



TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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APPROVED Minutes of the June 27, 2012 Conservation Commission Meeting

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bob Brown (Chairman), Ryan Bernstein (Trail Intern), Rick Anderson, Dan Allen, Terry Dancy, Laura Alexander, Ruth White, Emma Crane, Bob Crane (Webmaster), Mike Gelcius (President of the Elkins Fish & Game Club)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Sue Clough, Andy Deegan

Chair Brown called the meeting to order at 9:00am. He offered the floor to Mr. Gelcius who was there to observe the meeting.

Mr. Gelcius said that he had volunteered for a spot on the Conservation Commission (CC) although there are no current openings. He and his club would like to work with the CC on projects. He had talked with Peter Stanley earlier about the observation decks on Beaver Pond. They were put in by the club several years ago and they are thinking of putting in some new decks, made of some other lighter materials that would last longer. Mr. Allen believed either the wind had been blowing the blinds over or it was hunters throwing them over in haste which is causing the damage. He wondered if a lighter material would hold up to these conditions. Mr. Gelcius said that the material they plan to use is intended for this use and the wind wouldn't blow them over because it has holes in it and wouldn't catch the wind. They have some members who are interested in repairing these blinds once the nesting season is over. He explained that the Elkins Fish & Game Club wants to help the CC with projects and they want to be involved in conservation. Chair Brown said that the CC would welcome the help and explained some of the projects they currently work on, including the miles of boardwalk and bridges that they build and maintain. He added that although there was not an open spot on the CC, Mr. Gelcius was welcome to attend any meetings he would like. Chair Brown opined that it would be a natural alliance between the two organizations.

Review of Minutes of May 16, 2012

IT WAS MOVED (Emma Crane) AND SECONDED (Laura Alexander) to approve the minutes of May 16, 2012, as circulated. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Letter Received

Chair Brown received a letter from Mrs. Coonley from 938 Morgan Hill Road. He explained that at the end of Morgan Hill, they reach the pavement section and then the terrain is very steep at that point. He was not sure if it is a private driveway or a class VI road. The 150' from the power lines to the parking area on the left where the trails start, is washed out on one side. Mrs. Coonley made comments about the CC having shared the costs of repairing the road in the past. Mr. Dancy and Ms. White thought it was a class VI road and not private. Chair Brown said he found out that even the paved strip was private and was paid for by the owners. A Class VI road isn't paid for or maintained by the town. Chair Brown said that he worried about setting precedent by helping to repair this road. Mr. Dancy couldn't recall the question or issue of the CC assisting in the repair or maintenance of this road coming up during all the years he has been on the commission. Chair Brown said that there is a legal issue here, which involves spending tax dollars on something that isn't a town road. Mr. Allen suggested looking to find if there is a legal right of way there. Chair Brown said he would speak with Ms. Hallquist about this to try and do some research. Mr. Lee had indicated to Chair Brown that he couldn't recall ever spending town money on that road. The commission agreed to allow further investigation into this matter.

Easements & Acquisitions

Phillips Preserve – the CC has paid half of the monitoring contribution (\$2,500) and has the same amount to pay in the next fiscal year.

Low Plain Forestry Plan

Chair Brown indicated that this is done. Doing the actual cut is second in line behind the Phillips Preserve cut. Mr. Stanley was to plan a visit by Leo Maslin to do some marking but it looked as though they would need to follow through with this on their own. Chair Brown said he would be contacting Mr. Stanley to see if he was still interested in being involved with the project.

Phillips Preserve Tree Removal

Chair Brown said there is a maple tree at the trail head which is 14” -16” in diameter. 8’ up it is decayed, leaving less than 1/3 of the trunk. The decayed portion is leaning towards the high voltage lines. David Carey, Tree Warden, is very busy and so Chair Brown called PSNH who said they may come to look at it. He suggested to them that if they could cut it to below the voltage line, the town could take care of the rest of the tree removal.

Mountain Road & Laurel Lane Parcels

David Carey looked at the parcels and felt there was some good pine on the edge of the road at Mountain Road. There are some wet areas, especially the back of Laurel Lane. There didn’t seem to be a huge potential for valuable timber there.

Budget

Chair Brown said they have spent within \$1,300 of the balance which will become unavailable at the end of June. Chair Brown said they would need a purchase order by Friday for the money to be used. He said they did receive a delivery of lumber but they need more.

Mr. Allen said that he has identified 20 species of trees on the Clark Pond Trail. He suggested putting tags to identify the mature and saplings where they can find them, which would use up some of this money. Several ways to identify the trees were discussed and Ms. White said if they have the money, she would suggest putting the actual tree name at the trees instead of having numbers put on the trees, which coincide to descriptions on hand-outs. Ms. Crane said she found out that the signs that label trees at Knight’s Hill are made in Maine and that the company is accommodating to work with. Others agreed that having such signs would be nice. They would contact Fred Slayden from Knight’s Hill to gather details about the signs they have used. Ms. Alexander offered to help identify the trees when the time came.

After some discussion, the CC agreed to spend \$700-\$800 on additional lumber.

Chair Brown indicated that the Fish & Game Contribution had also been paid.

Invasive Species

Rick Anderson said that the Invasive Species Coordinator thought he was misleading homeowners about their ability to spray herbicide on rights of way. The Enforcement guy, however, was supportive of the work the commission was doing with the pamphlet. After the two met, language was adjusted to satisfy both of their wishes. Mr. Anderson added that he found the Board of Selectmen to be supportive of the work he is doing with the pamphlet. At the last CAC meeting he brought it up and the topic generated a lot of interest. He felt momentum was building and hoped that a couple people within the Public Works Department may be getting certified to use the herbicide. The pamphlet will be posted online on the CC’s website. Mr. Anderson hoped that this awareness could lead to the identification of a central collection

site for the Knotweed that has been cut. Mr. Allen felt the best place for the cuttings would be the burn pile at the stump dump.

Mr. Anderson said that he has seen some cutting along the roads in New London and Andover, which appears to be state mandated. Ms. White suggested putting something in the Kearsarge Shopper and the Intertown Record to let people know that the pamphlet was available. Mr. Anderson asked if it would be OK to spend \$50 to make copies of the pamphlet for distribution at the Town Office. Chair Brown agreed that this was fine. Mr. Anderson said most people could be pointed to the website but that the pamphlets would be intended for people who did not have access to the internet.

Trails & Projects

Chair Brown said that Mr. Allen has been interested in marking trails. He has come up with some ideas about using weatherproof plastic. Chair Brown said that the sheets of the material are quite heavy and that 25% of its cost is for shipping. A 2x4 sheet is \$6 + shipping, making each marker cost roughly \$.06. He has ordered some of this material has cut 300 markers already. Mr. Allen suggested the new markers be placed over the existing blazes and should be put on every trail. They would be affixed with aluminum nails.

It was noted that the sign where Lyon Brook meets the hospital will be moved, as the vegetation is covering it.

Chair Brown said that the Ryan Bernstein (summer intern) has done a lot of brush cutting and has done a lot of work at the Bog replacing planks and doing some shimming. Ms. White said there are still some boards that need to be replaced at the Bog. She thought that some of the rotting boards that had been replaced in earlier years, which had been left along the side of the trail, should be removed. They won't be used for shimming and she felt they were an eye sore. If the boards would be used again for something else, they should be lined up or stacked. Ms. White said the orchids are out and there will be many visitors coming to see them; the trail should be tidied up.

Chair Brown said that Mr. Bernstein had blazed the Phillips Preserve and did some brush work there too. The beavers are gone and the two dams were removed by Mr. Bernstein and Chad Denning (Recreation Director). To return the favor, Mr. Denning asked Mr. Bernstein to help with a Recreation project that day. Once that area is dried up, Mr. Denning will go in and work on the story walk again.

Mr. Allen said he asked Terry Dancy if another bench would be suitable on the Dancy Trail. It was agreed that this would be nice. Mr. Allen said he would put a bench in at the top of a steep rise this fall.

Mr. Allen said he helped Mark Vernon cut the hemlock that fell across the Great Brook Trail. He has a call in to Richard Lee to get the poles moved and he hoped it would be done soon. They have 27' poles which will give a wide expanse and hopefully wouldn't get washed out. They would use the old stringers from the previous bridge.

Chair Brown said that he is having a problem getting Hemlock and that the price has gone up significantly. They can buy #2 Pressure Treated (PT) for 15% less than the same size Hemlock. They can buy #1 for 10% more. He wondered if they be OK with the decking if they used PT instead of Hemlock. Mr. Allen said that the PT is slippery but if they have a hand rail it would be OK. He found some of the rough cut Hemlock to also be slippery when it was wet. It was determined that #2 PT would be suitable to use.

Mr. Allen said he was reminded that Great Brook trail crosses the Bucklin property before it gets to the Webb Forest. The issue is whether there is a trail agreement with the Bucklin's. Ms. White said that there

used to be a trail sign on Morgan Road going through the old Putney Road. Since there has been a change in occupancy, she didn't think there had been a sign up. If there is one, but is hidden by vegetation, and should be removed. Mrs. White said that legally it is a class VI and they could cross it, but because it is someone's private driveway, they don't. It was suggested to look in the files.

Badge Program

Ms. White said that last month they discussed designing a patch program for people who have hiked all of the town's trails. Ms. Crane got some prices which were very reasonable, although she couldn't recall the amount. (Ms. Crane had left the meeting prior to this portion of the meeting and so was not available to confirm the amount). They suggested a boot image on the badge. There would also be a small form available on the CC website for people to fill out and sign as they complete the trails. Ms. White said that either she or Ms. Crane would be the ones to award the badges to those who complete the trail system. She wondered how others felt about this program. Everyone thought it was a great idea and should be done. Chair Brown wondered if they could put "New London, NH" instead of just "New London" on the badge. He also asked if they could put "Conservation Commission" somewhere on the badge. Ms. White said that they could do both of these things.

Ms. White said she would call Ms. Crane to go forward with ordering 100 badges. She would have Ms. Crane call Chair Brown with the price to approve the expenditure. Chair Brown said it would be good to have the purchase order dated for June so they could pay for it out of this year's budget. Mr. Anderson suggested putting one of the patches behind glass at the town office with some information on the program to help gather interest.

Upcoming Meetings

July 18, 9:00am.

No meeting scheduled for August.

September 19, 9:00am.

**IT WAS MOVED (Laura Alexander) AND SECONDED (Ruth White) to adjourn the meeting.
THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 10:17am.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristy Heath, Recording Secretary
Town of New London