nothing will run off the field, but into the field for maximum drainage. A study was done for existing drainage conditions and they have designed the drainage for the new field to mimic them. The flat panel drains are split at the crown to share the drainage. They are not proposing any grading steeper than 3:1. They will extend the swale 80' to create more wetlands to make up for those that they plan to remove.

Mr. Hambarzumian explained other erosion control measures that would keep materials from the field from migrating. On average the stone beneath the turf surface is 10" thick and will retain the rainwater. The trench below is pitched at .5% to keep the water running into the appropriate drainage systems.

Chair Brown asked maximum width of the field. Mr. Hambarzumian said it was 225' plus a 10' safety zone. The outside paved areas on the ends of the field are sloped in towards the track and runoff will go into a slot drain.

Mr. Dancy said their original concern was increased runoff but he sees their main concern is to make sure that with the new design, the runoff is the same or less than it is currently.

Mr. Anderson said that he has heard this presentation three times and noted that the college held a community meeting prior to meeting with the Planning Board and the Conservation Commission. He thought this was an improvement in the drainage and noted that Pleasant Lake was close to the facility. He was encouraged that so

much attention was being paid to the drainage. He said the field will collect 4” of rain before they encounter any issues.

Mr. Procott said he got involved in the project in January of 2013. He delineated the wetlands to be impacted at that time when the ground was barley frozen. There is a proposed 5,400 sq’ of wetlands to be filled in the area. He passed around photos of the wetlands on the property. He identified the wetlands as minimal and sparsely vegetated. Mr. Procott added that they were able to confirm that there were no rare or endangered species in the area.

Mr. Procott explained that wetlands will be recreated in part by the formation of a new drainage ditch. The State does not require mitigation for wetlands of this size. Mr. Anderson asked if he had considered the runoff’s eventual destination, which was Pleasant Lake. Mr. Procott said that he realized it was a mile away but believed any pollutants would be cleaned through the wetlands before they made it to the lake.

Mr. Hambardzumian said they would like to move forward with construction to be ready for the college track season. The Planning Board had approved this request at the previous night’s meeting, contingent upon the Conservation Commission’s approval.

IT WAS MOVED (Rick Anderson) AND SECONDED (Andy Deegan) to approve the plan for Colby-Sawyer College’s upgrades to Kelsey Fields, as presented. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Tree-Cutting Request at 544 Lakeshore Drive, Ms. Lindsay.

Ms. St. John indicated that a previous tree-cutting was done at this location in 2004. Ms. St. John went and looked at the tree, which she confirmed as being dead. She said there were many other trees on the site. The Planning Board has approved the cutting contingent on the approval of the Conservation Commission.

IT WAS MOVED (Andy Deegan) AND SECONDED (Emma Crane) to approve the tree-cutting request by the Lindsay’s at 544 Lakeshore Drive. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Request for Support by Jerry Gold

Chair Brown introduced Jerry Gold to the meeting. Mr. Gold said he was there representing the Sunapee/Ragged /Kearsarge Greenway Coalition. He noted that from New London to Cardigan there are trails, but none that connect them. There is less and less Federal money available to promote trails/trail creation in this area. The Greenway is going to submit an application for a small project, and would be asking for a little over \$2,000. The maximum request is \$10,000 and they must match it by 20%. Mr. Gold said he has been to both the Sunapee and Newbury Conservation Commissions to see if they would to support the proposal. They are not asking for any money, but just a nod from the area Conservation Commissions in this effort.

Mr. Gold said that if they receive the grant, they will use the money for advertising the need for trail work. Once they have a larger list than they currently have, they can share this list with area Conservation Commissions to get help with their own trails. They plan to have 6-8 days of trail work events to teach people how to lock tree branches, how to move a rock, etc. The AMC will send two people from Pinkham Notch to teach a rock moving clinic.

IT WAS MOVED (Andy Deegan) AND SECONDED (Terry Dancy) to support the efforts of Mr. Gold to attain a grant from the Quabbin-Cardigan Partnership for \$2,000. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Mr. Anderson wondered if they would eventually share their volunteer training information with area Conservation Commissions for their own use with volunteer training. Mr. Gold said he hasn’t thought that far ahead but would certainly be willing to share this information.

Request from John & Betty Rabbi

John and Betty Rabbi, who live on Morgan Hill Road came to the meeting with a bag of trash he has picked up from the trail head on Morgan Hill. He realized that they were all responsible to keep trail heads clean but would like some help. Mr. Rabbi opined that perhaps a large heavy-duty trash can or two and a sign that points where trash should go would be helpful. He has seen people at the trailheads from NJ, CT, MA and he imagines they have family/friends in the area. His point is that others than locals are already using the trailheads and imagines that more and more people will be coming. It is important to make sure the trails and trail heads are well-maintained.

Chair Brown was worried that if they put trash cans at the trail head, they would be encouraging this kind of activity. He was also concerned that the trash could get full and would need to be picked up regularly. Ms. Rabbi thought if they had a trash can there they would pick it up on their way to the dump. Mr. Rabbi said he doesn't want to see the trail head becoming an attractive nuisance that adjoins his property.

Ms. White said they have trail adopters who are supposed to keep an eye on this kind of thing. Mr. Deegan said they are instructed to monitor the trails four times/year but they may need more attention than this. Chair Brown said that over the last year their level of feeling welcome in this area (Morgan Hill) has been low. With permission, the Conservation Commission could walk the trails more and help with what needed to be done. They could consider putting a container in the area. Mr. Rabbi suggested clearing up the trash and keeping an eye on the area for several months. If a trash receptacle would help, they could try that as well. It was suggested that people at the trail head at night are not there to hike and perhaps the police could be contacted if they see activity in that area at night.

American Tree Farm System

Chair Brown said at the last meeting they were educated about the American Tree Farm program and felt the consensus was they would want to go ahead with becoming a member of it. The Town was qualified for membership at Philips Preserve and Low Plain. Mr. Deegan and Ms. Alexander thought they should hold off on the Low Plain as it might catch people unaware of the thought that a tree-cutting may happen in that area. Chair Brown said that there was a cut at Low Plain not too long ago and there would be no immediate obligation to cut there again for another 10 years or so. Mr. Deegan recalled that the program was flexible and with just reason, would approve a longer time between cuts.

Review of Minutes April 17, 2013 Minutes

IT WAS MOVED (Laura Alexander) AND SECONDED (Emma Crane) to approve the minutes of April 17, 2013, as amended. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Philips Easement Update

Mr. Deegan said that Ausbon-Sargent met with the Board of Selectmen and presented evidence why they should sign the easement. The Selectmen still decided not to do so. It was suggested they go through mediation with himself, the Town, Town Counsel and a mediator. That is still the plan and he is trying to firm up dates with John Garvey, a mediator. He was hopeful that this mediation will work.

Mr. Deegan said the language in dispute has to do with enforcement of the easement. It is not good to weaken their easement and hopefully they can come to a resolution when they meet with Town Counsel.

Desirable Land List

Chair Brown said that on June 20, 2011 they wrote 12 letters to the owners of the top pieces of property. They received four responses, three of which expressed interest in learning more about the easement processes. They still need to follow up with these letters. Mr. Deegan said one of these people has since passed away and the property is for sale on King Hill Road. Another contact has property in the conservation district and is adjacent to the Webb Forest, and believes there isn't any value with the property because of this. Mr. Deegan said he

came up with a couple properties where the property is more developable, the owner has been in touch with him before, but they haven't made a decision on what to do with their land yet.

Town Meeting

Chair Brown said Ms. Alexander has worked very hard on her presentation for Town Meeting. A hand-out that includes verbiage and a map will be passed out at the meeting. The Budget Committee is trying to spread incorrect information and this is an effort to correct that.

Ms. Alexander explained that the Forest Society recommends 25% of the lands (not water) to be conserved. In a study done by Colby-Sawyer College students, 42 key properties were identified. Mr. Deegan applied assessed rates to these and found the average cost to be \$421,862. They set a cap of \$500,000 for their Land Acquisition Fund as they could never be sure if/when more than one property would come up at once. She included the history of the fund, and the tax impact (\$3.43 for average taxpayer to support). Ms. Alexander noted that in order for New London to have 25% of land conserved, they would need to conserve another 825 acres.

Chair Brown explained that Article 3 was not recommended by the Board of Selectmen or the Budget Committee. It is his understanding they will invite the Selectmen and Budget Committee to explain why they do not recommend it. It was felt that the Conservation Commission having the last word was to their advantage.

Ms. Alexander shared that at the bottom of the hand-out, she referenced the community survey was done, which showed land conservation to be a priority of the townspeople.

Planning Board Review

Ms. Crane said that at the last Planning Board meeting, they approved the site plan for upgrades to the Kelsey Athletic fields by Colby-Sawyer. They also approved some changes to the exterior lighting at Colby-Sawyer College's parking lots, and an arbor at the entrance of a garden on Main Street. They approved a Fast track application for Tawell Gallery, and a tree-cutting request on Lakeshore Drive. Lastly, there was a conceptual discussion of a property merger/lot line adjustment by Carolyn Reynolds who owned two lots on Seamans Road.

Ms. Crane showed a poster she and Mr. Crane created to put up at the Town office, library, Recreation Department, the information booth, at Morgan Hill Book Store, and Village Sports, to promote the patch program.

Trails

Chair Brown introduced Trail Intern, Steve D'Angeli who is a 4th year Environmental Science student at Colby-Sawyer College. Ms. Alexander is his academic advisor. He had internship last summer working for a non-profit, and worked on environmental volunteer projects with the Nature Conservatory. This past week he started his work with the Conservation Commission by surveying and hiking the trails and getting familiar with them. He worked on the Kidder-Cleveland trail, put up some trail markers and intersection signs, and stabilized some of the planks. The previous day he walked the Morgan Hill trails which he found to be in poor shape. Some areas are washed out and flooded and seemed abandoned. He found it difficult to follow the trails and added that many signs are faded and need to be repainted. He worked with Dan Allen the previous Friday with the Merrimac County Inmates to move rocks.

Chair Brown said a work day with students from Proctor was cancelled on Saturday as the weather conditions did not permit.

Mike Gelcius of the Elkins Fish & Game Club will be painting and making new signs as needed at Low Plain. One day, the club went out to work on the trails with a crew of about 10 people.

Chair Brown said the next Merrimac County work day is planned for August 8, 2013.

Calendar Events

Ms. White said she would submit the photo from that day's patch recipients to the Intertown Record and would include an article about the program. The article would mention those who received a patch in October, and indicate that the next patch presentation ceremony would be held this coming October. Chair Brown suggested sending the article to Leigh Bosse at "The Messenger" and to "The Valley News."

Mr. Dancy said the New Hampshire Lakes Association would be meeting this year at Colby-Sawyer College on June 21st. They are having a tour of Pleasant Lake showing how water sampling is done. Mr. Dancy invited all to attend this day-long event.

Other

Mr. Anderson said that although he hasn't had much feedback from anyone regarding the new website, he felt they should move forward with it.

Mr. Anderson said they have talked about what people can and can't do within buffers and dug-in boat houses. He suggested to Ms. St. John and Ms. Hallquist that they should get together with an attorney if there are interpretation issues with the ordinance. He felt they should all be on the same page.

The next meeting of the Conservation Commission is scheduled for Wednesday, June 19. In Chair Brown's absence, Ms. Alexander has agreed to act as Chair.

**IT WAS MOVED (Andy Deegan) AND SECONDED (Ruth White) to adjourn the meeting.
THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 11:10am.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristy Heath, Recording Secretary
Town of New London