



TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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Minutes of the July 21, 2010 Conservation Commission Meeting

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bob Brown (Chairman), Terry Dancy, Laura Alexander, Andy Deegan, Bob Crane, Emma Crane, Ruth White, Vicki Koron, Sue Clough, Peter Stanley (Zoning Board Administrator)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Dan Allen

Chair Brown called the meeting to order at 9:00am.

Minutes Review

Chair Brown noted that the minutes were on the website and asked if anyone wanted to make a motion to approve them.

IT WAS MOVED (Laura Alexander) AND SECONDED (Vicki Koron) to accept the minutes of June 16, 2010. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Recording Secretary

Chair Brown noted that the group needed a secretary, as Kristy Heath had agreed to take minutes for only the summer months. It was suggested by Ms. Heath that if they moved their monthly meeting to 9:30am instead of 9:00am, that she could continue taking the minutes for the Conservation Commission. The group agreed that this was possible.

IT WAS MOVED (Laura Alexander) AND SECONDED (Ruth White) to move the Conservation Commission meetings to 9:30am, every third Wednesday of the month. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Conservation Commission Land Acquisitions Study

Chair Brown said that he was not present at the land acquisition study meeting but heard that an excellent presentation was given and that the Board of Selectmen was happy that they had come to talk to them before moving forward with anything. Ms. Alexander said that at the meeting they described the project and Mr. Deegan described the work that had been done with the LSPA. Walt Goddard was also present and spoke on behalf of the project. It was noted that Mark Kaplan said that it was a nice change they were making in communication. Mr. Deegan said that they seemed to be behind the project, due to the fact that there was so much support from other groups involved.

Mr. Dancy said that the key to the project being accepted and successful is to have fundraising be a part of it. He said the LSPA people were familiar with fundraising. Ms. Clough asked if it would be wise to set up some fundraising plans now or to wait until they know they can move forward with the land acquisition. Mr. Deegan said the project is still on hold and the attorney involved realizes the work that has been put into this, and he will get back to them if and when they can move forward. Mr. Stanley said that the Conservation Commission is the obvious choice for them to sell the property to, as by doing so, they will be cutting out the middle man and saving the client \$50,000. He added that they are prepared to move forward with fundraising, but until the property has become available, they should not be promoting anything. He noted that there are some people who have already committed to supporting the project if

and when the property becomes available. It was noted that New London would be the only town involved in the project that would need to go to Town Meeting to move forward with their part of the purchase.

Chair Brown asked if the project has to be presented in the form of a warrant article and wondered when the application for the article had to be submitted. Mr. Stanley said that if it was by petition, it would be due in February. Otherwise, it would be some time in January. Chair Brown said that if they find that the property is ready to sell, they will have roughly until the end of the year to put it on the warrant. There was talk of possibly putting something in place as a place-holder in the warrant articles in case the purchase was going to happen. Mr. Stanley thought they should just leave it alone and not worry about holding a place in the warrants but wait until they have time to fundraise and get the support of the Board of Selectmen. They agreed to remain in a holding pattern and keep their eye on the situation until further notice.

Trail Projects

Chair Brown said it has been very hot for trail work. Dan Allen has been working very hard on the Norman Trail, blasting and rolling stones. Gerry Gold took some pictures which were sent to Mr. Crane who posted them online. Mr. Crane noted the ski loop is now called the Allen Ski Trail.

Mr. Allen asked if they could expend a couple hundred dollars for blasting. He is currently using a mechanism that is activated by compressed air. He has managed to move some enormous rocks. It was determined that some money could be spent for this effort.

Chair Brown said they had another work day scheduled for the next Saturday. If the weather continues to be hot, they will do some brush trimming in the Bog area, which is in the shade. Mr. Stanley said that he and his wife walked the Wolf Tree to Webb Forest Trail the other day. Two bridges there are extremely dangerous; they are rotted and falling in. He thought it better to have no bridge at all. Ms. White asked who should be monitoring that trail. Ms. Clough said that Mark Vernon was. Mr. Stanley said that the location of these bridges was in the shade and could be a nice place for the diversion group to work. Mr. Dancy said it originally had no bridges and people just walked through the mud. Ms. White said that this emphasizes her point that the trails are not monitored. Unless people from the Conservation Commission happen to go out and see the trails, they don't know if something is wrong. She was concerned that their existing trails are not being monitored enough. Mr. Dancy said that Mark Vernon has been replacing the signs in that area and that he has more to finish.

Chair Brown said the Peril Bog Loop has a few spaces that need to be fixed up. They have some boardwalk made up that they can bring in. They also have replaced quite a bit of boardwalk in the Tundra. It is dry there now, but in April it is ankle-deep water. They need to add some outriggers to some boardwalks in the Peril Bog Loop, which has worked to stabilize others that exist in the same conditions.

Chair Brown said that they have plenty of lumber and so will continue their work. Mr. Stanley said if they used the woods roads, they could drive the materials all the way up. They would need to get permission from Van Webb. Mr. Deegan said he would get in touch with Mr. Allen to let him know the two bridges needed to be replaced. Mr. Stanley said that some of the boardwalk sections from the Bog trail could be used and that a new bridge was not necessary.

Ms. White said that there were about 10 missing number signs on the Bog trail. She felt it was embarrassing that there were so many missing. Ms. Koron said she has two numbers at her home that she found on the ground and thinks that in the spring or winter people pick them up and move them. Mr. Stanley asked how deep it is between where the numbers are. Mr. Dancy said between 20-25 feet. They use long poles, although they can sink. Ms. White didn't feel that many were sinking, but were

being taken. Chair Brown said he could make some more signs but only if they had several days of rain when he couldn't do work outside.

Ms. Clough asked about Great Brook Trail. She and her husband maintain the trail. The signage is supposed to be put out, but she wondered who was responsible for doing so. Mr. Dancy said the Conservation Commission has always put in the informative signs. She wanted to know about the blazes or signs to tack into the trees. Mr. Dancy said the Greenway was supposed to do that. Ms. White suggested calling Jerry Gold instead of Dan Allen about this.

Mr. Stanley said that he has been told that at the Devil's Half-Acre the beaver dam is about 5'tall and was causing some flooding out one end of the trail. It is located in Springfield. He wanted to talk to whoever manages the forest to see about getting a beaver pipe or have some beavers removed from the area.

Website

Chair Brown said that Mr. Crane would like some backup help to do maintenance on the website. At the last meeting, it was agreed that members were going to think of some possible solutions. Mr. Crane said that it doesn't take up very much time right now, but that anyone who would be taking it over would need the appropriate software that only works on his computer. He uses Dreamweaver, which Adobe has purchased and a new version is a couple thousand dollars. The Conservation Commission took over their part of the website (from the Town), as they wanted to do things that the Town was not able to do. Mr. Dancy asked if they could use a different program. Chair Brown asked if he would like to make a recommendation.

Mr. Crane said that if they just wanted to make announcements, they could change the links to the Town's website. To put the minutes on the site, they could change the software. Ms. White said that that is not all they want to do. They have a project link and seasonal pictures links that need to change. She felt that if they want a website, they should have it kept current, updated and complete. She said it is good and has a lot of information on it, including the trails. Mr. Stanley said they might want to look at what the other area Conservation Commissions are doing and see if the possibility of cost-sharing for software was available. Sunapee, Newbury or Wilmot may be willing to share the costs with New London. If they formed an association of small Conservation Commissions, they would not violate any agreements having to do with the software. Mr. Dancy said the SRK Greenway has a website that they could check into. Mr. Crane said he would speak to Brian Farmer from Wilmot to find out some more information.

NLCC/NLDPW Forest Nursery

Chair Brown said that he has been watering the saplings twice a week and explained that they haven't been moved yet. He hasn't worked out with Richard Lee (Public Works Director) who would be watering them and when. They are all potted. The Maples have grown close to a foot. The Scotch Pines have grown well too. Nothing has died and they have about 116 saplings. Chair Brown said that he would work with Mr. Lee in the fall to have the trees moved and work out a watering schedule.

NH Lakes - Watershed Stewardship Program

Chair Brown explained that Messer Pond Protective Association held a meeting the previous Saturday with a speaker from NH Lakes, who spoke about a Watershed Stewardship Program. It is a pilot program that is coming up and they plan to do a Lake Conservation Core project on Messer Pond next summer. He summarized that they identify at least three shorefront properties with issues and need to be restored in a more favorable condition with keys on erosion and stormwater management. When it gets to identifying private properties it might be a little sensitive. One thing that he is concerned with is that the residents in that area discontinue the summer party they have out on the island in Messer Pond. The people put rafts out there and no one is supposed to even go on the island. It is heavily used. He told the speaker from NH

Lakes that he'd like to be kept in the loop with regards to this project. Chair Brown said it is a sensitive issue about some misunderstandings of ownership of some of the properties.

It was noted that the ramp/boat launch area is eroding and thought he'd talk to Mr. Lee about putting some stone in between the ramp and the road. Mr. Stanley suggested he talk to Fire Chief, Jay Lyon, who would most likely do something about it.

2010 Budget

Chair Brown said that the Conservation Commission is in good shape and haven't spent much at all. Mr. Stanley suggested that for the budget next year they include some money to hire an intern for next summer to work on the trails. It would not be a tremendous amount of money. They would be needed for two months, and could assign a week's worth of work at a time to the intern, and whenever they found themselves without a project, they could prune, clean and clear trails, and work on bridges, etc. Mr. Stanley felt that it would need to be more than \$10/hour and that they would be considered a part-time employee of the Town. Ms. Alexander said that students looking for internships from Colby-Sawyer College need at least 244 hours of work for it to count.

Mr. Stanley said that they have the whole Clark Pond trail system and many miles of trails that need to be maintained. They would need to outfit the intern with a pack frame that could carry tools and equipment. Ms. Alexander said that they should advertise the internship beyond Colby-Sawyer College, as there may be returning students from the New London area who may be looking for an internship. Mr. Stanley said he would get the hourly rate from Carol Fraley. Ms. Clough said they should look also for someone who could do work with the website.

Mr. Stanley said that there are three upcoming weddings at Clark Lookout this year. He suggested to the people using the area, that they do some pruning, mowing and liming to make it easier for their guests to access and maneuver the trail. To his surprise, the people have already gone in there and done some work on the trail.

Budget/Planning Board meeting (CIP) August 16, 2010

Chair Brown said that they currently have \$420,000 in the land-acquisition fund. They still have room for more before they hit the \$500,000 mark, which is the cap. Since they have a specific project in mind, the question is how much they want contributed to the fund this year. Mr. Stanley said they got their funding by petition last year. It passed, but not by a lot. Mr. Dancy said it was \$25,000 that was deposited last year. Mr. Stanley said that if the goal is \$500,000 they are getting close to it so perhaps they could increase the fund incrementally by \$20,000. If the CIP does not go with that, they will have to go with another petition warrant article.

Mr. Stanley said that the Pratt property adjacent from the Low Plane amounts to 22 acres. If that becomes available for \$100,000 they would want to purchase it. He said that it is buildable and they could be creative and divide the lot and keep the half closest to low plane.

Mr. Deegan asked if the money was for land purchase only or could it be used for land easement. Mr. Stanley said he thought it could be used for both and suggested changing the language to specify this more clearly this year. He said it is not clear enough and should be clarified. Mr. Deegan said that Town funds can only be used after approval at Town Meeting. Mr. Dancy said they should plan on broadening the definition of the Capital Fund language to be able to allow for easements and the like. It should include possible purchasing of property that straddles two towns or the ability to give money to purchase other town-owned land that could impact New London.

Mr. Stanley gave some history as to how the Conservation Commission has received money from the Town. The Conservation Commission used to have a \$10,000 budget each year. They'd spend \$2,000 and \$8,000 would go into their general fund. The Conservation Commission made some purchases that raised a few eyebrows. For instance, the Colby Sanctuary was purchased in 1972 for \$18,000. This was an extremely high price for a landlocked piece of land with only a 6' right of way to it. No appraisals were done or required, as they are today. This set off some people in town and raised some concerns. Discussion ensued with the Budget Committee about the process of how the Conservation Commission purchases property. The Capital Reserve was set up. A simple vote of the Conservation Commission was not enough when spending that kind of money.

Mr. Stanley said that they do have the account which has about \$12,000 in it, which is money accumulated from donations and gifts. That money can be used for an appraisal without getting permission from Town Meeting. It can be used with only the approval of the Conservation Commission.

Chair Brown asked if they wanted to replenish the land acquisition fund, if it would have to be done with a warrant article. Ms. Alexander said that if they reword their warrant article for the land acquisition fund, they can use that money for those things as well.

Mr. Stanley said they should add a line item to replenish the fund and have a cap on it. Mr. Dancy said they probably don't want to get into a discussion with the Budget Committee about this fund in addition to the other one. Mr. Dancy said they should say that they'd like to go back to \$50,000 deposit per year, but would like to suggest going to \$25,000 again for 2011. Mr. Crane said the Planning Board had unanimously approved the \$25,000 last year. The Conservation Commission agreed that the number they should request would be \$25,000. Ms. Clough wondered what else was happening in the CIP before they cut theirs in half. She thought they should ask for a higher number in case they drop it down even more. Ms. Crane said that with her prior experience with the CIP process, they would do well to hold it at \$25,000, although personally, she'd like to see be more.

Mail

Chair Brown said that he received several notices on Jeff Sullivan for a 300 square foot deck. Mr. Stanley said this was on Pleasant Lake.

Chair Brown said they have received a notice from the Wetlands Bureau regarding instructions on the use of routine roadway and railway utilities. Mr. Stanley said that it was regarding the replacement of culverts along Twin Lake Villa Road, across from Randy Foose's property.

Mr. Stanley explained that a resident, Gary Anderson, cut trees on the shorefront of Little Lake Sunapee. He is going to replace the boathouse that he tore down. He said that he was not intending to cut any vegetation but ended up doing so. He was noticed of a violation. Mr. Stanley said that the garage that is being built on the property was also not in compliance.

Mr. Stanley said that resident, Mauli MacDonald wants to put up a green-roofed gazebo on her business property. Her concept will be displayed at the Planning Board meeting on Tuesday, July 27th.

Mr. Stanley also shared that the Petry's who had proposed a home business in the past, with many complications, did eventually get approval for it but never did it. They are regrouping and pulling back due to current conditions. They have approval already and want to tweak their plans a bit. They want to add a box truck and temporarily work out of their attached garage until they can build a barn in the next 18 months or so.

Mr. Stanley said that the Griffith's daughter has requested the installation of a Planet Aid box to be put behind the WNTK building.

Mr. Stanley said that there are also a couple tree cutting requests on Pleasant Lake, which are minor. There is also one request on Little Lake Sunapee, in addition to the one for Mr. Anderson.

Mr. Stanley added that at the bottom of Burpee Hill at Carter Road, a resident named Viggo Cartensen owns 17 acres and has been trying to sell it for years. He has decided to subdivide and sell a 13.3 acre parcel and will retain the rest. There is a mapped stream on the property. The driveway will be hopefully 100' from the mapped stream. There will be two stream crossings to get into the development. Mr. Stanley said that Matt McClay, who owns Pleasant Acres Landscaping, wants to clear the larger parcel for pasturing animals. Portions of it were good pasture at one time.

Other

Ms. Alexander wondered why in the Hall Farm area, the Public Works Department has been ripping out the vegetation in the ditches that slows the water down and is putting soil and rocks in its place. She felt that the vegetation was already doing this job. Mr. Stanley said that they are cleaning out built-up sediment. Mr. Dancy said this will be a disaster because the water from these ditches goes down into the lake. Mr. Stanley said they should arrange a meeting with Mr. Lee who could explain it. He said it is better to express concerns with Mr. Lee and see what they can do, if anything, or to set up some experiments for alternative ways to deal with this issue. Mr. Stanley explained that it is the obligation of the Public Works Department to maintain the ditch lines. Complaining about it won't solve anything.

Ms. Clough said that on Whitney Brook they increased the holding pond where the culverts come through, which was helpful.

Mr. Deegan wondered if below the beaver dam at Low Plain Purple Loosetrife was growing. Several on the Commission said that it was, but that it has not taken over because it does not like the soil there.

Mr. Brown asked about the garden near the transfer station. Mr. Stanley said that it was from the Energy Committee to showcase alternative gardening and an alternative to mowing. Ms Crane said that the Garden Club maintains the planters and other gardens around the Energy Committee's Garden.

Mr. Dancy said there is a scout getting his Eagle Scout award on Sunday for the work he did at Knights Hill, which was very much conservation oriented. The Conservation Commission has been asked to send in a letter of commendation. Chair Brown said that he would do this. There was a dam that the scout cleaned, and he removed many saplings.

Mr. Deegan asked the Conservation Commission about the Messer Pond easement. It allows the Town to post against hunting and snowmobiling. They have to go to Town Meeting to get this permission. He wanted to know what the Conservation Commission wanted to do. Mr. Deegan reminded them that just because they CAN post against these things, doesn't mean they HAVE to. He added that they could change the guidelines so they could never post against hunting or snowmobiling. If these actions gets abused and become a problem, they would change it. The board said they would like to keep the option to post in the future if needed.

Ms. Koron said that she has been keeping track of the footpath maps and has told Rob Bryant from the Chamber of Commerce that she is the contact person for getting more when needed. She went to deliver maps and found that he has been coming to the Town Office and getting his own maps and paying the Town for them. Someone has come to him and ordered a bunch of maps. She tries to keep track of the maps that go out each year. It is hard to determine what happens to them if they don't go through her. She

wanted to know if she should be so concerned with keeping track. The Conservation Commission thought perhaps Mr. Bryant should call her or let her know how many maps he is taking. Mr. Stanley said that he shouldn't be coming in to take maps. She said that other businesses call her for maps and she brings them the same day. She said she would speak to Linda Jackman to let her know that no one should be coming in to get the key to take maps.

Ms. Koron also said that she sent photos of the Hilltop Screen to Ron Koron, who is the president of LLSPA. She feels that they should be asked to build a more substantial screen, as it doesn't go to the edges and she was worried that the Milfoil could go up through the screen if the water level rose. LLSPA is monitoring this situation. Ms. Koron said that Mark Kozikowski hasn't been asked to build the screen any larger. Ms. Koron offered to speak with Mr. Kozikowski, directly.

Lastly, a letter was sent in from Paul Spitzer, PhD, from Trappe, MD who commended the layout and maintenance of the Philbrick/Cricenti Bog trail. He thanked the Conservation Commission for sharing the trail with a stranger. The letter has been included with these minutes. An electronic copy has been made, as well.

Mr. Stanley was sad to share that the Loon nest on Little Lake Sunapee failed. The egg was taken and so it is suspected that it was removed by a bird, such as an eagle. He gave suggestions for making the nest more inconspicuous next year.

IT WAS MOVED (Laura Alexander) AND SECONDED (Vicki Koron) to adjourn the Conservation Commission Meeting of July 21, 2010. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

The meeting adjourned at 11:00am.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristy Heath, Recording Secretary
Town of New London