



# TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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## **APPROVED Minutes of the November 17, 2010 Conservation Commission Meeting**

**MEMBERS PRESENT: Bob Brown (Chairman), Dan Allen, Terry Dancy, Andy Deegan, Vicki Koron, Emma Crane, Ruth White**

**MEMBERS ABSENT: Sue Clough, Laura Alexander**

**OTHERS PRESENT: Peter Stanley (Zoning Board Administrator), Bob Crane (Webmaster)**

Chair Brown called the meeting to order at 9:30am and noted that they needed to approve the minutes from the October 20<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Ms. Crane wondered if the terminology “convict labor” was too “heavy.” Mr. Brown said that they needed to be clear that the diversion program was not to be confused with convict labor. The diversion program was made up of volunteers from people who are required to do community service. If the town gets manual labor assistance from the State, the workers are incarcerated individuals. Ms. White suggested using “state correctional workers.” Mr. Stanley said that they should use “convicts” or “prisoners.” Chair Brown said that he didn’t believe the workers would pose any danger and had consulted with Ms. Levine and Chief Seastrand before accepting this sort of help from the State.

Ms. Crane said on P. 3 on the 5<sup>th</sup> paragraph says “Chair Allen” and should say “Dan Allen.” Same page, 7<sup>th</sup> paragraph, Ms. Alexander had commented that she had recently met with the Garden Club who was not receptive in working with her on invasive species. She had commented that the meeting was in 2003 and should not be considered “recent.” Ms. Crane said that she, herself, was on the board of the Garden Club and felt if the invasive topic was presented now it would be much more favorably received.

**IT WAS MOVED (Bob Brown) AND SECONDED (Andy Deegan) to approve the minutes of October 20, 2010, as amended. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

### **Budget**

Chair Brown said that the budget hasn’t really changed.

The invoice from Clayton Platt for the low plain forestry management plan would be coming. It was budgeted at \$2,700. Mr. Deegan said that Mr. Platt has the maps and would be getting something to him by the next meeting.

Mr. Deegan had recently sent an invoice to Chair Brown for \$5,000 for the Messer Pond easement, which allows for public access. The reduction of \$1,000 has been granted due to this allowance to the public. Without allowing the public access to the property, the cost would be \$6,000.

**IT WAS MOVED (Emma Crane) and SECONCED (Vicki Koron) to accept the invoice for the Messer Pond easement for \$5,000. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Ms. Koron said she had submitted a bill for \$15 for water testing.

Chair Brown noted that due to the fact that people are using a lot of their personal equipment on the trail work, they should not feel embarrassed to submit a bill if something like a chain on a saw, needs to be replaced or repaired. No one on the Conservation Commission felt differently and agreed it should be done.

Chair Brown said they had a meeting with the Budget Committee on the CIP. Over an hour was spent on the pros and cons of an 18 month budget, semi-annual vs. quarterly billing, and he felt that people were not totally clear on the details. Mr. Stanley said that they go from paying instead of for the past period of time, they will pay for future time so that in that 18-month window they will not pay only the taxes that are due for the 18 months that had passed, and they will also pay for the next six months. The taxpayers come up with an extra payment(s) so they are always paying for future taxes. Chair Brown said they are not paying more, but just paying sooner. After that discussion they got into the CIP and their request for 25,000 seemed sort of insignificant. The Chairman thought that while it wasn't a huge amount of money, they were still questioning it and looking at it. It is currently at \$25,000, which is over an 18-month period. He said he could tell that not everyone in the room thought it was a good plan. The Board of Selectmen has suggested reconsidering the request as there is some discomfort that there is \$400,000 in the fund currently with no plans to spend it. Chair Brown agreed to bring the topic to the CC to discuss it with them. He mentioned that they had some preliminary discussions about an RSA to change the use of the fund beyond outright land usage. He asked if the Board of Selectmen would review the RSA to give their opinion as to whether or not it would be appropriate to bring before Town Meeting in two articles. If they can get an easement on land the town doesn't have to buy would help the town, as they wouldn't have to purchase the land but could gain access to it.

Mr. Deegan said it was a benefit to the town as they don't have to remove it from the tax roll. Mr. Stanley said that the way they are currently set up, they can't purchase an easement but only land. They will have to adopt provisions of RSA 36-A:4-a, Optional Powers, to allow them to purchase an easement. This would involve two warrant articles. He said that the language for the warrant is in the statute but allows them to purchase land outside of New London and interest in land that works towards the goals of the Conservation Commission as outlined in the statute. If they have too many things on their plate at Town Meeting, they might not get anything. His recommendation was to substantially reduce or eliminate the contribution for this year in return for the Board of Selectmen endorsing changing the language to be able to purchase easements. Ms. White asked if other towns had done this. It was noted that Warner and Sunapee had. Mr. Stanley said the real argument was that the ability to purchase an easement would conserve land without having to purchase it.

Mr. Deegan shared that 103b and 103a may become part of a scenic route and that there was the possibility of receiving a grant to protect the land along the scenic view. Mr. Dancy asked if they got any reaction to this suggestion from the Board of Selectmen, regarding the RSA. Chair Brown said that the chair, Tina Helm, said she would review the RSA and get back to him. He asked them to decide on whether they propose the language at the December meeting. Mr. Stanley said that the two issues were:

1. Revisiting the purpose of the Capital Reserve so it is amended to state it is to be used for the purchase of interest in conservation easements.
2. Adoption of the additional powers as provided under RSA 36-A:4-a, which allows them to purchase rights of property out of town and interest in conservation easements.

Ms. White asked if it was worthwhile to have an informal explanation to the Board of Selectmen to go with the RSA giving the specific advantages to their town. Chair Brown said that some type of cover memo explaining the reasons for this would be appropriate.

Chair Brown asked if there was any cost associated with this. Mr. Stanley said there was not.

Mr. Dancy said they should not tie this to the fact that they will not ask for money this year. They are two different things. Others agreed on this.

IT WAS MOVED (Andy Deegan) AND SECONDED (Ruth White) to proceed with adopting the optional powers, as stated in RSA 36-A:4-a. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

IT WAS MOVED (Dan Allen) AND SECONDED (Terry Dancy) that the Conservation Commission amend the purpose of the Capital Reserve to include the ability to make contributions to interest in land easements. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

### Land Acquisitions

Mr. Stanley said that the deed has been prepared for the strip on the Philips Preserve that belongs to the Crowells. It has not been signed as of yet. He was confident that it would be signed in the near future and would be accepted by the Board of Selectmen and the Conservation Commission at a public hearing. Mr. Stanley said that when the bill comes from Upton Hatfield, it will be singled out as “Deed for Conservation Commission.” He estimated the cost to be about \$300, plus recording fees.

Mr. Deegan said he was approached by a land owner on Little Lake Sunapee who owns land on Stump Dump Road. The Town owns a small piece of land near theirs. They own two developable lots and want to cut part of one of the lots off and give it to the town to prevent further development and to help protect the lake. Mr. Deegan said he would come to the Conservation Commission about getting a gift of land. The size is 2.1 acres. Mr. Stanley asked if they understood that if they gift it to the town, it is developable for beach use. Mr. Deegan said he didn't think they knew this and would explain it to the land owner. Mr. Stanley said that if they gave an easement instead, beach use would not be an issue. Mr. Dancy asked if it is given to the town and could be used for the beach, could it be used for extra parking at the beach. Mr. Stanley said it could. It didn't seem to anyone that the land owner understood the details involved and they should be informed. Mr. Deegan said he would bring up these concerns with the land owner. Chair Brown asked what the cost would be associated with this. Mr. Deegan said it would be about the same as what they are paying for the land being donated by the Crowells. Any subdivision of the land would be the responsibility of the land owner, not the Conservation Commission. He agreed to discuss these issues further with the land owner.

Mr. Deegan said that if anyone can think of anything along the roads on 103a or 103b, to let him know. The grant could be used.

Mr. Stanley said that on the land around King Hill Brook and Pike Brook (purchased by Carr), there may be some leverage there for a conservation easement. He also indicated the Darrah property that abuts the low plain.

Mr. Stanley suggested creating an updated list of properties they would like to protect, as Ken McWilliams has resigned and his involvement stops as of December 1<sup>st</sup>, so the entire Master Plan project would be handed over to the Regional Planning Commission. If they want to change anything in the chapter or have input in the land use chapter, they would need to have an updated list created. They should make it clear that there is a long list of targeted land parcels. Mr. Stanley volunteered to help with this list creation. Ms. Crane said she would help with this list as well. Mr. Dancy asked what the time table was for completion of the Master Plan. Mr. Stanley said his guess was this coming summer. They were in transition now with Mr. McWilliams leaving.

Trails

Mr. Allen said that he keeps getting injured. A come-along chain broke and he had to get some staples to close a wound. He needs to purchase another chain. Chair Brown said that the Conservation Commission would replace the chain for him, as he was using it for a town project. He noted that he couldn't move dirt around once cold weather comes, but can still move rocks. He works 3-4 hours/day, 4-5 days/week. Chair Brown said that he walked the Norman trail recently and took some pictures. A lot more has been done than moving rocks; places have been filled in and it looks really good. What Mr. Allen has accomplished was just phenomenal. Ms. Crane said that she and Bob Crane walked the trail and took pictures, which are on the website. They agreed that it was nicely done.

Mr. Allen said he was confronted by Matt Green, as people are walking off the end of their trail onto his property. He pointed out to them that they had not put up a "No Trespassing" sign. He was invited to come to the meeting but didn't come. Mr. Stanley said that it is Bill Green's property that abuts the trail, not Rick or Matt Green's. Matt's father, Rick, owns the next parcel over as they go around the pond. Mr. Allen said that Matt told him a canoe had been stolen. Chair Brown said that there was no real action they had to take on this issue; they have a sign posted already on the trail, but they have to post their own land if they want to.

Chair Brown said they placed a small order for lumber, which has been put up on sticks and covered for use in the spring.

Mr. Deegan said that he and Chair Brown got together to make a list of trails that had monitors and which did not. The person to contact for trail monitors would be switching to himself and not Mr. Allen. The people who are still monitoring trails want to continue. Chair Brown said that he is still having trouble grasping the big picture of where all the trails are. The master map doesn't have a couple of the trails on there, such as Clark Pond and other newer trails. The list was largely taken from the website and includes some trails that are out of town.

Mr. Deegan said it is important to have monitors on the trails. He wondered how monitors have been selected in the past. Ms. White said they should ask people who live nearby or who use the trails for their own use. Chair Brown said that they were talking about adopters and monitors and Mr. Allen had provided a good definition of the adopter and monitor. An adopter does the work on the trails to keep them clear. A monitor is to report anything that needs to be done. Ms. White said that adding on to Mr. Allen's list, they should add a line for specific dates of when people are monitoring the trails. Mr. Deegan said that they had talked about monitoring the trails after a weather event, such as an ice storm or strong winds. Ms. White thought it was confusing to have an adopter and a monitor; she felt they should just have one person taking care of the trail. Ms. Crane agreed.

Ms. White said that they needed to prioritize the trails: Lyon Brook North and the Philip Cricenti Bog need to have someone right away on those; they were high priority. Mr. Deegan said he would monitor the Bog, as he goes there all the time. Ms. Crane said they had discussed closing the short-cut loop at Cricenti Bog. Chair Brown said he hasn't gone to look at it but if it can't be fixed it should be abandoned.

Mr. Crane commented that Bunker Loop needed some chain saw help on the top. There are trees across the trail and brush needs to be cut.

Ms. White asked Mr. Deegan to email the trail list to the group after it has been tightened up so they can see what is still needed.

Chair Brown said he talked to Bill Ross about monitoring trails and he thought perhaps he might have some scout families who might like to be a monitor or adopter work. Mr. Deegan said that the girl scouts wanted to do the Lyon Brook North but only wanted to go out once/year.

Chair Brown said that he is planning on using the Diversion Group next year, in addition to the convict help.

#### Geo caching

Chair Brown said that he got a request about putting a geo cache on the Clark Pond trails. He wasn't sure what the protocol was. Ms. White said she sent him Ms. Levine's response, which was that this has been approved on all trails in New London. She indicated that there were several placed throughout the trails and are not the same as the letter box or the valley quest, although the procedure is similar. Mr. Deegan said that they are fine with it as long as people obey the signs. Ms. White said that these encourage people to go out on the trails. She said that if anyone gets asked about this in the future, they should tell people they are approved for town trails.

#### Invasive Species

Mr. Dancy had a letter of request from the Pleasant Lake Protective Association, who is concerned about Japanese Knotweed. They have a map with locations marked on it where the knotweed has been found. They want to know if the Conservation Commission was concerned about this issue. Mr. Allen said they are concerned about getting volunteers to work on this problem. Mr. Dancy wondered if there was a summary written as to how they could get rid of the knotweed. Mr. Allen said that he did not have anything written up. Mr. Dancy felt this sort of thing would be useful to help people move in the right direction to get rid of such invasive species. Mr. Crane said they should point them to the web; there are pictures and places where the weed has been found, and there are links to the UNH Extension website explaining what they have used to rid both this invasive, and insects and aquatic invasive species as well.

#### Forest Nursery

Chair Brown said that the town's nursery is now planted behind the sewer plant in the field. There are 115 pots, which have been planted. He talked to the director at the nursery in Boscawen who will be sending them a new catalog. They might find some things in there that they would be interested in, such as Sugar Maples. Mr. Lee (Public Works Director) is keen on crab apple trees, which are not very expensive. Chair Brown said that Mr. Lee has done a great job helping with this project. He noted that he would like to get a sign that says Conservation Commission/Public Works Forest Nursery and take a photo of it for the website.

#### Mail

There was no mail.

#### Calendar

Chair Brown asked Mr. Allen if they could do a snowshoe walk to Clark Pond. Mr. Allen said they have done it before. Mr. Stanley does the wood duck boxes, and a couple more snowshoe walks, so that would be four events in the winter. Ms. White said that if they schedule these events and they cannot happen, or even if a couple of people come, they should try to keep doing such things to show that the Conservation Commission was doing positive things in the town.

The meeting adjourned at 10:50am.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristy Heath, Recording Secretary  
Town of New London

