



TOWN OF
NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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MEETING MINUTES
TOWN OF NEW LONDON
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
October 21, 2009

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

Absent: Emma Crane

Guests: Peter Stanley, Zoning Administrator
Michael Todd, New London Resident
Hannah Bright, Colby-Sawyer College student
Jeanne Clark, Colby-Sawyer College student
Andrew Froncia, Colby Sawyer College student
Heather MacIntyre, Colby Sawyer College student
Jamie Trombley, Colby Sawyer College student

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

Minutes: The minutes of the September 16, 2009 meeting were accepted as presented.

Colby-Sawyer Students:

Ms. Alexander summarized that her students has been reading Natural Resource Inventories and have broken up into topic related sections. Jamie Trombley is working on scenic resources and she asked the Commission their suggestions as to how to decide what scenic resources should be considered, since the term is somewhat vague and can be subject to individual interpretation. She was seeking the Commission's suggestions as to how this was done in the past in New London and how it might be done now. Mr. Dancy said that it was his recollection that those scenic resources in the 1998 master plan came from public input. Several suggestions were given to her. These include placing a request for input in the Kearsarge Shopper and an article of interest in the Intertown Record which could include an e-mail to which residents could respond with their suggestions. It was also suggested that she could perhaps request access to the Town Administrator's New London residents e-mail list and perhaps utilize this to contact the residents to gain their input. Mr. Dancy noted that would be a section on scenic resources in the new master plan which would be coming out the end of this year.

Ms. White presented a CD, "Swanzy, NH: Open Spaces" done by a high school student in Swanzy to illustrate the rural character of the town. The CD includes interviews with Swanzy residents speaking about what they loved about their town and its rural character. She thought perhaps the student who did the documentary could be contacted to see how he went about doing this and collecting the information. She gave this CD to Ms. Alexander for class use.

CIP Money/Cap:

Chair Deegan reported that at the recent Planning Board meeting the committee voted to approve, unanimously, \$25,000 to the Conservation Commission. The question was then raised by the Commissioners as to whether or not the Commission has a cap on this CIP fund. Mr. Brown asked what the scope of use for these funds would be. Mr. Stanley said that these funds could be for acquisition of property and for fees and easements which would protect land from development. Mr. Allen moved that the Conservation Commission place a cap of \$500,000 on the CIP fund at this time. This was seconded by Ms. Koron. The discussion that followed suggested that the Conservation Commission write and adopt a purpose statement on holding the money and what it can be used for, consistent with RSA 36. Chair Deegan will draft this statement and bring it back to the Commission for their review. It was noted that no money can be spent in the CIP without Town approval.

Trails, Bog Trails:

Mr. Todd asked the Commission for their opinion on using mechanized vehicles to provide trail maintenance. He said he had recently assisted with trail maintenance at Clark Pond and trail grooming behind the old Middle School using a mechanized vehicle. He also questioned what the maximum width of trails would be. Mr. Allen said that he had gotten permission from the Town for a two year period to use mechanized vehicles for maintenance and grooming this winter. Mr. Stanley said that the use of mechanized vehicles requires permission by the Town and written permission from the private land owners, if that were applicable. Mr. Stanley suggested that Chair Deegan obtain from Jessie Levine the delegated authority to provide this oversight for use approval of mechanized vehicles on the Town trails. Chair Deegan said he will discuss this with Ms. Levine and get back to the Commission. Until this authorization is in place, it was agreed that any use of mechanized vehicles for trail maintenance would obtain permission from the Town prior to their use.

Regarding the issue of trail width raise by Mr. Todd, it was decided that this is site specific, due to natural limitations, and use of the trails and will therefore vary. A discussion then followed regarding having multi-use trails and identifying which in the current network of trails might be appropriate for this. Mr. Stanley reminded the Commissioners that the Town does not have an ordinance regarding the use of the public trails. If the trails cross private property, however, this may or may not be spelled out. Ms. Clough urged the Commission to work with the Recreation Commission to have a more inclusive approach to the trails in New London. It was agreed that better communication was needed between the two commissions. Mr. Allen noted the recent Pleasant Trail Run recently sponsored by the Recreation Commission, which used some of the Conservation Commissions trails, commenting on the number of participants who used the trails. Mr. Stanley will speak to Chad Denning about this event. It was mentioned that if there is more use, then more maintenance is needed to maintain the trails, and perhaps they could help. There was concern about using wheeled vehicles on the trails and possible erosion caused by them if the trail conditions were wet. Mr. Todd said he would like to see the Town get past the use of side-walks as the only way to connect with Main Street. He would someday like to see a network of trails that would enable residents to get to the commercial establishments in Town via trails rather than sidewalks. Mr. Stanley said that there was possible money available for this through the "Safe Schools" funding.

Mr. Brown reported that the third trail of the new loop at Clark Pond is now complete. He moved that this trail be named the Allen Trail. This was seconded by Ms. Koron and passed unanimously by the Commission. He also reported the following: the car on Messer Pond trail is gone; and regarding the KCC trail behind the old Middle School, the ramp is in. He commented about signage and thought a larger sign on Pleasant Street should replace the smaller sign making it easier for users to see, since the trails was now gaining in usage. Regarding Lyon Brook, Mr. Brown said there is quite a bit to do in there, including a second bridge that is all but gone and 5 different places where it is wet and the boards are rotted, which he assumes can be replaced. Another problem is access to do these repairs. He said there is a point at the Outing Club field, where access may be obtained, but it is a long hike and the first 200 yards off Pleasant Street is very wet. This trail also needs to be re-blazed. The issue of utilizing assistance from the Girl Scouts for trail maintenance was raised. Mr. Allen said that the troop leader he had spoken with said that they would only take the Parkside to County Road section and give the rest to a different troop. Chair Deegan said he had not heard from any other troop regarding this. Ms. White said that recently there have been three geocaches hidden in there which has meant that people are access this frequently. She said she knew that the Bog has been a top priority of the Commission for quite a while but thought that some effort should be made to repair this section of Lyon Brook. With regard to the Bog, Mr. Brown said there are some boards that need to be replaced, but all in all there was nothing life threatening. He said he and Mr. Allen are going in tomorrow morning at 8:30A.M. to do these repairs and asked those who were available to join him.

Mr. Stanley said that recently a Town resident had asked him how come the Conservation Commission can erect boardwalks and bridges without getting a permit and Town residents were not able to do this on their own land. After some discussion, it was agreed that anything installed later than 1968 needed to have a permit. He suggested that the Commission get “after the fact permits” on any recent construction and get permits for all future construction. He reminded the Commission that in order to obtain a permit, there needed to be a public benefit.

Regarding trail maintenance, Ms. White asked if the Trail Adopters had been contacted regarding trail conditions and condition of the signage. Mr. Deegan said he would do this and report back to the Commission. With regard to trail maintenance, Ms. White suggested that perhaps Judge McSwinney could be contacted to see if any projects might be needed for youth who may need to have a community project. It was noted by Chair Deegan that there are details that would have to be arranged for this type of involvement which included a reporting and monitoring structure in place as well as a way to keep track of the time commitment and hours utilized. Ms. Clough said she would speak to the Judge regarding this potential resource. It was also suggested to look into the use of correction facility inmates as possible trail maintenance workers.

Any Other Business:

Chair Deegan presented a site plan for land that the hospital is selling to private commercial developers. There is 1700 feet of wetland which will be impacted by the use of a proposed parking lot. This will be located behind Hubert’s and WNTH. It was noted that this will come before the Planning Board on October 27. The Commissioners agreed that approval would be

contingent on: 1) the parking area being available for individuals who may access the multi-purpose trail which had been proposed several years ago, but put on hold, and, 2) the impact on the wetlands be addressed, including the issue of snow storage. Chair Deegan will communicate these contingencies to the Planning Board, Ms. Levine, and Mr. Stanley.

Chair Deegan noted that the Lake Sunapee Watershed Infrastructure Project will hold a first Stakeholder Forum on October 28, 2009 from 6:30 – 8:30P.M. at the Newbury Town Hall. This project marks the beginning of a two year effort to assess potential risk in the Sunapee Watershed to storm water infrastructure due to increasing runoff from an ever developing landscape and historically increasing storm intensities. All Commissioners were encouraged to attend.

Mr. Stanley raised the issue of people who own farm property for farm use and still have land in current use. There would be a tax on a building placed on the land, but the land below the building would still be in current use. He requested a sense of the Commission to allow this opportunity in New London. Chair Deegan asked how the Town would know of this use. Mr. Stanley said that a permit would still need to be obtained. The Commissioners thought this would facilitate the Town being farm friendly. After some discussion, the sense of the Commission was that they were in support of this concept.

Chair Deegan presented two bills to be paid: One to Cote and Reney and the other to Home Depot. Ms. Alexander moved that these two bills be paid. This was seconded by Vicki Koron, There being no discussion, the motion was passed unanimously.

Mr. Brown asked if there were any restrictions on individuals planting plants on Town property. It was agreed that if this were to be done, the individual should obtain permission from the Conservation Commission prior to the plantings being done.

Ms. Alexander moved that the meeting be adjourned at 2:35P.M. This was seconded by Ms. Koron. There being not further discussion, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen K. Colby
Recording Secretary