



TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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APPROVED Minutes of the October 20, 2010 Conservation Commission Meeting

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bob Brown (Chairman), Dan Allen, Terry Dancy, Andy Deegan, Vicki Koron, Peter Stanley (Zoning Board Administrator), Bob Crane, Emma Crane, Ruth White, Sue Clough, Laura Alexander

Chair Brown called the meeting to order at 9:30am and noted that there were two sets of minutes that needed to be approved.

IT WAS MOVED (Bob Brown) AND SECONDED (Laura Alexander) to approve the minutes of August 18, 2010, as circulated. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

IT WAS MOVED (Bob Brown) AND SECONDED (Laura Alexander) to approve the minutes of September 15, 2010 minutes, as amended. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Dan Allen said that it should not say that he built the Lincoln Trail, as it was the students at Kearsarge Regional High School who built it.

Sue Clough added that it should say "Low Plain" in two places instead of "Low Plane."

Budget

Chair Brown said that as of the first of the month, the Conservation Commission had expended about 25% of their budget. He said that if there are legitimate things they are planning to do in 2010 it was time to get moving so they could be billed. The 2011/2012 budget has been given to Carol Fraley, Finance Officer, and Jessie Levine, Town Administrator, and he hasn't heard anything from them. He was not able to attend the Board of Selectmen's meeting that reviewed the budget. He said he would follow up with Ms. Levine to see if they owe her anything more.

Mr. Stanley questioned Mr. Deegan about the ASLPT contribution. Mr. Deegan said he sent out the baseline to everyone that day and would be heading there after the meeting to find the remaining boundary and then they would be done. He would send a bill after the project closes. Mr. Deegan said that he had some difficulty finding the bounds and has been waiting for the vegetation to go down. Mr. Stanley said they will need this bill by the end of December. Mr. Deegan said if he can't find the boundary, he would consult with the two surveyors who did previous work on the property. He could also use a metal detector to find them. He added that he could produce an invoice before the work was done and it would be for \$5,000.

Mr. Deegan asked if he should alert the Police Department that he would be out on that property because there had been some recent break-ins in that area of town. Mr. Stanley said it was a good idea and would it would also be helpful to put a placard in his car incase people drove by and were suspicious of his parked car.

Mr. Stanley said that the forest management plan for low plain would be about \$2,500. They should pay for this out of the remaining funds in the budget and noted that there were legal expenses associated with the gift of land that could possibly occur. He talked to Peter Crowell last week and they said they are struggling to decide to do this as a gift from individuals or from the estate and would be contacting his lawyer to find out. Mr. Stanley hasn't heard back from Mr. Crowell but said he would continue to follow up. He estimated that this would cost between \$1,500 and \$2,000 to do the appraisal and some fees for the quit claim deed. Bart Mayer, Town Counsel, has recommended that this would be the best way to do it. Overall, they should plan to spend \$2,500 for the appraisal and fees.

Mr. Allen said he submitted a bill for \$420 the other day for explosives.

CIP

Chair Brown said that they talked with the CIP sub-committee and the Board of Selectmen about their request for \$25,000 for the Land Acquisition Fund. He said they gave a lukewarm reaction. He reminded the Commission that the request was for the 18 month budget, and not just 12. He could understand their thinking because there is a lot of money in the fund currently. He wasn't sure at what point they would be officially notified that their request wouldn't be supported. Mr. Stanley said it would be listed as an item for appropriation, but as soon as the budget committee decides it is out of the running, they take it off the list. They could put it in as a warrant article by petition as they did last year. Mr. Deegan thought they talked about holding off on this request for this year and then pushing it through in another year or so. He said he has talked with Brian Hotz from the Warner Conservation Commission. He recommended contacting the New Hampshire Association of Conservation Commissions and to explain the warrants they might be interested in. They may have some draft language available that could be edited for New London's use. Mr. Deegan said that they would wordage for being able to expend money out of the fund for easements, without taking interest in the property, and to expend money for property outside of town. He wondered if they should try and pass the RSAs and not worry about the money this year. Mr. Stanley read from the statute about expending money from funds. The actual language was there that should be used. The actual RSA was: RSA 36, section A:4-a which was a sub-category of Powers.

Ms. White and Ms. Clough thought a lot of people wouldn't like these proposals, as they concern property outside of town. She thought it would take a lot of explanation. Mr. Deegan said that these RSAs would save the town money and if they convey this to the taxpayer, it should pass. Ms. Clough said that they could use the Philips property as an example, as part of it lies in Sunapee. Other members gave examples of property not wholly in the town of New London, which they would not be able participate in if asked, as they have not passed these RSAs. Mr. Stanley said that the surplus from their budget used to go into the Conservation Fund, but that is not the case now, and that it would be a good idea, at some point, to put some money back into the fund before it is depleted.

Land Acquisition

Mr. Stanley said they are deciding if the Crowell property is a factor of the estate or an individual gift. They want to time everything right so that just one appraisal would be done. Ben Crowell has called him about merging some lots on the other side of the road. Mr. Stanley agreed with Mr. Brown that it will happen, but probably not this year. Mr. Allen asked if they need a warrant article to accept this gift. Mr. Stanley said that they would need a public hearing. A warrant article was needed to dispose of land but not to receive it. He would check that fact, as he wasn't completely certain.

There was no new news on the Philips property. They are still aware that New London is very interested and are keeping them in the loop.

Trails

Mr. Allen said that at the last meeting he mentioned he hadn't had any success in the knotweed project. Actually, one application did appear to be successful. Iodized table salt poured on the cut stems of the plants seemed to work; they did not come back. The area he experimented on was part of a much bigger plot and he cut the rest with a scythe. This was plot #3 at the stump dump. He will try to allot more time next year to larger plots. Ms. White said she had received an email from someone who had success by continually cutting the knotweed once or twice per year. Mr. Stanley said he did this with a plot on his property and it took almost 15 years of continual cutting before it gave up. Ms. White said they should do something different near the water instead of using salt. It was mentioned that perhaps the summer intern could cut knotweed as part of their workload.

Ms. Alexander said she thought she saw Buck Thorn in the Bog. She described it as a shiny leaf, almost oval, and that it has regular veins almost opposite from each other. It also has a woody stem. Ms. Alexander thought they may want to pull it out at this point.

Mr. Stanley said it wouldn't be a bad idea to have an invasive species subcommittee, as things like this are happening more and more with species like knotweed, fragmitis, burning bush, barberry, multi-flora rose, etc. Ms. Alexander agreed.

Mr. Allen commented on invasive species. Because of increased Co₂, the vines are able to grow at twice the rate they were able to do 25 years ago. Ms. Crane said that poison ivy was a good example of that.

Chair Brown asked if Ms. Alexander would be interested in starting up a subcommittee on invasive species. She said she would but didn't know how to begin. Mr. Deegan said a lot of the offending species are on other people's land. They need to educate the public and the roads crews. Mr. Stanley said the state has recently stopped disseminating the invasive species. Ms. Crane, Ms. White and Ms. Clough said they would be interested in working on the committee.

Mr. Stanley said that on the town land, how and when they cut things is based on the calendar alone, not on the spread of invasive species. For instance, if the people who do mowing were trained in the identification of the strains, they could understand to remove the debris from the mowers so as not to spread the species around to other locations. He said that Richard Lee's workers could do this, but didn't think the state would be so easily able.

Ms. Alexander said the Garden Club didn't seem very willing to help with the removal of certain species, when she gave a presentation to them several years ago.

Mr. Stanley said that it is hard to find native varieties of things. Mr. Deegan suggested giving people options for buying other non-invasive species instead of invasive ones (blueberry bushes instead of burning bush).

Mr. Crane said that the Intertown record will take short 5-paragraph articles of interest. The Energy Committee had been doing this and the Conservation Commission could do it as well. Mr. Deegan said they might want to submit something now with the possibility of Buck Thorn in Cricenti bog to alert people that this kind of thing happens and to let them know that they have caught it early.

Chair Brown said he sent out a memo recapping their last diversion work day. The last one was cancelled as not many people signed up. He would like to try to pursue the program again next year. Someone sent him a contact from the State Correctional group where they can get well-behaved guests of the state to come out and do things with supervision. Mr. Stanley thought it was a great idea. The old dam at Hominy Pot was done by State correctional worker labor. Mr. Stanley said they would feel remiss in not taking advantage of this option for labor.

Ms. Clough thought they as a commission need to step up and be part of helping with these labor programs. She thinks it would be good if it was more than just Chair Brown helping on the trails. It would be a benefit to the town to know that everyone was doing the best they could. Chair Brown felt it would be helpful to come up with a prioritized list of things to do.

Ms. White said one of their winter activities should be to compose a timeline for the trail adopters that would identify specific days that they must report back to somebody on regarding the condition of their trail(s). Chair Brown said there hasn't been a lot of communication with the trail monitors and it would be good to make sure they are still available to monitor. Ms. White said that they need to clarify that they need to get out there a lot to monitor the trails. She said most people were pretty good about getting a report back if they were asked. Mr. Crane said they don't have a good way for people walking the trails to give reports. He would like to see the list of adopters on the trail to be contacted if there is a tree down, for example.

Ms. Crane suggested abandoning a shortcut loop in Cricenti bog that is continually under water. Ms. White agreed that it has always been under water and would be a good idea to abandon it. She also noted that numbers 14, 15 & 16 are the old signs and need to be replaced. #20 is also missing. Ms. Clough said her daughter Kate took her three year old down to the bog this summer and had a great time. Ms. White said it is used heavily and is loved by many people. It is never ever going to be completely "done" because it is ongoing work. The new numbers look good and the raised boards are wonderful. Mr. Crane said the state has brochures on the bog, as well.

Photos

Chair Brown said he is still looking for new photos of trail work or trails. Mr. Allen said they should take some pictures of the new Norman trail. Mr. Crane said he would and also some pictures of the new bridges.

Chair Brown said Chad Denning (Recreation Department) forwarded an email from Allen Coop, who sent a nice compliment on the new bridges and the fact that the brush had been cut. Starting from #30 on the web trail, his son did a lot of work and cut the brush enough to get the bridges through.

Website

Bob Crane said he looked around the conservation websites in the state, which can be accessed through the Conservation Commission Association. Most of them are part of their town's website and they list the people on the commission and that is it. Sunapee has trail maps, Hanover has taken topo maps and put them in, but none are as extensive as the one New London has. The one person in town who does some work on the web is Mr. Denning who said if they were really in trouble, he would try to help but it won't be at the level it is now. Mr. Dancy asked if they have talked to anyone from Wilmot, as Jerry Gold has done some work with them. Mr. Stanley suggested that Mr. Gold would be a good person to approach about this, as he loves anything to do with trails and is very active.

Forest Nursery

Chair Brown said the planting was delayed in the summer due to the heat. They had to water three times per week at his shop. Hopefully next week they will dig some trenches, put pots in ground, and fill them with mulch. Mr. Lee said he would arrange for some irrigation this spring. Chair Brown has re-potted some trees that needed larger pots and currently, they have about 110 trees. Mr. Lee said they use Crab Apple trees a lot and would look into getting some to add to the nursery.

Mail

Lawsons – Mr. Stanley said that they have merged two lots. On the portion of the lot across the street they are putting the septic system and will need a zoning variance as it is not possible to locate septic on the lot without it being 50' from the wetland. It is a small area that is 50' away and will need state approval, which they have gotten already.

Fletchers – Pilot House Road want an extra dock. Only permitted is permitted and they want a second.

Mr. Stanley noted there were some requested driveway crossings of a wetland to get into a new lot on Burpee Hill. One is the ditch, the second is the drainage from culvert above the ditch, and the next three are drainages off the hill that are small. They picked the smallest place possible.

Chair Brown said that on Thursday the 21st there would be a round table discussion of the Conservation Commission chairs involving the 12-town region.

Chair Brown said that the Society Informational meeting held in New London would be on October 27 at 7pm in the library. Sutton's meeting would be the following night.

IT WAS MOVED (Dan Allen) AND SECONDED (Andy Deegan) to adjourn the Conservation Commission meeting of October 20, 2010. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

The meeting adjourned at 11:00am

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristy Heath, Recording Secretary
Town of New London