



# TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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## **APPROVED Minutes of the February 15, 2012 Conservation Commission Meeting**

**MEMBERS PRESENT: Bob Brown (Chairman), Rick Anderson, Dan Allen, Andy Deegan, Terry Dancy, Laura Alexander, Peter Stanley (Zoning Board Administrator)**

**MEMBERS ABSENT: Emma Crane, Bob Crane (Webmaster), Ruth White, Sue Clough**

Chair Brown called the meeting to order at 2:00pm. He indicated that Clayton Platt would be joining the meeting but would arrive a little later on.

### **1. Easements**

#### Low Plain

Mr. Deegan said that an amended conservation easement deed for Low Plain has been sent to him by Rich Cook for their review. He had not looked it over yet but said that Mr. Cook was willing to meet with them to review it further. Mr. Stanley said his only issue is that they need to pay the contribution before the end of June. He suggested that Chair Brown speak with Ms. Hallquist as there were numerous line-accounts that were short on cash due to the 18-month budget configuration. He needs to let her know that this \$5,000 must be paid. Chair Brown said that this has been going on for a long time and they wanted some closure. He wondered if Mr. Deegan would review the document and forward his thoughts on it to the Conservation Commission. Mr. Deegan agreed to do so. Chair Brown wondered if they could send the Town and invoice now. Mr. Stanley thought that could and should be done.

#### Phillips Preserve

Mr. Deegan said they are ready to bring the Phillips Preserve easement to the Land's Committee on March 1<sup>st</sup>. Mr. Stanley said they will need a warrant article to accomplish this. Chair Brown said that they would discuss this in the Warrant Article portion of the agenda.

### **2. Low Plain Forestry Plan - Clayton Platt**

Chair Brown said that the Conservation Commission has discussed forestry in Low Plain and that they would like to have a plan created. He said they would like to hear his thoughts and suggestions.

Mr. Platt said that he thought the two higher priority areas were off of Wilder Lane and around the bog area. Mr. Stanley noted that the town owns the land right up to Wilder Lane. He said they should be sparing with regards to tree removal in the Wilder Lane area. The other areas in question of cutting had no issues.

Mr. Platt thought they would need two skidder bridges. Mr. Stanley said they should think long-term and they might want to put a couple culverts in. This would enable future cutting and maintenance in that area.

Chair Brown asked if the timber on the road would have any value. Mr. Platt said that that it had no value and would be chipped. Some would not even be large enough to chip. This cutting would be mostly done to improve wildlife habitat. Mr. Stanley said that they need to make sure they keep the beavers' food source in mind and cut in such a way to encourage them to stay to maintain the dam.

Chair Brown asked what the steps were that needed to be done after the plan was put together. Mr. Stanley said when it came time to do an actual harvest, they would want to formulate the concepts of the

plan (improve access for periodic harvest, create patch cut near the water to improve habitat, etc.) for the forester to follow. They would stay within the basic parameters of the plan. The forester may select who the logger would be and would supervise the cut. When asked, Mr. Platt said this was a service that he provides. He tends to give a recommendation to the owner of the parcels regarding a logger and leaves it up to them to choose.

Mr. Stanley said that if spring comes and there is a lot of work to do, would Mr. Platt have the time to devote to this sort of project. Mr. Platt said he would need to look into it. Mr. Stanley said that there are other options they could take, such as working with Leo Maslin, as the town and Mr. Platt had done together in the past. Mr. Stanley said they would not do a harvest in the summer months, but rather in the winter months when the ground was frozen. Mr. Dancy asked if next winter would be the time this would be done. Mr. Stanley said that this would be a good time-frame but there was some preparation that would need to be done beforehand.

Mr. Anderson asked how many abutters would be affected. Mr. Stanley said nothing much would be happening near the abutters. Mr. Platt didn't think there would be much concern or that they would even notice anything. Mr. Stanley said they went through this experience with the abutters of the Phillips Preserve. No one had a word to say or a complaint. It is the initial push to get into the woods that creates a stir sometimes. Chair Brown thought that the volunteer workers could help with this first step, come fall. Mr. Stanley agreed that this would be a good project. He thought they could also make a program out of this project and invite people to learn about what they are doing and why. It could teach people about how to maintain habitat for the beaver. Mr. Allen thought what was cleared before was about 100' wide. He didn't think they needed that wide a roadway. Mr. Stanley agreed and said that they may make it only about 30'.

Mr. Dancy asked when they would mark the trees for cutting. Mr. Stanley said that they should do it soon and if Mr. Platt would be asked to do it, they would need to pay a marking fee. Mr. Platt estimated it would be a few hundred dollars to do this. Mr. Stanley said they should include one patch cut down by the water.

Chair Brown asked Mr. Platt if he was comfortable with what they wanted and if he would be able to go and mark the trees. Mr. Platt believed he understood what they wanted. Mr. Stanley suggested he talk to Fish and Game about the possibility of getting a grant to use a Brontosaurus in the area. Everyone was in agreement that they'd like Mr. Platt to do the initial marking. Mr. Platt said he would send a proposal to the Conservation Commission for this work.

There was some talk about how to handle the proceeds of this harvest and what the money would be used for. Some of the money would be used to pay for the harvest. A warrant would be created to allow for funds of this sort to be able to be deposited back into the Conservation Commission's fund to help pay for things such as trail maintenance, etc.

Chair Brown said that he has tried to contact Dave Carey regarding the Laurel Lane and Mountain Road properties. Mr. Stanley gave Chair Brown Mr. Carey's cell phone number, as it appeared as though email communication was not working.

### **3. Approval of Minutes from January 18, 2012**

Mr. Allen said on page 2, last sentence: Mr. Allen withdrew his motion and encouraged Ms. Clough to make hers. (There was a lot of shuffling of papers at this point in the tape and it was hard to hear what Mr. Allen said at the end of his sentence. Please let me know if it needs to be changed!)

Mr. Allen said on page 5, he hung a cardboard sign from the gate, not on barbed wire.

**IT WAS MOVED (Laura Alexander) AND SECONDED (Terry Dancy) to approve the minutes of January 18, 2012, as amended. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

#### **4. Invasive Species**

Mr. Anderson said he met with some people who have had luck combating Knotweed. Doug Saigan gave him some pointers. Other people suggest other methods for success. Mr. Anderson said that he feels he has come to some conclusions about the best practices to eliminate Knotweed, which includes a combination of cutting and the use of herbicides. He would like to create a two-page homeowners guide about Knotweed to put on the Conservation Commission's website and also write an article about it to have published in the Intertown Record.

Mr. Stanley said if they cut in the late summer, there are no blossoms and so there would be no danger of spraying honeybees, which are attracted to the blooms. Mr. Anderson said that this is one approach, but Mr. Saigan believed spraying in the spring/summer was the best time. He said that there are many theories about the best way to combat Knotweed.

#### **5. EF&G Duck Boxes/ Blinds**

Mr. Stanley said he changed the nest material in the boxes last weekend. He was joined by three people from the Elkins Fish and Game Club. They wanted to learn about the procedure and spent about three hours together. He said there were seven functional boxes in Low Plain and in the marsh below the old land fill and did the same to the duck boxes there. Mr. Stanley said he has been doing this for almost 20 years and has been the only one continuously doing it, on behalf of the Fish and Game Club. The Elkins club is interested in being a part of this effort.

Mr. Stanley said the blinds have been pounded to pieces. The Club would like to take this project on as well. If the Conservation Commission had no objection, he thought they should encourage the help and authorize him to communicate this to the Club. Mr. Stanley added that the members of the Club who were with him that afternoon actually repaired a few of the duck boxes and will purchase the materials for replacing the blinds.

#### **6. Trails & Projects**

##### New London Hospital Trail

Chair Brown that the New London Hospital Trail is being proposed along the power lines. Chad Denning was interested in this in the past but the hospital put it on the back burner during their construction. It was suggested that PSNH be brought in as it is their easement and they will be meeting with them the following Tuesday to see if the trail could be created and maintained. He didn't feel it was a huge project but there was a suggestion that the surface be ADA compliant.

##### Phillips Preserve signs/trail work

Chair Brown said that they are having some new signs made. Two large ones at the base are 80" signs and the wording would be exactly the same as the old ones. A couple of smaller signs will also be replaced and some would be repainted.

##### Clark Lookout signs

Chair Brown said they had talked about some signs at the crossroads to point people towards the right. Those signs are in the works.

##### Clark Pond trail system

Mr. Allen said that he and Mike Todd cut the trail along what he calls the "North-Side Trail" which is opposite the Clark Pond natural area. There will probably be about 4-6 more weeks until the ice is gone so if anyone wants to see this cutting, they should get out there soon. Mr. Allen said that he cut a loop at the

end of the trail which turned out to be 100 yards short of their boundaries. He may go out and cut it further but that would mean cutting more trees. He asked if the name “North-Side Trail” was acceptable to others. It was agreed that this name was acceptable.

Mr. Allen asked if they thought, when Mr. Crane was well and back with them (he recently suffered some leg fractures) that he could be asked to go out and GPS this trail and put it on their Town maps. Chair Brown said that this was fine, although he didn’t know if Mr. Crane would be able to do it for a while. It was determined that they should wait a year to let the trail smooth out a bit before putting it on the Town maps.

#### Trail Maintenance Intern

Chair Brown said that they had discussed this previously and they all agreed to put it into the budget. He spoke with Ms. Hallquist to get it straight that the budget ends in June, which is the middle of the intern program. He wondered if this would pose a problem with the intern program. He felt there was a remote possibility of having this intern rejected. Last year they advertised in mid to late April, which he felt was too late. Mr. Stanley said they should send Doug McKenna an email to see if he’d like to intern with them again. Chair Brown said that was a possibility. It was also possible that Mr. McKenna would know someone else who would be a good fit. They could use the same wording as last year.

#### Merrimac County Department of Corrections Work Days

Chair Brown said that he has contacted the MCDC and has requested 6 work days this year. They would be all on Fridays from May through October. He hasn’t heard back yet to see if the request has been accepted.

#### Maps

Chair Brown said he talked with Mark Vernon who asked a question about the Webb Forest Brochure. He sent a revised version from June 10, which is not the one being used. Mr. Dancy said that they decided that since they had so many maps already that they weren’t going to re-print it because it wasn’t sufficiently wrong. It is definitely not the same map. Mr. Stanley recalled that some of the numbers on the trail were hard to read or were missing. Certainly things had changed.

Chair Brown wondered if when they went on their website and went to “trails” did it show the printed brochure? Mr. Stanley said he didn’t believe it did. It was suggested to ask Mr. Crane to link the brochure to the website so people could print out the most recent version themselves.

### **7. Budget**

Chair Brown said that nothing significant has come up since their last meeting.

Mr. Allen asked if he could be permitted to spend \$50 on some signage material. Chair Brown said that was fine.

### **8. Programs**

Chair Brown read that the Webb Forest Tour was successful. The Park Society has one coming up in Grantham in the next couple of weeks. Mr. Deegan said that it was an educational thing to teach people about timber harvesting.

### **9. Warrants**

Chair Brown said that he thought they had another month. He would be talking to Ms. Hallquist about placement within the other warrants. He wanted to appear in the middle instead of the end this year.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 21, 2012 @ 2:00 PM.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 3:27pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristy Heath, Recording Secretary  
Town of New London