



TOWN OF
NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

375 MAIN STREET • NEW LONDON, NH 03257 • WWW.NL-NH.COM

MEETING MINUTES
TOWN OF NEW LONDON
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
June 17, 2009

Present: Andy Deegan, Dan Allen, Bob Brown, Sue Clough, Terry Dancy, Vicki Koron, Ruth White

Other: Peter Stanley- Zoning Administrator

Chair Deegan opened the meeting at 1:00P.M.

Minutes: The minutes of the May 21, 2009 meeting were amended as follows: page 2, line 5, Mr. Freeland was changed to Mr. Friedlander. The Minutes of the special meeting on June 3, 2009 were accepted as presented.

Trails Update: As a preface to his report, Mr. Allen offered that he has felt very fortunate to have been able to cut a third of the Norman Trail by himself. He added that he did not anticipate that this trail will be done until sometime in November. He presented the following update on the other trails. The Bog Trail - While Nat Davis and Ruth White were conducting some trail maintenance, they noticed some sort of insect infestation on the Black Alders along the trail. Ms. White will take a sample to the UNH Extension service office in Newport to determine what it is and what, if anything, might or should be done. Low Plains Trail - Mr. Allen reported that 16 foot of boardwalk, supported in the middle, has been installed and the rest of the boardwalk has been completed. He said there still needs to be a new roof installed on the blind. Lyon Brook Trail- There are two new boardwalk sections in the first 100 yards of the trail and the bridge has been replaced. He is going out to the trail with Janice Stokes next week to view and determine what else is needed. Clark Pond - All bridges on the new Dancy trail have been installed, with 1/3 of the trail cut through.

With regard to trails, Mr. Brown told the Commission that he will be gone for the next 10 days, will be back for 10 days and then will be gone for the next 2 months and that he would not be attending the next two Conservation Commission meetings. Mr. Stanley asked that when he returns from his first 10 day trip if he could let him know so that they could do the installation of the beaver pipe. Mr. Brown said he would let him know when he is back. Mr. Brown added that once he is back in the fall, he can assist with trail projects if Mr. Allen is not available. Ms. Clough volunteered that Mr. Clough might be available to help as well.

Master Plan: Chair Deegan reported that last week the Planning Board reviewed the Conservation Chapter of the Master Plan. A draft of this has been e-mailed by Jessie Levine to Chair Deegan who will send copies to all the Commission members. Mr. Deegan said in reviewing the last chart in this chapter which depicted Town owned land and its conservation

status, there was some confusion regarding the difference between the terms conservation land and conservation easement land. He said the difference was that conservation land has no permanent restriction on it, where as land in the conservation easement did have permanent restrictions. He added these definitions to this chart to clarify what the different terms meant. Ms. Clough opined that she hoped this chapter emphasized enough how important conservation is to the Town. Ms. White noted that by comparison to most towns in New Hampshire, New London has a very low ratio of conserved to non-conserved land. She said much of the New London land is in the center of Town and is therefore high profile, leading people to think there is actually much more than 15% of the Town's land that is protected. Mr. Dancy noted that the State recommends 25% of a town's land be protected.

A discussion then followed about ways to get this information to the public along with information regarding the on-going work that the Conservation Commission is doing with regard to trail improvements. Mr. Dancy said there is money in the budget to obtain easements and he asked the status of some of the conservation land with regard to taking specific actions to obtaining easements. Mr. Stanley replied that Clark Pond, the balance of the Low Plain and Phillip's Bog would be pieces of land on which the easement process could be completed with little or no cost since most of the work has already been done. Mr. Stanley suggested that the members of the Commission begin to regularly attend the Budget Committee meetings to prepare the groundwork for possible future funding of these and other easement projects. He added that a partition warrant article could be circulated to the Town residents to get something on the Town Warrant. He suggested that a list, with priority ranking, be developed for future conservation easements targets and then the Commission should work through that list.

Ms. White suggested that, based on the confusion demonstrated with the of the terms conservation land and conservation easement, perhaps an article in the Intertown Record could address this for the community at large. This article could also include just how much land is actually in each category, and what the objectives of the Conservation Commission will be for the next few years. She and Mr. Dancy volunteered to draft this article for the Commission which they will circulate via e-mail to the Commission members for their input.

Mr. Stanley said with regard to future easement plans, the only problem that might be voiced at Town meeting will be the associated cost. Ms. Clough suggested that the actual cost for anything that will be suggested at Town Meeting be researched ahead of the meeting. Mr. Brown, using the Messer Pond property as an example, wondered what the dollar cost would be to prepare this land to come before Town Meeting to have a conservation easement placed on it. Mr. Stanley thought it would be under \$10,000. He asked if it would be helpful if a private donation would be made to help defray the cost. It was agreed that this would definitely be welcomed. Mr. Stanley further explained that this type of proposal, if approved, would then be given to perhaps the ASPLT to have them craft an easement. The ASPLT would have to go through their own review process and as well as the Town and then this would ultimately be decided by the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Stanley volunteered to draft a list of the conserved land that should be considered for easement for the July meeting. Mr. Stanley further suggested that the Colby Sanctuary be considered as another potential idea for a conservation easement, working with Graham Webb who owned that connecting property.

Ms. Clough expressed concern with the idea that the Town would lose value if easements were placed on pieces of land. She said the inference she is hearing is that eventually the Town will make some money if this property is sold, and if it is placed in easement, the Town will lose those potential future development dollars. Mr. Dancy said that the value to the Town for preserving this is much greater than any dollar value that could be assigned to this land. The question about how to convey this value to the residents of New London was then discussed.

Any Other Business: Chair Deegan reported that he had received a standard Dredge and Fill application from the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services Water Division. Chair Deegan said he will send a copy of this application to Ron Koron of the Little Lake Sunapee Lake Association for his review. This work will be done by the State of New Hampshire and should be done by the end of September.

Mr. Brown reported with regard to the KCC trail, the work that he had planned to do has been completed. He noted that there has been some confusion on the part of the users of the trails as to which organization was actually doing the trail work and maintenance. He reported that all the trails are being used more than he thought and suggested that the perhaps the Conservation Commission should hold a trail "open house" to both encourage people to come use the trails, and also to let the public know who is responsible for the trail work. Chair Deegan suggested that with the completion of the Clark Pond easement in the next few weeks, perhaps an event sponsored jointly by the New London Conservation Commission and ASPLT at Clark Pond would help to educate the public to the importance of easement land, the contribution it makes to the community and the efforts on the part of the Town's Conservation Commission to maintain it. It was suggested that Chad Denning, Recreation Department Director, also be contacted to participate since they worked with the Boy Scout troop on the KCC trail. Mr. Brown thought something could be planned in October to coincide with fall foliage.

Ms. Koron reported that she had observed an algae bloom in front of her home on Little Lake Sunapee. She took some samples and has sent these off to the State for analysis.

Mr. Stanley reported that Colby-Sawyer College is planning on building a new Windy Hill School building adjacent to Susan's Swamp. When this was first announced, it was thought that there would be no environmental impact. He believes this should be reconsidered and that there might be some concerns about storm water run-off. It was suggested that these new building plans be discussed with Laura Alexander.

Mr. Stanley reported that the estate of Elizabeth Graham at the corner of Columbus Avenue and Burpee Hill Road is being subdivided and wondered if the Conservation Commission had some interest in considering a conservation easement, since this already abuts on to a conservation easement. He said this very small subdivision of this property is being considered by the Planning Board.

There being no other business, Mr. Brown moved that the meeting be adjourned. This was seconded by Ms. Clough. There being no discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 2:00P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen K. Colby
Recording Secretary