



TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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APPROVED Minutes of the November 28, 2012 Conservation Commission Meeting

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bob Brown (Chairman), Dan Allen, Ruth White, Rick Anderson, Terry Dancy, Laura Alexander, Emma Crane

MEMBERS ABSENT: Andy Deegan, Sue Clough

OTHERS: Bob Crane (Webmaster), Lucy St. John (Planning & Zoning Administrator)

Chair Brown called the meeting to order at 9:00am.

Ms. St. John gave an update on the last Planning Board meeting, per request from Emma Crane. For the December meeting there is a full agenda with two Colby-Sawyer College plans, the Messer subdivision, a Hopwood tree-cutting, and two mergers for the Vernon's.

Ms. St. John indicated that she had been informed of an intent to cut on Pingree Road. Some people were concerned about the cutting possibly affecting a nearby stream. She contacted the people from DRED and also went out to look at and photograph the area herself. It was found that the company did put in proper control and the water cleared up. Ms. Alexander said that Northern Timber was the outfit who did the cutting and they were the same company that did the poor cutting on Seamans Road. Chair Brown said they walked around the area and checked out the brooks. There was silt present in one stream but it has since cleared up.

Ms. St. John said Mark Mozden submitted a building permit but she wasn't sure why. He likes to go in every few years to clean out the silt at his waterfront property. Chair Brown said that the drawing provided makes it look like a great amount of material will be removed. It was noted that this request was from someone who is located next to Slope 'n Shore. Mr. Anderson said that the owner has done this in the past. Sediment and dead leaves tend to settle in the area and Mr. Mozden likes to clean it out.

Mr. Anderson said that the lake will be lowered next fall and if anyone would like to do work on their waterfront areas, they must obtain a permit by March 1st. The Town will be doing some work to the boat ramp once the water is lowered.

IT WAS MOVED (Dan Allen) AND SECONDED (Laura Alexander) to sign the expedited request for Mark Moshen. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Minutes of October 17, 2012

IT WAS MOVED (Laura Alexander) AND SECONDED (Ruth White) to approve the minutes of October 17, 2012, as circulated. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Trails & Projects

Mr. Allen said that he has revamped the Edna and Dancy bench on the Clark Pond Trail. He also noted that he has found a 10" Oak tree that could be labeled, near the trail which he was happy about. He did a lot of cutting after Hurricane Sandy and had to do a lot of work in one area where it was completely overgrown.

Ms. White asked if they have a cautionary sign to put up at the entrance of the pond for when it is frozen. Mr. Allen said that Chair Brown made the signs and they have been put up.

Chair Brown asked about the North Side Trail. Mr. Allen said that the prison workers came and worked on this trail. They were able to move some large rocks but there is still some work to be done.

Mr. Allen said he would be ordering the signs for tree/shrub/flower identification. The cost of the signs would be about \$200 - \$300.

Mr. Allen said there is a device he would like to purchase that is used to pull weeds. He thought they were less than \$150. It pulls the plant out by the root. Chair Brown agreed that this was fine to purchase as there was money in the budget for equipment.

Ms. White wondered if it was too soon to start making a master list of maintenance items for the spring. Low Plain needs a lot of work, she felt. A lot of the “Trail Closed” signs were in the bushes and a lot of the block signs with numbers on them are illegible. Some of the blazes are gone as well. She would suggest making a list of these kinds of little things that need to be done so that when the intern comes in in the spring, they will have things to work on right away.

Ms. White thought that all the trail adopters should have received a letter or email after Hurricane Sandy to ask them to go check their trails. She thought they should take better care of the trails and wasn't sure the adopters knew what was expected of them. Chair Brown said all the requests for maintenance should be put on a list and they could then decide what the priorities were. In order to make new signs, he needs to know the conditions of them, where they are and what they need to say. He thought that the adopters should be contacted individually to ask them to check on and maintain their trails. If they need assistance with this or no longer wish to be adopters, they would be asked to let the commission know. Chair Brown said he would verify the adopter list and get back to the commission about where to go next.

Ms. White said she put in new signs near the duck blinds thanking people for taking their trash out with them. She also commented that the new duck blinds that were at Low Plain look great. Elkins Fish & Game fixed the blinds and would be maintaining them. Elkins Fish & Game sent a bill to the commission, which was less than \$300. Everyone is very pleased with the blinds. Chair Brown said he sent a thank-you note to the Fish & Game club for the work.

Mowing

Chair Brown said he needed to confirm what needed to be mowed. He suggested that Low Plain, from both ends, the top of Clark Lookout, a small area at Clark Pond, and the field a Phillips Preserve, would need mowing. Richard Lee (Public Works Director) has agreed to try and fit this into his schedule. Low Plain will be done in the spring and fall. Ms. White felt it should be done in August and not any later as the grass gets really high. She anticipated many complaints if this wasn't mowed before fall. She suggested that if Mr. Lee can't mow on this timeframe that he should let the commission know so they can make other arrangements.

Department of Corrections

Chair Brown said they had some pretty good work-days with the inmates. They cleaned up debris at Messer Pond and re-routed a trail. They also removed some of the old lumber at the Bog. They went up on Clark Lookout and finished the last pile of brush. He has received a lot of positive comments about how nice it looks there now. He wondered if they'd like to do this again next year as it is a source of man-power. They need help to organize and supervise the workers. There should be more than one or two people directing them in the right place. Chair Brown said that they could talk about this a bit more at the next meeting. Requests for the work days need to be submitted in January. Mr. Dancy felt they get a lot of good work out of the inmates and they should be commended for the good work they have done. Chair Brown said that he always sends a thank-you note after each of the work days. The director of the program has indicated how important and well-received these notes have been.

Phillips Preserve Easement

Chair Brown said that the language for this is still being reviewed.

Phillips Preserve Forestry Plan

Mr. Bedard feels this will be finished by the end of December. Leo Maslan seems enthusiastic about the project. He has arranged a logger, Lou Cadwell, to do the work. Ms. Alexander felt that Mr. Maslan does good work and trusted him. They plan to do the work this winter once the contract is signed by the Board of Selectmen and the “Intent to Cut” application is submitted.

Chair Brown said that while there is no requirement to notify the abutters regarding the intent to cut, he thought it would be helpful to offer a letter of explanation to the abutters, letting them know what would be going on. He thought perhaps a meeting could be held to invite abutters to at which they could explain what would be going on with the property. Ms. Alexander said she could help with the letter and identify the abutters by using the GIS information she has access to. Chair Brown said that getting the letter out by the first of the year would be ideal.

Budget

Chair Brown said the Conservation Commission has been asked to submit their budget for 2014. The end of June is the end of the Town’s fiscal year. He sent a draft out to the members of the commission for review. They have the bill for New Hampshire Conservation Commissions, which went up to \$265. Stewardship Easement Legal Review he put in \$4,500. Most other expenses stayed the same. The members of the commission discussed what properties they are still interested in getting easements on and decided they need to review the list. Chair Brown thought that they might want to increase the intern pay to \$10/hour. He asked if anyone had any additions or questions about the budget. It was felt that the budget looked good and should be submitted as-is.

Chair Brown said that the desired property list’s value was about \$16 million dollars. This was averaged out to about \$375,000 per property.

Conservation Commission Fund

Chair Brown said that this also has been called the Esther Currier Fund and has about \$13,000 in it. It is money that has been donated privately and is not taxpayer money. Mr. Dancy said it started off as escrow money for the purpose to purchase the land at Low Plain. It has been re-named several times and is now the Conservation Commission Fund. It is money that, under the RSA, the Conservation Commission has the right to use as it was donated specifically for property acquisition. Ms. Alexander said that now they can use it for other things under their discretion. Chair Brown said that if they needed a survey or appraisal, they could use this money.

Chair Brown said that the definition of a “town and city forest,” as noted by author Kim Hallquist in 2007, says that the Board of Selectmen can authorize the Conservation Commission or appoint a Forestry Committee to manage a forest. If it is voted to adopt this RSA, the commission has complete authority and authorization to take care of the land and the selectmen have no further say. Any income from the forestry land goes to the Conservation Commission.

Ms. Alexander thought it would be good to include information in the town report about the amount of conserved land in New London. It would help people understand that even though they have a lot of trails it doesn’t mean they have a lot of land.

Trail Map Inventory

Chair Brown said they found another box of the big maps, which are missing two trails. It would be nice if they could get the map updated. He wondered if they could get the map on the website. He wasn’t able to find it there although Mr. Crane said it is. They have maps for the Low Plain, the Bog and the Webb trails as individual maps, but the Bog maps are getting low. He has received permission from Ms. Hallquist to make a couple hundred copies on the photo copier.

Programs

Ms. White said that people don't seem very enthused about continuing the walks and nature programs in the winter. If they were going to do them they would need to know soon. She can do all the advertisements before she leaves for the winter but the other people would need to do the rest. The duck boxes need to be done and now Peter Stanley isn't there to do it. The people who were interested in helping aren't doing so any more.

Chair Brown wondered if a school group would be interested in coming to help with this. Ms. White wasn't sure. The State Conservation Commission had tried to get into the schools but unless there is one teacher who is there to support the program, it doesn't work. Ms. Alexander said that there are teachers out there who are doing these kinds of things. She agreed that with the State standards and other things, it is difficult to organize these trips from the outside.

It was determined that December 19th at 9:00am would be the next meeting.

With no other business, Chair Brown called for a motion to adjourn.

**IT WAS MOVED (Laura Alexander) AND SECONDED (Terry Dancy) to adjourn.
THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 10:41am.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristy Heath, Recording Secretary
Town of New London