

TOWN OF NEW LONDON
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
APRIL 20, 2005

PRESENT: Laura Alexander, Dan Allen, Dale Conly, Bob Crane, Emma Crane, Terry Dancy, Les Norman, Peter Stanley, Ruth White.

Les Norman called the meeting to order at 1 p.m.

Minutes- March 16, 2005

Peter Stanley moved to accept. Dale Conly seconded. No further discussion. Motion unanimously approved.

Memorials-Wayne Warriner and Ted Parkhurst

- o Skip Johnson met with the Commission, regarding a memorial for Wayne Warriner. Many of Wayne's friends would like to have something in his memory, such as a bench with plaque, on one of the conservation lands or trails.

Terry Dancy said the principal question which must be considered is, to where (on conservation land or trail) can one transport a heavy bench. He suggested the spot where the Dura Crockett trail joins Great Brook—that's up beyond Colby Sanctuary, and is reachable with a four-wheel drive. Also, something could be driven into the Phillips Preserve, to a location near the new field. He proposed that the bench be granite—something permanent, which would not require a great deal of maintenance, with a bronze memorial plate.

Ruth White suggested people take a look at the benches at Knight's Hill. Those are not granite, but of a heavy, durable plastic that resembles granite. They are easier to move, and, as they have backs, they are more comfortable to sit on.

Regarding proposed location, she said that in the winter, a snowmobile could carry something to the top of the Phillips Preserve where the great view is. That spot may be preferable to the more buggy location by Great Brook. Her second choice would be the field at Phillips Preserve, as it is anticipated that the field will be heavily visited by wildlife.

Dan Allen said that the Bill Best Memorial—a granite bench, was carried to the top of Bog Mountain by snowmobile.

Peter Stanley reminded everyone that Wayne Warriner did a great deal of work on the Commission's bridges, and asked if there were need for a new bridge anywhere.

Dan Allen said Dave Cook needs a higher bridge on one of his trails.

Peter Stanley asked about the spot where the Great Brook Trail crosses the brook, about a half-mile beyond the Sanctuary.

Dan Allen said that is Crockett's Brook, and there is a bridge there now.

Ruth White asked about the new trails behind the school.

Terry Dancy said there really is not a place there which would require a substantial sized bridge. The bridges there are smaller, for crossing drainages. The Cranes agreed that there are multiple small bridges there now. One on the trail towards Pleasant Street does need replacing, but, again, it is very small.

Skip Johnson said he will take these ideas, plus the recommendation that the memorial be low maintenance, back to the group at the tennis club, and they will make a proposal for the Conservation Commission's consideration.

- o Terry Dancy said he is putting the finishing touches on the new sign for Cricenti's Bog. He This will bear the plaque dedicated to Ted Parkhurst. He would like that to be bronze in order that it may weather the climate, and with raised lettering. He asked about location.

Members agreed to place this new sign on the opposite side of the previous location; that is, on dry land.

Peter Stanley has some information about where to obtain the bronze plates, and Dale Conly volunteered to assist Terry in putting the sign up.

Procedure for Discussion of Resident's Proposed Projects

Members confirmed that this procedure will be published, as well as given to people when they submit applications for discussion. Ruth White moved to approve this draft. Emma Crane seconded. No further discussion. Motion unanimously approved.

Membership

Dan Allen and Laura Alexander have met with Selectmen and been sworn in as regular members at this point. Emma Crane is waiting to be notified when she should come in to be sworn.

Les Norman asked about the idea of rotating chairmen.

Conservation Commission members concurred that the current arrangement is best for this Board. Les Norman agreed to continue on as Chairman, but suggested that it would be a good idea to plan for his successor early, noting that, as Chairman, he has had to learn quite a few things "on the fly."

Trails

There was brief discussion regarding the ad for Trail Adopters, Monitors and Helpers which will be placed in the *Kearsarge Shopper*. Members agreed that the ad should define the distinct roles of "adopters," "monitors" and "helpers," and should fit into the quarter-page size. Dan Allen will place that ad.

Ruth White said that at one point in time, each trail had someone assigned:

- o Neal and Wanda both monitor and work on Wolf Tree.
- o Dan and Nat Allen do the Great Brook Trail.
- o Peter Stanley has taken charge of Low Plain, but due to time constraints, would not mind if another volunteer were available for that.
- o He suggested contacting Scott and Susan Brown for the Phillips Preserve.
- o Dick Cavallaro along with Wayne Warriner has been in charge of the trails behind the school.
- o Wayne used to monitor and work on Lyon Brook Trail.
- o Vicki Koron has volunteered to monitor the Bog.

Dan Allen said he will inquire of those volunteers if they wish to continue, before making new assignments. Terry Dancy provided Wayne Warriner's old list of volunteers, as well as an e-mail stating that Ben Adams may be interested in working on trails.

Les Norman asked about winter usage.

Almost all the trails see winter usage, some quite a lot.

Web Site

Bob Crane said the membership list has been updated on the site. He asked about Jessie Levine's suggestion that minutes be placed on it.

Members agreed that approved meeting minutes should be on the web site.

Ruth White asked for the Commission's preference for the individual trail write-ups which she and Fred Sladen are preparing. Should these be broad overviews of the location, or more detailed, season by season, and changing with each season?

There was general consensus that it would be great to have the web site automatically adjust its natural history narratives with the changing seasons, but otherwise, she and Fred Sladen ought to go ahead and write those up in whatever manner they enjoy.

Members also agreed the web site ought to include information on the trail monitoring and trail work, projects such as perambulations, and duck boxes.

Also, the Low Plain, Webb Forest, and Bog maps could be scanned into the site, so people could download those themselves.

Members expressed appreciation and approval of the way Bob Crane has set up the trail pages on the principal that all information relevant to a particular trail is contained on one page, and that page includes the trail's map, description, and a profile of that trail's ups and downs. (The individual trail pages can be linked from the General Trail Map on the web site.)

A couple of questions were raised about intersections of trails (there is a white space between the top of Morgan Hill Road and the Morgan Hill Trail, and a space on the Dura Crockett trail), links from one trail to another, as well as the link to the site from the Town's web site. Also, Lakeside Road can be changed to Lakeshore Road.

Bob Crane said right now the natural history section just has Low Plain and the Bog. Are there other town lands that should be included?

That particular question was not answered, but members noted that the site does include links to ASLPT, the on-line Herbarium, Knight's Hill, and the Greenway.

Terry Dancy asked if the web site should include other news items with conservation relevance, such as Laura Alexander's students' Regional Conservation Priorities presentation scheduled for May 9 at 7 p.m. at Colby Sawyer, as well as meetings of the Sunapee Watershed group.

Also, he pointed out that Pleasant Lake Protective Association will be taking water samples to establish baseline data prior to the subdivision of the Granger property. John Wilson has drafted wording for the Planning Board to use in its decision, referring to the requirement for water testing during and after the construction; that is, the developer will be required to pay for the water testing, and for communicating those results to the Town.

Conservation Commission members agreed on announcing the meetings on the web site, but said that the data from the water testing should be in the minutes, not necessarily a separate item.

Master Plan

Les Norman asked what the criteria are for the Conservation Commission's involvement in the Master Plan Update process.

Peter Stanley said the Conservation Commission will have primary input for the conservation section.

Suggestions for Conservation Commission input include:

- o The section of the Master Plan which relates to the status of the corridors leading in and out of Town should be more strongly worded. Those corridors should remain undeveloped. Peter Stanley noted that in the last iteration of the Master Plan, that section was watered down somewhat, and it ought to be re-strengthened.
- o The Commission should be documenting specific parcels, fields, ridge lines and hills, and make specific recommendations for preserving those.
- o The Town should amend the zoning ordinance so that all wetlands and steep slopes are excluded from areas permitted to be subdivided and developed. Right now, only slopes over 25% are excluded.

Dan Allen added that areas with shallow ledge should also be excluded.

Members agreed, and Peter Stanley said that before the zoning ordinance can be amended to that effect; it must be part of the Master Plan.

- o Terry Dancy reminded of a previous proposal that commercial development be kept to the center of town, but that was voted down.

Members noted that there is a lot of commercial space in Town, but it is not for sale right now. Members also noted with interest, some statistics recently presented (by Mark Kaplan from the assessor) to the Planning Board: 30% of the Town's houses now are assessed at under \$200,000; of the remainder, 75% are assessed at under \$400,000.

- o In response to Les Norman's question, Peter Stanley said the sections regarding subdivisions on waterfronts and in watersheds needs to be strengthened. The shore-land and streams ordinances were just starting points.

Les Norman asked if any sub-dividable lots remain on the waterfronts.

There are more chunks with potential for subdivision in watersheds than on waterfronts now. However, there is one potentially sub-dividable parcel on Little Sunapee and one on Messer Pond. In respect to the latter, Peter Stanley pointed out that a portion is in the R2 zone and a portion is in the ARR zone, so the more stringent regulations must be applied to the entire parcel.

Terry Dancy pointed out that planning should be for the long term, and should have the behavior of the watersheds (which we are all just learning about now) as its basis.

Members commented on the fact that the increasing development on waterfronts and in watersheds, has resulted in more impervious surface being near the water than upland. That is the reverse of how it should be.

- o Members suggested that at some point in the Master Plan update process, the presentation showing the relationship of development and income (Cost of Community Services Study) should be made.
- o Laura Alexander said the Master Plan process may be an opportunity to draw from the students' work on Conservation priorities. Their findings for Lake Sunapee last year, for ASLPT this year, and for PLPA next year, may support a case for zoning changes. She noted especially the students' data delineating the differences

in materials carried by those streams which run through and from developed areas versus materials carried by those flowing through and from undeveloped areas.

- o Peter Stanley said that he attends the Planning Board meetings as part of his responsibility as zoning administrator, and Dale Conly attends as the Commission's regular representative. However, as many other Conservation Commission members as possible should attend every Master Plan meeting, once those get started. They will be every other Planning Board meeting (i.e. one a month) for about a year and a half.

In conclusion:

Conservation Commission members agreed to review the existing Master Plan over the summer, and schedule in early fall a meeting devoted entirely to discussion of the Commission's plan of action for the upcoming Master Plan work.

Granger Subdivision

Dale Conly said the new plans for the first half of this project have been submitted. He noted that the Commission doesn't really have the tools to improve it.

Peter Stanley said that reinforces the urgency to have zoning which would keep the wetlands and steep slopes out of the areas permitted to be developed. (And as Dan Allen pointed out, the areas of shallow ledge should also be kept out.)

Terry Dancy said that the developers did take Dan Allen's letter per the septic system shown in the preliminary plans for this development, under advisement (minutes, March 16, p.5). As a result, they have changed the plan to a single aerobic system for fourteen houses.

Peter Stanley said that will allow the size of the field to be smaller.

Dan Allen said that one problem with that is that it will increase the groundwater mound, which may eventually result in an anaerobic condition.

Dale Conly said that persons involved in the review process for this proposed subdivision include the Town Planner, the engineer who will be paid by the developer but report to the Town, and members of PLPA. All parties have experience with the good and bad aspects of previous subdivisions.

Terry Dancy presented John Wilson's drafted wording regarding required water testing during and after construction. The data will be reported to the Town, and presumably conveyed to this Commission.

Members said there should be volumetric as well as flow measures taken.

Other

- o Emma Crane said she is still working on scheduling the Newbury perambulation. There was some discussion about where to get the brass tags.
- o Terry Dancy submitted invoices for supplies he purchased for the Ted Parkhurst memorial.

Meeting adjourned at 2:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
S.A. Denz
Recording Secretary