

TOWN OF NEW LONDON
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
MAY 21, 2008

PRESENT: Les Norman (Chairman), Dan Allen, Bob Brown, Dale Conly, Emma Crane, Robert Crane, Terry Dancy, Vicki Koron, Ruth White.

ALSO: Peter Stanley (Staff), Erin Darrow, Carol Foss and Ron Koron (Little Lake Sunapee Protective Association), Debbie Stanley (ASLPT).

Les Norman opened the meeting at 1 p.m., and the Commission addressed seven items of business during the meeting.

Minutes – April 16, 2008

The minutes as drafted were accepted without changes.

Terry Dancy referred to paragraph four on page one, and said he spoke to Karen Ebel regarding the Conservation Commission's position re: the new parking area at the College and the fact that only the minimum requirements for mitigating runoff are being planned. He said that Karen Ebel informed him that the Planning Board has discussed this, but is reluctant to put more pressure on the College to follow best environmental practices, so at this point it is left that the College will meet only the minimum requirements to mitigate runoff from that parking area. He said that he responded to Karen by reading this paragraph from the Conservation Commission's minutes, and stressing that the Commission feels that as an educational institution, the College should act as a role model. He reported that Karen Ebel said she will relay this to the Planning Board, but at this point, it seems as though there will be no changes to the plans.

Conservation Commission members pointed out that New London Hospital has gone the extra mile in doing its parking areas using best environmental materials and practices. Members acknowledged that there is a difference in cost— perhaps 25 percent. Several CC members said that they understand that the feeling of Jesseman Engineering is that it (the engineering firm) does not want to create problems for plowing and sanding by using the more porous surface material that the Hospital is using. However, the Conservation Commission understands from speaking to Lori Underwood of New London Hospital that the Hospital plans to "sand" with a different type of material that will not clog the porous surface.

Later in this meeting, the subject again came up. Question was raised about the efficacy of sending letters-to-the-editors expressing this concern. Several CC members suggested that the letters could reference New London Hospital's mitigation practices and ask why the College could not do the same. Les Norman said that CC members are free to write as individuals if they wish. Dan Allen said he may be speaking with the President of the College soon, and he will bring up this subject. Ruth White said that having that conversation plus Terry's idea of a letter to the newspapers would both be good. Terry

Dancy indicated that he will follow through on the letter, and Commission members suggested that the letters be cc'd to all the local papers including *InterTown Record*, *Argus Champion* and *Concord Monitor*.

Erin Darrow-Proposed Wetland Crossing on Cate Property, Route 103A

Civil Engineer for the property owners, Erin Darrow, explained that the Cates plan to subdivide this 58-acre parcel into four house lots. She presented a color rendering of the property, showing the proposed subdivision lines, locations of jurisdictional wetlands, and proposed house sites. She pointed out that the proposal concentrates development close to 103A, and is consistent with New London regulations. They have completed the high intensity soil survey, the topographical mapping, and done test pits.

She is here today to update the Commission on the wetland impact. She said the two southerly lots (proposed) will not require a permit; however, the two northerly lots (proposed) will have a shared driveway that will cross a drainage stream. She noted that they did meet with DOT regarding this proposed shared driveway, and all are in agreement that this is its best location as it will create a four-way intersection with Poor Road (rather than have the driveway offset from the entrance to Poor Road by a few feet or yards), and it will cross the drainage stream at its narrowest point. The impact from this crossing will be to 3845 square-feet of wetland, most of which is for the necessary grading there. Also, they will be removing part of the stone wall that is there. She reiterated that this is a drainage stream, and not really a good environment for fish or amphibians. DES has inspected this proposed impact, and she has also spoken to the Army Corps of Engineers.

The other impact consists of a proposed fire pond that will be located on a separate parcel that is also owned by the Cates. The location is easily accessible from 103A, and is in a jurisdictional wetland. They propose to dredge there, and impound water to a depth of twelve feet. She said they plan a larger than required turn off for fire department apparatus. She noted that this neighborhood is not currently served by a dry hydrant, so this will be a benefit to other residences there. The plan has received special exception approval from the New London Fire Chief. It meets all New London requirements. Terry Dancy noted that dredging a wetland for a fire pond is a permitted use with special exception. Les Norman asked if the fire pond will serve residences on Poor Road as well. Erin Darrow said that the proposed fire pond is further south than Poor Road.

Les Norman asked if the subdivision has been approved yet. Erin Darrow said they had a preliminary discussion with the Planning Board on January 7, at which time it became clear that the biggest issue was to get the fire pond planned. She said that they understand that because the proposed lots are over five acres, they will not need subdivision approval from the State, but will need to have all other permits in place. They will next meet with the Planning Board on May 27. On June 9, they will present their request for special exception to the ZBA, and after that, they anticipate final approval from the Planning Board.

Having no further question or comments, Conservation Commission members agreed that this meets approval, and they gave a verbal “go-ahead” to Erin Darrow.

Carol Foss & Ron Koron-Little Lake Sunapee Protective Association Milfoil Grant Request

Ron Koron referred to the Little Lake Sunapee’s lake host program that has been quite successful in keeping milfoil and other invasives out of Little Sunapee. He said this is a state-run program—specifically, it is run by New Hampshire Lakes Association. NHLA hires the lake hosts and pays them, then bills the individual lakes associations for 75% of that cost. Deadline for submitting applications to NHLA is May 28th, and Carol Foss confirmed that she has submitted that last Thursday on behalf of Little Sunapee.

Bob Brown confirmed that the Messer Pond Protective Association has also done so, as well as submitting a detailed narrative of its 2008 needs to the Town. Ron Koron said they have also submitted a letter to the Town, and both he and Bob Brown said they based these submissions on the 2007 requirements, as the Town has not yet sent out its guidelines for applying for 2008 grants from the New London milfoil reserve. They pointed out that it is difficult for them to apply for the lake host program before they are assured that they will receive the funds from the Town.

Ron Koron went on to say that in 2006, Little Sunapee PA received \$4000 from NHLA; in 2007, it received \$3000; and they have been told that this year, they may anticipate \$2500. Bob Brown asked if it is correct that NHLA’s grants are capped at \$3000. Ron Koron said he did not know that, but they were told that their grants (Little Sunapee’s) are going down based on the number of boats entering the lake.

He said that last year the NHLA funding was supplemented by \$5500 from the Town’s milfoil reserve. He said that in December of 2007, he informed Jessie Levine that they do anticipate a decrease in the NHLA funding this summer, and would like to request \$6680 from the Town. She responded by saying that she would incorporate that into the budget, and not to worry. He said that they have already lined up the four hosts to work this summer, for a total cost of \$9100. They calculate that the NHLA grant of \$2500 will cover 250 hours to be paid at \$10/hour. The balance of 153 hours at \$10/hour and 413 hours at \$11/hour (for the two returning hosts), or a total of \$6680, must be covered by the Lakes Association itself. He said that he and Carol Foss are at this meeting to solicit the Conservation Commission’s support of their request to the Town for \$6680 for the 2008 host program on Little Sunapee.

Les Norman explained that the Conservation Commission collects the applications from all the lake associations in New London, reviews those, and sends them on to the Board of Selectmen. He reiterated Jessie Levine’s assurance that they need not worry about the funding.

Ron Koron asked if there were any way that the Town's schedule could be bumped up to parallel the NHLA schedule. Les Norman said it just seems like a clerical slow down. Ruth White asked them to let the Commission know if there is anything that they can do other than to emphatically stress in the minutes that the process needs to be underway earlier in the year.

Shultz Survey

Peter Stanley reported that the ground work is done here. The subdivision and annexation plans have to be prepared for preliminary presentation to the Planning Board in late June. Also bounds have yet to be set in. They anticipate closing in July as soon after Planning Board approval as possible.

Master Plan Update

Les Norman reported that Planner Ken McWilliams has requested that the Conservation Commission submit revisions to its section of the Master Plan (Ch. 6, p. 120) by June 28. He proposed that at this meeting, the Commission review this and list what needs to be done, then break up into subcommittees for assignments.

Debbie Stanley pointed out that missing from the last Master Plan (1998) is a narrative on conservation easements as one of the ways to protect land. She noted that because that was left out, they ultimately had to add an Executive Summary as a supplement. She would like to see that inserted right into the chapter itself, and she volunteered to draft something.

Dan Allen asked if "Goals" are distinct from "Criteria." Debbie Stanley agreed that they are, saying that she would like to see language referring to goals in the introductory narrative, but she agreed that the language on criteria should be updated as well.

Les Norman turned to the section on Significant Land Protection Projects by ASLPT and NLCC. Terry Dancy said that Clark Lookout, Clark Pond Natural Area and the Cook property should be added. Robert Crane said those are the Town owned properties that have been added between 1998 and 2008. Also new are the conservation easements on Evergreen Point and at Cordingly. Debbie Stanley agreed to update this section so that it includes everything that has changed between 1998 and 2008.

Peter Stanley said the language in the "Goals" narrative should address the idea of acquiring lands that are adjacent to those the Town already owns. He said that should appear as an objective somewhere. He cited as examples, the area next to the Town's Low Plain property, and also the land adjacent to the Phillips Preserve. Terry Dancy said that could also be referred to in the section on future trails.

Ruth White said there should be some language about the desirability of the Town saving money every year for conservation land. She pointed out that every year the question is

asked, “Why are we putting money aside when we do not know specifically what it will be for?” She said the answer is obvious: So the Town will have the resources when they are needed. But, she said, it should be put in writing.

Debbie Stanley said it would be helpful to have a fuller narrative about Goals. The Town needs to think about conservation as much as the organizations do. She offered some statistics. New London is the only Town in this region with no State owned (protected) land. Only 15% of New London’s land is protected right now, and the minimum recommendation is 25%. The Goals section needs to emphasize that conservation is important for many reasons—not just esthetics. She observed that protection of agricultural lands and the quality of their soils, is important for food security in the future. Ruth White agreed. The goal for preservation of agricultural lands really should be spelled out at this point. Conservation is not just for scenic views.

Terry Dancy asked if the task right now is to provide more narrative and to keep the lists. Debbie Stanley agreed, and reiterated that there should be more language on goals. Terry Dancy asked about the wording included in the lists. Ruth White suggested that could be more specific, and everyone at this meeting agreed that accuracy should be checked.

Peter Stanley suggested there should be a narrative addressing the issue of Energy versus visual objectives—when mini-hydro plants are proposed for streams, for example. The section should address how the Town is going to deal with its streams. Also, the narrative could address the ideas of wind and solar powered energy. He observed that there will be an Energy chapter in the Master Plan. Robert Crane said that needs much work at this point. Terry Dancy agreed that the Conservation Commission’s Chapter 6 should recognize the potential conflict between esthetics and energy development, and should recognize the inadvisability of always opposing energy development when it may have benefits that will balance out the loss of a scenic view.

Peter Stanley suggested there be a section under Goals addressing the advantage of conserving the lands along the routes in and out of Town. He also offered a statistic: New London has the fourth highest population density in the Upper Valley, yet it does not appear so upon entering Town. Keeping the entrances and egresses to Town as natural areas has worked; New London remains a desirable place to live. He suggested the section could point out the other possible locations in Town for a commercial incubator or work-force housing, that would be more central and have easier access to services. He volunteered to craft some language for this.

At this point in the discussion, the question was raised: Is Ken McWilliams asking that the tables be filled in, or that the text be rewritten? Les Norman said essentially what he has heard here today is that the Commission is not happy with some of the wording of the 1998 Master Plan. Debbie Stanley said there are some sections of it that are very good and could stay in, but others need updating, or are no longer applicable.

For example, Terry Dancy pointed out that the map is flawed. Robert Crane agreed and said he sent by email a list of those types of problems to Ken McWilliams. He suggested that all of the conservation easements should be included on the Master Plan map. Robert Crane agreed to be the Commission's liaison on maps with Ken McWilliams.

Les Norman pointed out that another need is for the tax map numbers for the properties in the tables to be correlated to those on the latest tax map.

Dan Allen asked if there is a list of Town owned properties that do not have a conservation easement. Members said that is included in the Town Report (p. F13), as well as in Appendix C of the Master Plan. There was some discussion of having as a goal the placement of conservation easements on some of those.

Terry Dancy turned attention to Table 6. After some discussion, members agreed that this should be just a list, not necessarily in order of priority. Suggestions included:

- Adding the rest of Phillips Preserve.
- Adding the land adjacent to Low Plain.
- Adding the land from the Hospital to Lyon Brook.
- Keeping on the list, the Ewing piece (formerly diLorenzo) along Lyon Brook.
- Adding the Cricenti field.
- Keeping the Cleveland field on the list.
- Keeping the Messer property on the list. Robert Crane pointed out that this was the location for some of the Town's ski trails last winter, and more recently he has observed that the owner is enlarging the road there, and putting in new culverts. Dan Allen said at one time, Bob Messer talked about that land going for work force housing.
- Removing the Lake Sunapee Country Club from the list.
- Removing the Shultz property on Clark Pond but keeping on the list the Green property on Clark Pond.
- Keeping on the list the Woodruff property with its 2600 feet of waterfront and its common boundary with the Clark Lookout property.
- Debbie Stanley informed the Conservation Commission that the Riggs property is on the market now for \$4-million. That, along with the neighboring Crimi land as well as the Cordingly Preserve are crucial to the Sunapee Watershed. She observed that the

Riggs property, despite its high price tag, could be on the list, perhaps with the idea of a partnership being formed for its acquisition. She said it is important visually, as well as for protection of the watershed. And it is adjacent to the Cordingly preserve.

- There was some discussion of removing the Crook property from the list. Debbie Stanley suggested some thought be given to including on the list the lands on either side of the access to that property. The Crook protected property is just the lookout itself.
- There was some discussion of the Kidder-Cleveland property on Mountain Road, Debbie Stanley said she thinks that has been divided between the two families, and Marilyn Kidder has subdivided her piece into three lots, but has kept a large portion of it. Members agreed that should be researched. There is a major wetland back there.
- Debbie Stanley suggested the Bucklin property on Morgan Hill Road be considered.
- Vicki Koron asked about the five acres owned by the Mormon Church and located on 114, behind the Millstone. That is currently a productive farm land, and members agreed to leave it on the list.
- Debbie Stanley and Ruth White recommended members go out and look at the Brewster property at Tracy and County Roads. It's flat open field. Terry Dancy suggested that open fields should be looked at critically not just for esthetics, but also for future agricultural uses—hay, pasturage, corn. Debbie Stanley suggested they look at the soils map online.

A subcommittee consisting of Vicki Koron, Ruth White and Emma Crane will work with Peter Stanley on checking the properties on this list for accuracy including both tax map numbers and owners' names. Les Norman asked that they let him know when they will be meeting. At that time, he will complete the assignments.

Spring Walks

Ruth White reported that the heron is on the nest at Low Plain.

Upcoming are the Wildflowers Walk that she will lead, and the Tree Walk that Dan Allen will lead.

She reported on the sudden appearance of a lot of yellow flags at the Bog. Dan Allen asked if they are on the boundary or the interior of the property. Ruth White described their location, and members agreed that these are on Town property, and since no one knows their purpose, can be removed.

Ruth White reported that a couple of trees are down on the path at the Bog, and that there are a number of rotten boards. Dan Allen clarified that those are on the right hand side of the loop, and said that they have not gotten to that side yet, but will. He has received an email from student Ian Proulx who wishes to volunteer again this summer. Until that gets underway, Conservation Commission members authorized Ruth to put up a sign urging caution on that portion of the boardwalk.

Dan Allen said that he and Bob Brown have inspected the path from Pleasant Street to the former Middle School and propose replacing 400-feet of the boardwalk using a lighter weight platform than that employed at the Bog. Also, they will put in a new bridge. Bob Brown said he has solicited quotes from two suppliers. Cote & Reny, and Colby. He said they can get inch and a half boards but it would be premium. The question is whether or not the savings on weight would offset that premium price. He said otherwise the quote is for 1500 board feet at 50-cents per board foot. That means about \$750-\$800 for the Pleasant Street-Middle School project, and about \$600 for the Bog work. In addition, he suggested that a pair of bog wheels be purchased for \$100, for ease of lugging the materials out onto the bog.

Though Les Norman noted that all the survey work the Commission is having done now has turned out to be quite expensive, the Conservation Commission authorized those above-named purchases for the Pleasant Street/Middle School boardwalk and the Bog boardwalk, as well as the purchase of bog wheels.

Other

- Bob Brown reported that the Messer Pond Protective Association has completed its engineering study and he suggested everyone take a look at that on the web site. He can provide hard copies upon request. He noted that one of the most surprising things to come out of the study is that the Messer Pond watershed is 1500 acres large! That watershed crosses County Road, and goes up Burpee Hill. It is impacted by I89 and other roads. They have discussed the study with Richard Lee who suggested that some of the steeper banks along the roads could be seeded (this being a less expensive and time consuming solution to erosion than putting in culvert crossings).

Bob Brown said he is asking a number of groups and people to look the study over, and at some point, he proposes scheduling a meeting to see how everyone can support and implement the recommendations that have come out of the study.

- Terry Dancy said the Sunapee Watershed plan is ready for initial presentation to Selectmen of the six towns in the watershed. He said that on June 9, he and June Fichter will meet with the New London Selectmen, and he has recommended a more detailed discussion at the Planning Board meeting. He has asked Karen Ebel to attend the June 9 Selectmen's meeting. Also, he has asked June Fichter to include in that discussion the studies done for Pleasant Lake and Messer Pond. At this meeting, he

asked Conservation Commission members to attend the June 9 meeting. They want to be sure that all this watershed data is fed into the Master Plan.

- A subcommittee of the Planning Board will meet on May 27 to discuss shoreland regulations.
- Bob Brown said that the MPPA also has available a Guide for Erosion Control/Stormwater management.

Having no other business before it, the Conservation Commission adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah A. Denz
Recording Secretary