



TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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APPROVED Minutes of the January 19, 2011 Conservation Commission Meeting

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bob Brown (Chairman), Emma Crane, Dan Allen, Vicki Koron, Sue Clough, Terry Dancy, Peter Stanley (Zoning Board Administrator)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Laura Alexander, Andy Deegan, Ruth White

OTHERS PRESENT: Bob Crane (Webmaster)

Chair Brown called the meeting to order at 9:30am. He noted that the recording secretary was not present, but that they would be recording the meeting for her to use to compile the minutes at home. They discussed having her continue doing the minutes in this fashion in the event that she cannot attend the meetings. Mr. Stanley said it was the same as Ms. Heath sitting there, if she is using a recording device that works. The Commission was happy to have this continue.

1. Meeting Minutes - December 15, 2010

Chair Brown said that they had updated the minutes prior to this meeting to include the desirable land list.

IT WAS MOVED (Terry Dancy) AND SECONDED (Emma Crane) to accept the minutes, as amended.
THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

2. Budget- 2010, 2011/12

Chair Brown said that they are currently a little under, including the Forest Study. When they get the bill for it, it will go into the 2010 budget. He hasn't heard much regarding the 2011/12 budget. Another meeting is scheduled for January 31st at 7pm at Whipple Hall. It was his understanding that this is when the final recommendations would be presented. He updated that the last meeting he attended in December they were looking at things very closely. They wanted to talk about CIP but the big question on their budget was that it included the proposed intern. There were a lot of red flags, as they were adding an employee. He gave the necessary information on the need of the intern. They seemed to want to negotiate this position against the CIP request. They seem to have a problem with the \$422,000 sitting in their land acquisition fund, as to many other tax payers. Perhaps it is time for compromise as they have discussed. Their 50k request was denied, and the \$25,000 was dispersed between 18 months budget. He noted that zero was not a compromise. Chair Wheeler thought perhaps if they met half-way, it would be acceptable. He hoped that Mr. Wheeler would continue with this thought process at the January 31st meeting, and encouraged those on the Conservation Commission to attend the meeting. For the 2011 budget, not including contributions to the capital reserve was \$14,330 is the operating budget for 2011, which excludes the minutes. That is down from \$14,806 and is roughly 3% less. Ms. Crane asked what they spent in 2010. Chair Brown said he projected they were somewhere around \$1,000 below budget.

Andy Hagar contacted Chair Brown and they have \$422,000 in the fund. Some of the instruments are coming due and he was wondering if they should be put in long term or short term. He didn't believe anything had changed with the Otter Pond property but that if something did develop, he would let him know immediately.

3. Warrant Articles (RSA 36-A:4-a)

Chair Brown said that there would be three of them and he suggested having a workshop on how to approach them. Some key notes that needed to be made during their presentation needed to include the qualified organization segment, the in-town contribution part, and the out of town contribution. Mr. Stanley said that these articles would give the ability for them to accomplish more with their dollars than they would otherwise. To make a contribution to a project near New London will allow for conservation without ownership. He felt the out-of-town article was valuable as it might be to the benefit of those involved and not just those who live in the specific town.

Mr. Dancy said that it seemed desirable to have some specific, recognizable examples to illustrate the benefits of contributing to other town projects. He mentioned conservation in Springfield that affects the watersheds in New London.

Chair Brown asked how the group would like to work through the articles. Ms. Clough thought there were some members missing at the meeting who would like to help out as well. Mr. Stanley noted that they should prepare a very small piece to be read before Town Meeting for each article. He hoped that they would put the one more likely to pass first and the more difficult ones afterwards. Mr. Stanley said that he would come up with some simple text for them as a starting point. Everyone agreed that this would be helpful. Chair Brown said that there would be a brief review of the text and Mr. Stanley noted that if they met as a quorum, it would need to be noticed.

Ms. Crane said that at the last Planning Board meeting, they voted to support the Conservation Commission's efforts. Chair Brown asked if the Planning Board was generally receptive of standing up at Town Meeting in support of things. Mr. Stanley said that they were not. Members may stand as taxpayers in favor or against things, but they would not do so as part of the Planning Board.

4. CC Land Acquisitions Study

No news on Otter Pond. He asked if there was anything new from the Crowell property. Mr. Stanley said there wasn't. They have the deed but it has not been executed yet.

5. Trails & Projects (Volunteers)

Mr. Allen said that the day after the big snow, he groomed the ski track. It was walked over very quickly. He noticed that no one snowshoes the Dancy trail because it hadn't been packed, but the Norman trail had been packed and used. He commented that many of them were ice fishermen. Mr. Allen suggested putting up signs that ask people not to walk through the trail. He also suggested making the Dancy trail more attractive and perhaps putting a sign that says "Easy Trail" there so more people would walk in that direction. In terms of snowmobiling, the Dancy trail may be an option. He wondered if they wanted to keep a narrow snowshoe track. Mr. Stanley wondered if he could detach the groomer and pack the snow down with his snowmobile to make it a little easier for people to walk on. Ms. Koron said that she recently went on the Dancy trail and it looked wonderful. Mr. Allen said that she had gone out right after he had groomed it. She thanked him for his work and commented that it was a wonderful loop.

Chair Brown said that he needs to get back to their potential volunteers to discuss how much time/hours they would need. They come with supervision, but they need help identifying the task and pointing people in the right direction. He hoped that the intern they hire could help in this capacity. He is willing to do what he can, but was sure that if they get the help of the inmates, they will have more help and larger numbers of people. There was still work in the Bog that needed to be done, and also in Low Plain to be done. Chair Brown said that the inmates would be week days and the diversion groups would be mostly

Saturdays. A 4-5 hour day for the diversion group was usual. They also need to work again with their adopters and other volunteers to get some of this work done ahead of time, as the people who come in from out of town should not be operating machinery like chain saws.

Mr. Stanley said that they should wait and see how the rest of the winter goes. There could be an ice storm that would cause a lot of clearing and cutting. Mr. Allen said that Clark Lookout needs to have some work done as it had been 2 years since anything was done there. Ms. Clough said the trail behind Greg Berger's may need some help and wondered if anyone had taken a look at it. Mr. Crane said that it is in pretty good shape but that there were several Eagle projects going on in that area. Ms. Crane said there was a bridge that needed to be replaced. Mr. Crane said that Mr. Denning (Recreation Director) has been working with that trail. Ms. Crane said the area behind the school needs signs. Chair Brown said that he could install signs, with direction, in February or March.

Ms. Koron said that she knows some people who met land owner, Jonathan Ohler and he was so excited to find people using his trails. Mr. Crane said that in the winter time he is fine with it, but was not so sure he wanted the foot traffic during the summer. Mr. Dancy said that his property offers a potentially nice stretch of trail. It was noted that Mr. Berger was happy to have people in the trails behind Springledge but doesn't have time to find out the availability of using the trail. Chair Brown said that perhaps Mr. Denning would be willing to help maintain the trail. If they can get permission from all the land owners to cross their land and maintain the trail, that would be another project for the volunteers this summer. Mr. Crane said that Mr. Denning is currently maintaining some of the trails in the Kidder-Cleveland-Clough area.

Chair Brown said he would set up some dates and asked if members of the Conservation Commission would be willing to help direct the workers. Mr. Allen said he would help once. Mr. Stanley said that it would be difficult for him to help during the week, except on Friday when he is not in the office.

6. Invasive species

Mr. Stanley said that it may be desirable for a group like convicts to go to the overlook at low plain and cut down all of the knot weed that is up there so there is nothing that stands very high off the ground. When it comes back it would be easier to treat it. He said he had it knocked back for 8-10 years but it has grown back in full force. He added that there is a lot of poison ivy there as well. Mr. Allen asked if they have a chipper they could use. Mr. Stanley said the town has a chipper they could use. He added that this is something that can only be done by hand as no machinery can go into that area.

Ms. Clough asked who provides the tools to do this work for the inmates. Chair Brown said he has borrowed some things from Richard Lee (Public Works Director) in the past and may be able to do so again as long as they take care of the items and bring them back.

Chair Brown said that Laura Alexander wondered about her future role with the Conservation Commission, as she has had a conflict with the meeting date and time. She has been such a resource to them and he said he would talk to the rest of the commission about it. He said he would talk to her a little more to see if this conflict was long term. Mr. Stanley suggested meeting in the afternoon instead of the morning.

Chair Brown said that Ms. Alexander and Ms. Crane's spots on the Conservation Commission were up in 2011. Before reappointing these two members, they may need to be interviewed by the Board of Selectmen. Ms. Levine has a list of people who are interested in serving the community in some way. New members or existing re-appointed members would be appointed in March.

7. Mail

Chair Brown noted the items that had arrived in the Conservation Commission’s mailbox. They consisted of:

- a. Wetland application
- b. Messer Pond stewardship contribution –has already been paid.
- c. Viggo Carstensen –wetlands crossings for driveway
- d. Jesseman – watershed flow data
- e. Notice from Ausbon Sargent of receipt of \$5,000.00
- f. Monitoring reports from Ausbon Sargent for the Cook property
- g. Bill from the Conservation Commission Association for \$250.00

IT WAS MOVED (Sue Clough) AND SECONDED (Dan Allen) to pay the bill for \$250.00 for the Conservation Commission Association. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

- h. Thank-you letter from Cote & Reney with a copy of their new price list. Chair Brown said it didn’t look like it went up significantly.
- i. Monitoring easement for Clark Lookout

Mr. Stanley said the CC has a fire safe filing cabinet that is locked and no one seems to have the key. They should either find the key or have a lock smith come and make a new key. Mr. Stanley had no idea what was in the cabinet. Chair Brown said he would like to look at the cabinet after the meeting to see if they can identify the key number and/or get a lock smith in to get it open. Mr. Stanley said that if they find they don’t need the cabinet, they can give it to the Planning Board, as they have to buy such filing cabinets often.

9. Calendar events

The schedule on the winter programs was sent out by Ruth White. Mr. Crane said that it is now on the web but to their knowledge, was not sent in to the Kearsarge Shopper. It was noted that Ms. White was away and someone would try to contact her to find out if an ad was sent in.

10. Other

Colby-Sawyer College Natural Resource Inventory Report – Mr. Stanley made three copies. Library has one, Chair Brown has one, and one was given, by Mr. Dancy to the Wilmot Conservation Commission. Chair Brown said it was a good report with a lot of information in it.

Mr. Stanley said that there was a repeal in the legislature of the shoreline protection act. He wasn’t sure how it would play out. There were also a variety of other bills, including one that involves the comprehensive shoreline protection act. One involves work done after having to cross a wetland and if the work is approved by DES, the applicant does not need to file a shoreline permit as it is already in existence. That has been expanded to include the alteration of training permit. If they affect 100,000sq or more, they won’t have to get both permits, as they do now. Mr. Stanley felt this was efficient and was a good idea.

All man-made water conveyed structures would be exempt including LID structures from permitting, as long as they don’t exist in a wetland to begin with. The only things that will still count are manmade wetlands. For example, man-made ditches would not need to be permitted to cross or gain access to a lot.

Mr. Stanley said there is also a bill to change the definition and baseline qualifications of “prime wetland” going from a minimum of two acres to a minimum of five acres. He testified against the bill on behalf of the Association of Regional Planning Commissions. He is trying to steer them towards a better way of scoring wetlands.

Mr. Dancy referenced a recent study that showed that 20% were using surface water and 30% were using a domestic water supply. In this area, those using drilled wells have not been of any concern.

Chair Brown said at the last meeting they heard a proposal from Mr. DiClerico about his gifting a parcel of land to the Town. The Conservation Commission approved this idea in principal, as did the Board of Selectmen. Mr. DiClerico is due to appear before the Planning Board at their next meeting on January 25th.

IT WAS MOVED (Dan Allen) AND SECONDED (Sue Clough) to adjourn the Conservation Commission meeting of January 19, 2011. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

The meeting adjourned at 10:49am.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristy Heath, Recording Secretary
Town of New London