



TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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APPROVED Minutes of the April 16, 2012 Conservation Commission Meeting

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bob Brown (Chairman), Rick Anderson, Dan Allen, Andy Deegan, Terry Dancy, Laura Alexander, Sue Clough, Ruth White, Peter Stanley (Zoning and Planning Administrator), Emma Crane, Bob Crane (Webmaster)

Chair Brown called the meeting to order at 2:00pm.

Review of Minutes of March 21, 2012

Mr. Allen said that at the bottom of page 2 add “trails” after “Clark Pond.”

Chair Brown, page 3, 3rd paragraph: Suggested using Beaver “relocation” instead of “disposal.”

IT WAS MOVED (Laura Alexander) AND SECONDED (Emma Crane) to approve the minutes of March 21, 2012, as amended. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Easement Acquisitions, Low Plains

Mr. Stanley said they have paid the State the monitoring contribution. The State has approved the numerous amendments to the easement, as New London had suggested. There is one provision in the rights for the grantee (the State) which was an unrestricted right to post the property as they wish. Mr. Stanley had added wording that posting could only be done with approval of the Conservation Commission and only after holding a public hearing. He added that posting can only be done to protect public safety or to protect an endangered species.

Crowell Gift of Land

Mr. Stanley explained that there was a piece of land owned by a third party that had been donated to the Town. Having been surveyed incorrectly later on, it was thought that the property was part of the Peter O. Crowell house lot. Mr. Stanley has all the documentation showing that the strip of land was actually owned by the Town. The Crowells have agreed to gift the parcel back to the Town but have not executed the agreement yet. He said that he would like to go and speak with Ben Crowell, the original owner’s son who purchased the property, to see if he would be willing to execute the agreement.

Phillips Preserve Update

Mr. Deegan said he recently talked with Peter Warren about the 17 acres beyond the Phillips Preserve. There is still no movement forward.

Miller Property

Chair Brown said one of the four responses they received from the letters of interest that were sent out last year was from Mr. Miller who owns property on Stony Brook Road. Mr. Miller’s son contacted Chair Brown about a week ago and noted that his father is in an extended care facility and is not in good health. He would like to pursue a possible easement on his father’s property. Mr. Stanley said that the parcel is rough with several wetlands but that there was potential for a couple houses to be built there but they would need to spend a lot of money to make that happen.

Low Plain Forestry Plan

Chair Brown said that Mr. Platt has decided not to continue with the tree-marking of the forest as he did not feel it was his area of expertise. They will need to see if Dave Carey could do this marking instead. Chair Brown said he would keep trying to contact Mr. Carey.

Perambulations Update

Ms. White said that they are almost complete with the New London/Springfield perambulation. They have to get permission from Deirdre Sheerr-Gross who owns a house off of Little Sunapee Road, to go through her land to perambulate. This is the last portion that needs to be done.

Mr. Allen said that they are required to perambulate every seven years but that there is no penalty for not doing so. Mr. Stanley said that the State may do away with this regulation as other states, such as Maine, have done so. Leigh Calloway from Springfield will handle the mapping on their end of the town line. The report is done jointly between the two towns and is kept within the two towns' files.

Budget

Chair Brown said they have expended about 50% of their budget so far. He asked Mr. Allen about a charge for R.P. Johnson on January 21st. Mr. Allen said he would check to see what he had charged.

Chair Brown said that they have purchased a quality brush saw that should last a long time. They got a \$50 discount on it so it was \$550. They also have acquired some extra blades for the saw, some pruning shears, a folding hand-saw, and all the proper safety equipment.

Ausbon Sargent Preservation Trust Membership

Ms. Alexander and Mr. Deegan recused themselves from this discussion as they work for or hold a place on the ASPLT board.

Chair Brown asked the Conservation Commission if they wanted to become members again this year and at what level. Last year they donated \$500. It was thought by the commission that they should continue to be members. Chair Brown said that this year is the 25th anniversary of the ASPLT and they are asking people to increase their donation by 25%. He thought that \$500 was a pretty generous donation and is what they have donated in the past. The commission agreed.

IT WAS MOVED (Emma Crane) AND SECONDED (Ruth White) to donate \$500 to the Ausbon Sargent Preservation Land Trust membership.

THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Laura Alexander and Andy Deegan abstained from the vote.

NH Association of Conservation Commissions

Chair Brown said that they paid this membership in October and it was \$265. He would need to ask what the membership range was and see when the membership expired.

Lumber Supply

Chair Brown said they have a supply but not a lot. They may want to get some more and allow it to dry as they would be using more of it this year. Ms. White asked if they get a discount on the lumber. Chair Brown said that Cote & Reney has been good to the Conservation Commission and has given them 2 x 8 x 14s for the price of 2 x 8 x 12s in the past.

Mr. Allen said that he would be purchasing another 100 charges for blasting, which would be \$230.

Invasive Species

Mr. Anderson said that he had a draft fact sheet on Japanese Knotweed to pass out. Since joining the commission he has heard that people want to bring awareness to this species. He thought it would be helpful to come up with a format to bring awareness of this and other invasive species. He'd like to have it made into a PDF and put on the Conservation Commission's website.

Mr. Anderson talked to Doug Cygan and a lot of the confusion and challenge is figuring out how to use herbicides safely. If it doesn't say "Japanese Knotweed" on the label, it couldn't be used to kill it. He spoke with Bob Bruleigh, an herbicide enforcement person in New Hampshire and found that there were some exceptions for homeowners. It doesn't have to mention Knotweed on the label, and any method of application and tools can be utilized, unless the label specifies against them. The trick is that it is restricted in wetlands and in rights of way. Mr. Anderson is planning to run this draft by both Mr. Cygan and Mr. Bruleigh, to see if it is acceptable. Mr. Anderson also spoke to the Roadside Design & Invasive Species person in New Hampshire. He has had luck with over-the-top spraying of large patches of Knotweed. They have plans to do this kind of spraying at four-corners this year. He thought that the format he had come up with could be used for other awareness programs in the future.

Ms. Alexander said that Colby-Sawyer is planning on having Mr. Cygan come give a talk regarding invasive species, including insects, this spring.

Mr. Anderson thought they should cut the Knotweed around June 1st and then again late in August. Mr. Stanley said last year he cut some in early August and by late August it had grown vigorously and was larger than when he had cut it just weeks prior. He thought cutting Knotweed in June and waiting again to cut in August would be too long and that it would grow too much. He agreed that cutting was the right solution, but the timing of the cutting was important.

Town Meeting

Chair Brown said they have two warrant articles this year and they hope to have them positioned towards the beginning of the warrant. Last year they were at the end. The first article has to do with the Conservation Land Acquisition fund being used to contribute funds towards easements within the borders of New London. Mr. Stanley has reviewed the articles and the wording is what it has to be. Mr. Stanley said that for the second article, which was changing the wording for the purpose of the Land Acquisition Fund, was the most important. He said that he would address these articles on behalf of the Conservation Commission, as he was very comfortable with the details and could answer any questions people might ask. One key point he would express was that any money that was to be spent from this fund would need to be approved at Town Meeting, as usual. He also noted that Ms. Alexander had volunteered to help out with the presentation and this would help as she has credibility in the town.

Phillips Preserve

Chair Brown said he has some signs to put up and there are some trails to go in. Mr. Stanley suggested a small-scale timber harvest. There is some decent Pine in there and perhaps this would entice a harvester to come in and take it out for them without charging.

Clark Lookout

Chair Brown said that this has been cleared out and he thanked those who came to help on the work detail with the Merrimack County Department of Corrections. Mr. Stanley said that a condition of the easement the Town has with Clark Lookout is such that they need to keep the view open. If they do not do it, this work may be done by someone else and a bill be sent to the Town for the work. He thought it would be a good job for the summer intern to do.

Clark Pond

Mr. Allen said he installed the two benches that he had mentioned at the last meeting.

Other Trail Work

Chair Brown said that the Kidder-Cleveland-Clough trail needs to be looked at as far as bridges and boardwalks go. Mr. Stanley said that the beaver behind the old middle school has been relocated.

Ms. White wondered if they would re-board the Quaking Loop near Cricenti Bog. Chair Brown said that perhaps it was something he and the intern could do together.

Ms. White wondered if there was any way to get in touch with the Valley Quest people. She found a container that belongs to them but it had been moved from the Bog area where it was intended to stay.

Mr. Allen said that Ms. Hallquist (Town Administrator) and Ms. Johnson (Finance Officer) asked if he would give them a tour and so he took them on the Clark Pond Trails. Mr. Allen thought it was good of them to show interest in the trails, and Mr. Stanley added that the two were impressed.

Chair Brown said he sent a message out about the intern candidates. They interviewed two people who were both Colby-Sawyer students and they chose Ryan Bernstein. It will be 240 hours and the paperwork is in the works.

Merrimack County Days

The next work days are: August 31st, September 7, November 2 & 9.

Programs

Ms. White asked if the Conservation Commission wanted to do a Woodcock program. Mr. Stanley said that the bugs are out but the Woodcock are out and about. Ms. White wondered if they wanted to do a walk with flowers and birds or if they wanted to hold off for this year. It was noted that Ausbon Sargent had a lot of events planned for this summer. Mr. Deegan said that in July they have a walk at Low Plain. In August they have a canoe/kayak program around Otter Pond. It was noted that Knights Hill will also have weekly programs this summer. Chair Brown said that they should think about this and come back to the next meeting with their thoughts and/or ideas. Mr. Stanley said that perhaps they could come up with something different instead of a walk; perhaps a kayak trip into McDaniel's Marsh. Ms. White said she would call and find out when COA was going to this location and plan an event there for another day. She noted that the eagles are there now as are loons and ducks. Mr. Stanley said they should try to limit the number of people who could go. He added that he and his wife, Debbie, would be interested in participating in this event.

Mr. Stanley left the meeting at 3:30pm.

Calendar Events

Chair Brown got a letter from John Wilson regarding a meeting about a new Loon Bill. Mr. Anderson said that a bill was passed a long time ago that made it illegal to buy or sell lead sinkers less than an ounce in size. The bass fishermen are still allowed to use bass jigs. This is being found to be the cause of death in 45% of loons that have died. The loons will pick up sinkers that have been there a long time and use it as sand in their gullets. Within two weeks the loon is dead. The fishing community is fighting this as they don't want to be regulated. Top bass fishermen use tungsten jigs and not lead, but the use of lead is still widespread. Mr. Anderson said that anyone can go on to the New Hampshire Lakes Society website and view and sign a petition in favor of the bill.

Mr. Anderson said that PLPA has come up with a list of people who would be in charge of maintaining certain sections of streets and roads. Mr. Dancy said that Mr. Koron and Mr. Bowan were in charge of this list.

The next meeting is scheduled for 9am on Wednesday, May 16th.

**IT WAS MOVED (Dan Allen) AND SECONDED (Emma Crane) to adjourn the meeting.
THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 3:35pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristy Heath, Recording Secretary
Town of New London