

**Town of New London  
Conservation Commission  
January 20, 2010**

**Present:**

Andy Deegan (Chairman), Bob Brown, Sue Clough, Emma Crane, Terry Dancy, Vicki Koron

**Also:**

Bob Crane, Judith Guyer-Almstadt (recording secretary), Peter Stanley

Andy Deegan opened the meeting at 1 p.m.

The minutes from the November 2009 and December 2009 meetings were accepted and unanimously approved.

**Trails report**

Bob Brown gave a detailed report on trail work being done. The entire section on Lyon Brook (from South Pleasant to Lakeside) has been completed, and the work on Crecenti bog (the far right loop) is next. Some work has been done in there, but there is a lot of decayed boardwalk. The amount of boardwalk to be replaced is significant. Bob estimates that there is close to 800 feet to be replaced there (will go in the spring to get more precise measurements). There is only one section (just above midpoint where the trail gets somewhat elevated) that doesn't have boardwalk. Bob has contacted the Merrimack County Diversion Program in Concord (a voluntary program for individuals charged with a criminal offense, and who do community work as a way of avoiding prosecution and possible conviction). They have tentatively agreed on Saturday mornings although this is subject to snow melt and water level. The volunteers will carry hemlock wood to the required area. If possible, it is Bob's goal to get the work done on that loop before summer arrives. He reminded everybody that there is much to be done, and that the trail work can only be tackled one loop at a time. Terry pointed out that there might be some parts of that section of the trail where no boardwalk is necessary, or where it might even be more advantageous if there were no boards at all (as opposed to a few scattered boards). Bob agreed that the section up towards the middle is rarely wet, but it gets worse as you go further around. Bob would like to try and use longer sections stating that six-foot sections are not long enough, and have a tendency to become unstable. Terry is concerned about the danger cutting roots would have on the trees. Terry also mentioned that when this topic was discussed years ago, it was argued whether or not a boardwalk was even appropriate in that

one particular area or not. Bob agreed to look at it again to make an assessment. Apparently the link between the left loop going around, and when it comes back (a shortcut) is under water as well. It was discussed whether or not this particular shortcut should just be closed (rather than repaired). Bob stated he will begin watching closely again at the end of April. Until then he will try to prefab, and carry some completed sections in. This makes the wood heavier to carry, but helps the actual work on the trail go a bit faster.

### **Boyle-Anderson Boathouse Permit**

Andy was recently approached by the owners (as a first step) to see if he saw any issues moving forward with this project. Andy agreed to present the project to the commission, get their feedback, and then talk it over with DES to let them know what the commission's opinion of the project is. The permit application is for a standard dredge and fill on Little Lake Sunapee. The present boathouse is sinking. They are proposing to tear the present structure down, redo structure underneath, and then build a new boathouse (somewhat smaller). Peter pointed out that the new boathouse will most likely be used more than the current structure, but that there aren't many alternatives (other than to allow the owners to rebuild the structure). Personally he feels that boathouses are interesting features to have around the lakes. In its current state, the boathouse is not nice to look at, and unsafe. Additionally, there are only several boathouses on Little Lake Sunapee. It was unanimously decided that Andy will communicate to the owners and DES that the commission has no objections to the proposed project.

### **Conservation Easement Warrants for the Town Meeting**

The warrants for the town meeting must be submitted by February 2<sup>nd</sup>. There are three warrants to be submitted: the conservation easement on the Messer Pond property; the remaining easement on Low Plain; and a petition warrant (25 signatures) for the town's contribution of \$25,000 in the conservation commission's CIP fund.

Andy had already drafted the warrants for the Messer Pond easement and Low Plain (and passed it around for review). Bob inquired about the cost of such easements for the taxpayer. Surveys identifying the bounds of the properties are already available for both easements. With regard to the Messer Pond easement, the stewardship donation is budgeted for \$2500. The stewardship donation for the Low Plain easement is \$0. With regard to the Low Plain easement, there is the possibility of amending existing easement (by changing the legal description). Peter offered to prepare a short history about easements for Andy, in order to be ready to answer any questions at the town

meeting. A conservation easement limits certain types of uses or prevents development from taking place on that particular piece of land often enabling tax benefits for the landowners. Andy will finalize both warrants, forward via email to the commission members for review, and submit to the Town Clerk by the deadline.

Andy has also created a draft petition warrant for the CIP fund deposit. Specific legal language is required by the state for this document. It is currently worded as a \$25,000 contribution for the land acquisition fund. Andy started a discussion about how the commission would respond if the Selectmen agree on a contribution less than \$25,000, and what amount would be considered reasonable. Andy reminded the committee that although there would always be people trying to stand in the way of spending on conservation, most people are willing to expend funds for conservation, and the feels \$25,000 is not an unreasonable amount for this purpose. However, it was decided that the committee would accept whatever amount the budgeting committee agreed to. With regard to the petition itself, each entry requires the printed name, signature, and address of a registered voter. Andy was going to add signature lines to the document, and distribute to the members via email. All agreed that the goal is to get as many signatures as possible, and each member will print out the document, and circulate the petition (with the goal of getting as many signatures as possible). The completed petitions must be in the box by Feb. 1<sup>st</sup>.

## **Other business**

### **Annexation on Evans Brewster property**

Peter informed the commission that the board is reviewing a proposal this coming Tuesday to do an annexation on the Evans Brewster property (the southeast half of what was Tracey Farm). The proposal involves carving out a 5-8 acres lot around the house occupied by current owners. 40 acres will be carved off and annexed or merged with Tom Cuttle's lot. The other piece will be merged with an existing lot owned by Heather Hanson. There will be no change in the total number of lots in the community as a result. Only the configuration of those lots involved will change significantly. The expressed intent of this annexation is so that conservation easements can be granted on the land (which currently could still be developed).

### **Agriculture Commission**

Peter has been talking with a number of people about forming an Agriculture commission. By law, the Conservation Commission (and a member of the Board of Selectman) is entitled to a seat on the

Agriculture Commission. Peter has put together a list of people who are on some level currently involved (in NL) in agriculture or who have some productive connection to the industry. The proposed commission would have anywhere between three and seven members. The plan moving forward is to get together with several of these individuals, and start an agriculture committee. The committee would meet several times during the coming year, and put together a plan. The plan would include the stated purpose of the proposed commission, and provide the draft language for a warrant article to be voted on at the town meeting to establish the commission. Once the commission has been established, the Selectmen will appoint members. As Peter sees it, the purpose of such a commission is to become involved in land-use planning, as well as provide information on things such as soils, soil quality, agricultural opportunities, etc. Additionally, he believes it is important to have a group with agricultural background that is able to actively interact with the planning board (in particular) in developing regulations. In addition, the committee would help the community find new ways to use as well as conserve agricultural properties, e.g. pasturing opportunities that would help both the needs of the property owner and the farmer. Peter is convinced there are many such opportunities available that would meet goals and objectives of such a commission. It was agreed that the conservation commission is supportive of the concept of an agricultural commission.

### **Milfoil prevention/monitoring**

Bob brought up the issue of milfoil prevention/monitoring as well as the funding for this important work. All present agreed that clarification of the process in place is critical to ensure the work will continue, and the necessary funding is available.

The "April letter" contains important information about the application process i.e. what should be included in the application, the timeline for submission, year-end reporting requirements, etc. It was agreed that the "April letter" needs to be mailed out consistently, and early enough for all parties to meet the applicable deadlines. In the past, the lake associations were able to depend on the availability of state funds. Today, the application for funds must be completed in March. This means the lake associations have to make early decisions with regard to funding requirements. There were already substantial funding cutbacks last year. There is a growing concern whether or not the lake associations will have enough funding to continue their commitment to the milfoil prevention work. Many of the applicable deadlines for funding are out of synch with the towns'.

Milfoil contamination in our lakes would have an enormous economic impact on the town. The Conservation Commission fully supports the

program for milfoil prevention/monitoring, and believes it is of great importance. They strongly feel the program should become a town issue i.e. the lake associations should continue to administer the milfoil monitoring, however, the town should ensure that the work gets done. The commission also discussed their roles and responsibilities as it pertains to this issue, and it was discussed what measures might be taken to facilitate the process. All agreed that the commission could offer some support with the communication process. Vicki, Terry, and Bob will draft a letter (in coordination with Jessie as in the past the letter has come from her desk) to be presented to the Board of Selectmen outlining a new timeline and requirements of the application process.

**Donation by Brian Butterworth**

The Conservation Commission acknowledged receipt of the generous donation made by Brian Butterworth. They greatly appreciate his generosity. The check will be given to Ruth to be processed.

**New Recording Secretary/Commission Meeting Time**

Judith Guyer-Almstadt (new recording secretary) was welcomed to the meeting. Due to time conflicts on Wednesday afternoon, the commission unanimously agreed to hold all future meetings on Wednesday mornings beginning at 9:00 a.m. The next meeting will take place on February 8, 2010.

The meeting ended at 2:30.

Respectfully submitted,

Judith Guyer-Almstadt  
Recording Secretary