

TOWN OF NEW LONDON
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
JUNE 15, 2005

PRESENT: Dan Allen, Bob Crane, Emma Crane, Terry Dancy, Vicki Koron, Les Norman, Peter Stanley, Ruth White.

ALSO: Drew Wilkins.

Minutes – May 18, 2005

- o Dan Allen and Peter Stanley amended the second line of the last paragraph on page two to read "...one-foot of crushed stone..." rather than "one-inch."
- o Dan Allen referred to paragraph six on page three, and asked if the word "soap" should be added to that sentence.

Members concurred that detergent would include soap. No soap or detergent should be used in the lakes.

Peter Stanley moved to approve as amended. Emma Crane seconded. No further discussion. Motion unanimously approved.

Trails

- o Dan Allen reported that George Green has agreed to adopt the Morgan Hill Trail.
- o He opened discussion of the Little Sunapee Associates Forest Trails.

Vicki Koron said that Dave Bowen and Ron Koron maintain that.

Dan Allen indicated that it was his understanding from Dave Bowen that half the trail is maintained, the remainder has not been maintained of late.

Terry Dancy asked if trail work energy is better spent on those trails that are used.

There was suggestion that if those trails were kept up, they would be used.

Ruth White pointed out that those trails are on the Town trail map, and suggested that, whether or not the Commission decides to continue maintaining certain trails, the map and trails should match.

Bob Crane said those trails are not on the web site's overall trail map, at this point.

Les Norman asked if Dan Allen would walk that trail to ascertain its condition.

Dan Allen said they may need to flag and create the trail there. He projected that they could get to that in July.

- o He said the trail blaze paint is in. He will be cutting the stencils for the blazing, and drawing up some guidelines for trail blazing to provide to trail adopters.
- o Terry Dancy reported that he has made new signs for the landing at Webb Forest Trail, and the Pleasant Lake Bunker Loop.

- o Ruth White sent the photo of Brittany Stratton working at Low Plain to the *Argus Champion*, and that has been published in this week's edition.

Bob Crane said those photos, as well as the one of Terry Dancy and Dale Conly putting up the Ted Parkhurst memorial sign at the Bog, are on the web site.

- o Peter Stanley opened some discussion of the Class VI road known as "Putney Road," which extends from County Road to Pingree Road. The Fire Department would like to maintain that as a fire road, and fire break. It would require some outlay of Town funds. He suggested that it could also be used as a trail.

Terry Dancy reminded the Commission that at some point in the past, they did agree to reopen that as a trail. There was comment that maintaining it just as a trail would not require expenditure of Town money, though bridges would have to be built.

Peter Stanley said the only way they can maintain that Class VI road would be if it is designated as a fire road. The Fire Department would like to do that. Again, it would require outlay of town money, and would have to be a line or article in next year's budget. If approved, then they could legally have someone go in there to cut and chip. He agreed that the bridges would have to be built, and said he feels the Fire Department could do that with some logs.

Dan Allen asked about parking (for people using it as a hiking trail).

There is parking at both ends.

Members concurred that this would make a nice addition to the trail system, and Vicki Koron pointed out that people from Hilltop could walk to it.

The consensus of the Commission is:

- The Conservation Commission is not opposed to the Fire Department's maintaining Putney Road as a fire road.
- The Commission is agreeable to the Fire Department's pointing out its double advantage—as a fire road and as a trail, when it (the Fire Department) presents this as a budget item in the fall.

Walks

Dan Allen reported that there were ten walkers to the Devil's Half Acre. He said that Nat Davis went on Dave Cook's Erratics Walk, and said that ten walkers joined that as well.

Ruth White said that concludes the Conservation Commission's spring walks. The Commission will not schedule more walks until next winter. In the interim, the SRK Greenway schedules a series of walks. She noted the difference between the Greenway's walks which are *hikes*, and the Commission's which are *nature walks*.

Terry Dancy reported on the loons nesting on Pleasant Lake.

Web Site

Bob Crane said the Conservation Commission's web site now has thirty pages of its own; that is not including the number of pages on all the sites to which the Commission's site links. He added that the Recreation Department web site now has a link from its "Hiking" section to the Conservation Commission's trail pages.

Ruth White has drawn Marjorie Swope's (NH Association of Conservation Commissions) attention to the web site, Marjorie complimented the site, particularly the choice of a first page which gives an overview of conservation lands in the area.

Bob Crane said something new is needed for the “Outings” page now that the spring walks have concluded.

Ruth White suggested the page refer people to the Greenway’s schedule. Despite the fact that the Greenway’s and the Conservation Commission’s are two different types of walks, members agreed that they should not conflict in time. Some people may enjoy doing both. She added that the August 13 walk on Morgan Hill is not going to be a typical Greenway hike; rather it will include some discussion of the local history, including of the mills in that area.

Interaction with Planning Board

Les Norman reported receiving two requests from Planning Board Chair Karen Ebel. Specifically, the Planning Board would like the Conservation Commission to:

- Develop some guidelines for people doing work within the fifty-foot shoreline setback.

Note: At the October, 2004 Conservation Commission meeting, Dale Conly presented a draft of “Guidelines for Tree Cutting in the 50-foot buffer Zone.” Those guidelines were approved with some modifications by the Planning Board in December of 2004. Now the Planning Board needs something more specific.

Peter Stanley referred to New London Zoning Ordinance, Article XVI, §F-2, regarding cutting and removal of natural vegetation in the Shore Land Overlay District. He does have an erosion control document which he gives out to contractors, but suggested that it would be a good idea for the Conservation Commission to develop a summary, a simpler-to-read, guide-sheet for property owners. The Lakes Associations could distribute it to all its members.

Terry Dancy suggested that, in format, it could be modeled on the guide sheet provided to property owners by Lake Sunapee Protective Association.

Vicki Koron expressed concern that not all lake side owners belong to the Lake Associations. Emma Crane asked if it could be given to real estate agents to distribute.

Peter Stanley volunteered to draft a guide sheet summarizing regulations and restrictions relative to activity within the fifty-foot shoreline setback, to provide to property owners,

There was some discussion regarding a current violation involving the construction of a deck, well within the setback from Messer Pond. The Town’s process for addressing this with the owner has been initiated at this point.

Possibility was raised that there may be some relevant restrictions in the deeds for the lots on that side—the White Pine Lane side—of the lake.

In addition, Conservation Commission members expressed concern about the underwater weed-whacker now being used by several Messer Pond property owners, and the fact that cutting those weeds renders the Pond more vulnerable to invasives. Peter Stanley explained that the Town has no jurisdiction over what is done in the water. The Town’s purview ends at the shoreline. He will advise DES about the underwater weed whacking, though.

- Suggest ways in which developments in such areas as the Granger property can be subject to more rigorous limits than those which exist at present.

Peter Stanley said that “No Development” is not the right approach. The Town’s current subdivision regulations do provide some criteria for stabilization during the construction process.

Members have noted in the past, and noted again at this meeting, that the greater concern should be given to increase of impervious areas right next to the water. That has greater potential for damage to lake quality than does run-off from development further back from the lake.

Peter Stanley said that most of the shorelines are built up now, but people are tearing old structures down and rebuilding. He suggested that some consideration be given to the development of some incremental restrictions on shoreline activity, that is, restrictions which would become more stringent as activity draws closer to the water edge.

Les Norman asked if he knows of other towns which have done this.

Peter Stanley said not that he is aware of. It would be cutting edge. He referred to Newbury's development of a graduated set of regulations for development on slopes. At a certain point, slopes cannot be counted in the calculation for density or lot size.

Terry Dancy said, and members agreed, that the Commission should increase its streams mapping. Those streams which had previously been judged "seasonal" and therefore are not on the current Streams Map and not subject to the buffer restrictions, should now be reconsidered.

Terry Dancy reviewed some changes in the Granger subdivision schedule. The Public Hearing has been rescheduled for August 9, and between then and now there will be a subcommittee meeting early in July.

The Commission will send a written summary of this discussion to Karen Ebel, notifying the Planning Board that in addition to developing a clear, one-page guideline on buffer restrictions which can be provided to property owners, the Conservation will also promote and support:

1. The increase of restrictions on the uses of steep slopes, and development of those regulations into a graduated system, along the lines of Newbury's slope regulations.
2. Development of a similar system of incremental restrictions for the buffers along wetlands, streams, and drainages.
3. Development of regulations that would restrict the amount of impervious surface area within 300-feet of the shore, and which would become increasingly more stringent as the construction approaches the water.
4. Additional mapping of streams and drainages.
5. Strengthening the restrictions on cutting and clearing in the fifty foot setback to include smaller sized vegetation.

Master Plan

Conservation Commission members agreed that there are two separate areas to be discussed within the next few months in preparation for the updating of the Town's Master Plan: Conservation Principles and Conservation Priorities (specific land parcels).

Members concurred that the wording in the Master Plan regarding keeping the entrances and egresses to the Town free of commercial development should be strengthened. Consideration may also be given to developing restrictive zoning for those areas, i.e. a highway overlay. The understanding is that there cannot be spot-zoning, but rather, the zoning must be backed by theory or science.

The priority list in the current Master Plan was reviewed and will fall under further discussion during future meetings.

Les Norman raised a question about the area between Owl Nest Road and Soo Nipi Park Road. That is not on the list and members agreed it should be. Also proposed was the idea of changing its zoning from R-2 to Conservation.

Similar consideration should be given to the wetlands between Stony Brook Road and Rt. 103.

Other

- Peter Stanley reported that it has been too wet to do much work at Phillips Preserve. Les Norman asked about the mound in front of the entrance road. Mound? What mound? To be investigated.
- Les Norman has purchased brass tags to use on the next perambulation.
- There was some discussion regarding the Wheatons' dock. It may be permitted, but they cannot dredge in the lake. Question was raised about whether or not the Town has any purview over these types of applications. The Town requires 200-feet of waterfront per dock, in an effort to obviate large numbers of boats at one dock.
- Les Norman asked who owns the Otterville dam. It is clogged with tree trunks right now.

Two separate property owners own the rights to the dam.

- Terry Dancy said that Upper Valley/Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission has offered to prepare a master plan for Elkins for \$6,000. Members concurred that this would be a good idea.

The meeting adjourned at 3 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S.A. Denz
Recording Secretary