



TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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APPROVED Minutes of the October 19, 2011 Conservation Commission Meeting

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bob Brown (Chairman), Rick Anderson, Dan Allen, Emma Crane, Ruth White, Andy Deegan, Terry Dancy, Laura Alexander, Sue Clough, Peter Stanley (Zoning Board Administrator), Bob Crane (Webmaster), Michael Hansen (resident), and Candice Whitney (visitor).

Chair Brown called the meeting to order at 9:00am and asked if anyone would make a motion to approve the minutes from September 28, 2011.

IT WAS MOVED (Laura Alexander) AND SECONDED (Emma Crane) to approve the minutes of September 28, 2011, as circulated. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Wetland Crossing Consultation – Michael Hansen

Mr. Hansen from County Road said he has a piece of property that borders Stony Brook Road and County Road. They would like to put a crossing over a wetland for permanent access to the property, which is approximately 56 acres. The crossing would be upland to upland so the wetlands would not be disturbed. The location chosen is the smallest area of wetland.

Mr. Stanley said that this property was once part of a larger parcel that was subdivided into three parcels. Mr. Hansen is trying not to damage the stone walls and has come up with this proposal to be able to access the property. Mr. Hansen said that the wetland has been delineated. Mr. Stanley thought this idea made a lot of sense. There is room for one house lot on the property and the crossing could serve as a driveway at some point. There is no wetlands permit to cross a wetland with a bridge, but he may need a special exception from the ZBA. Before he can go to the ZBA he will need to get approval from the Conservation Commission.

Mr. Hansen said that they are rebuilding the stone wall and would like to keep the posts that are there currently. He said that the bridge will go over a large, marshy area and they will keep all the trees the way it currently is. Mr. Stanley noted that when Mr. Hansen goes to the ZBA, the abutters will be noticed to voice their opinions.

IT WAS MOVED (Laura Alexander) AND SECONDED (Andy Deegan) to approve the plan, in principal, by Mr. Hansen for the bridge crossing of a wetland. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Beaver reports

Mr. Stanley is hearing problems coming from Little Lake Sunapee and also from behind the old middle school. He has consulted with a trapper who will take care of the issue. Mr. Denning (Recreation Director) said that he would volunteer to remove the dam. Mr. Anderson noted that there was also a beaver dam on Great Brook back in Turtle Cove. Mr. Stanley asked Mr. Anderson to find out some more details. If needed, they will have the trapper take care of this beaver as well.

Budget

Chair Brown said they haven't spent a lot of money. Mr. Allen said he was going to introduce a request for the following year regarding an application of herbicide on knotweed but he hasn't received any estimates yet.

Mr. Stanley said he was recently contacted by Rich Cook of Fish and Game regarding the conservation easement. He has made an attempt to call him back but has not been able to. He guessed that they were looking for their \$5,000. He would report that the money was available. Chair Brown said that they had initially decided to pay this in two parts, \$2,500 each. Mr. Stanley said he knew this but if there was no objection, they may as well pay it all at once. Chair Brown agreed.

Chair Brown said that drying the lumber makes a lot of difference in their ability to work with it and move it. He thought they may want to bring in some more lumber now to let it dry over the winter, but would talk about this later on.

Mr. Stanley wondered if they should invest in a medium-duty, recent quality brush saw/weed-whacker that is maintained by the Conservation Commission rather than using the Highway Department's equipment. They also used equipment donated by people, himself included, and it may be time to purchase some of their own to take care of and use at will. Chair Brown thought this was a worthwhile thing to do. He and Mr. Stanley said that they didn't mind loaning their own equipment to the Conservation Commission every once in a while, but didn't want his things getting worn out doing work for the Town. Chair Brown said that in the past, LaValleys has been generous donating some smaller items and perhaps they would help them out again. Mr. Stanley agreed but indicated that they would need to purchase the larger items, such as a brush cutter. He noted that they also need to purchase safety equipment and would need to determine where these things would be stored.

Chair Brown said that this was something to keep in the back of their minds as they don't need these items for right now.

Invasive Species

Mr. Allen had nothing to report at this time.

Forest Nursery

Chair Brown said that some mulching may be needed and he would let them know if anyone could help. Mr. Stanley suggested talking to Dave Carey, who is the Tree Warden, who may have some materials available to help with mulching. Ms. Clough said that Springledge Farm also has an abundance of leaves that people bring him, which could be used for mulching.

Letters

Chair Brown said that they received another letter from an owner of a desirable parcel of land. This person is from Little Sunapee Road and would like to investigate options. She is currently in Florida and would be returning to this area in May. He wondered if they should send some information in the meantime.

Easements

Mr. Deegan wondered if they'd like to put another property under easement on Low Plain. Mr. Stanley said they've held off on the Phillips Preserve in anticipation of something happening. Perhaps they should go ahead as they have a survey and a forest management plan. He said they don't have an easement on the Bog. They could also consider Colby Sanctuary. He has been approached as there is a possibility that Mark Vernon and his brother would split the parcel of land on the north side of Pingree Road. They do have a right of way over that land, unspecified, in terms of location. It might be good to spell that out through the Planning Board so everyone knows where it is. That still leaves a 25 acre parcel that should have an easement on it.

It was agreed that the highest priority is the Phillips Preserve. There was nothing new to report on this property.

CIP

Chair Brown said he was invited to a Planning Board meeting, represented by two members of the Budget Committee. He related to them that per their previous discussion, it would be best to hold off asking for a contribution to the Land Acquisition Fund for this year, but would like their support on RSA: 36. He said Mr. Stanley was there and was very helpful in explaining the details of the RSA. They seemed receptive and would like to have some more discussion at a Planning Board. Chair Brown said that he asked them for their support and if they could not, that they explain why. Last year it was unclear as to whether the Planning Board or Budget Committee supported the RSA. Mr. Stanley agreed that it was well received. He said that after 2013, the fund is slated to have \$50,000 contributed in the following years. They may also discuss the same plan for next year of not depositing any funds if there have been no withdrawals during this year. He said that it seemed that those from the Planning Board and the Budget Committee appreciated this way of thinking.

Mr. Stanley said that it would be very important for at least two or three people from the Conservation Commission are present at the upcoming Budget Committee meetings. Chair Brown agreed that it was important to attend the meetings. Mr. Stanley said that there is a tentative schedule for these budget meetings but nothing was set in stone.

Trails & Projects

Clark Lookout – A work detail on October 7th resulted in a lot of cut brush. The written communication was clear but somehow the corrections people missed the date and a crew never got sent out. On October 14th they had another date scheduled but the weather was poor and Chair Brown cancelled. They were not able to get another date. He hopes to sign up for more dates in the spring. He was told that the budget for this program was in danger of being cut. Mr. Stanley said that the brush at Clark Lookout needs to be moved before the new growth starts whether they can get a work detail there or not. Chair Brown said he would get the word out and plan some times to do this work in the spring once the snow has melted.

Hayes Brook Bridge – Mr. Allen organized a work project and passed around some photos taken by Terry Dancy. He said that they spent one session retrieving the bridge from the brook, which was a couple hundred yards down. They managed to haul the frame back to the site. They got the bridge across and decked in two hours time. In a second session they got the bridge across.

Ms. White asked if they could put this photo in the paper to get some publicity. Chair Brown thought it would be good to get this into the Intertown Record. Mr. Dancy said he would put this information together and get it to the Intertown Record and see if it could be published.

Chair Brown said a recent article in the Intertown Record talked about a recent Eagle Scout project, which was constructing a one-mile trail behind the old middle school. His mother keeps calling him about a sign that needs to be put up. Chair Brown called the scout who said he wasn't in a hurry. According to the article, he built the trail. But he actually didn't. The conservation commission built the trail, the bridge and the boardwalk. He refurbished the sign posts that got vandalized a year ago July (the Story Walk). The point of this was that in his request for a sign it states that he built the whole thing and wants his name on the sign. The size of the wood he has been given for a sign is very large and he did not think it went with the agreed-upon size and type of sign they generally used. He was not sure that they even needed to put a sign up to explain who did this work. Mr. Dancy agreed and said they have worked on numerous scout projects in the past and there were never any requests for a personal sign, but more so a sign recognizing the troop.

Chair Brown said that the sign that showed the loop was missing. It was noted that there should be another sign put up as it was helpful to identify the entrance of the Kidder-Cleveland-Clough trail. He said that perhaps this would be a good winter project.

Forestry Plan – Mr. Stanley said that he hasn't received this yet. He would contact Mr. Platt that day.

Phillips Preserve clean up – Mr. Stanley said this is still too wet and no one would be going in there this year.

Clark Pond Trail head parking – Mr. Allen said some fill had been brought in and would allow about three cars to park there.

Messer Pond Trail – Chair Brown said that if the water went down he would like to go on this trail with Mr. Deegan to see if they could identify the last portion of it.

Project list and priorities – Ms. Crane asked the status of the bridge over Dura Crockett Brook. Mr. Allen thought the intern was going to take care of it. Mr. Stanley said that wasn't on their assignment list for the intern. Mr. Allen thought larger abutments were needed. He said there was a culvert issue here but the owner of the property was not excited about having vehicles and traffic in that area. It was noted that the trail was fordable. Chair Brown said that perhaps this could be a project for the volunteers from Merrimack County.

Mr. Deegan said that a monitor at Lyon Brook had noted some trees down that need to be taken care of. Chair Brown said that it would entail a couple hours of chainsaw work.

Trail work volunteer list – Mr. Deegan said this is updated.

Mr. Allen said he'd like to put a third bench on the Dancy Trail at the end. The Cranes felt it should be on the right side and he thought it should go on the left. They decided on the left up against the first tree. He would cut the alders to provide a screen so people would be more likely to see ducks when seated.

Mr. Allen said there are two new bridges that do not have cables and might benefit from having some if they have higher water than before. One is at the Pingree Connector and the other is the Hayes Brook Bridge. The cables would be about \$50-\$75.

**IT WAS MOVED (Laura Alexander) AND SECONDED (Andy Deegan) to allow Dan Allen to expend approximately \$75 to purchase cables for two bridges.
THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Allen noted that Mr. Tom Wessels said in his presentation to the town of Warner that the White Birch trees throughout New England are dying. He was most disappointed by the state of the White Birches in the vicinity of the parking lot at the top of Rollins Road on Kearsarge Mountain Road. He thought that if people watched carefully, they would see those trees dying as well. Mr. Deegan thought that these trees were following a natural life-span for their species. Mr. Allen thought that the Bronze Birch Beetle was one cause for the trees dying and that they had previously been under control by cold winters, but that they have not had many of these lately.

Programs

Ms. White said they haven't decided if they are going to do the winter walks. She thought November would be a good time to figure out the specifics, as she wouldn't be there. She suggested that those at the meeting who may be interested in putting on a program should think about this over the next month. She was happy to do the publicity for these programs. Ms. Alexander suggested doing a program in March when it is not as cold. There was talk that the duck box program had not been well attended in the past few years.

Other

Ms. White said that when she and Mr. Dancy were going through the files, they found that Springfield was last perambulated in 2004, Sutton, Sunapee, Wilmot and Newbury were done in 2005. She will take this list and keep it in a folder to keep track of when they were last done. She wanted to know if they wanted her to follow through with this perambulation. Mr. Stanley said it was the Board of Selectmen's responsibility. He would give the list to Kim Hallquist to have it put on the agenda so the Board of Selectmen could delegate her to do this. Mr. Allen said he would go with Ms. White with his GPS to help.

Mr. Anderson asked if there were any guidelines on monitoring parcels. Mr. Deegan said that the organization he works for has volunteers who do it and their own way of doing it. Other organizations use their staff and have the own way of doing it. They need to walk the boundaries and look for changes. They are not there to police anything. If the property has some important features they should be reviewed. He said he likes to know about interesting wildlife sightings and some narratives are given. Photographs are helpful. Mr. Stanley said that when monitoring anything and if they find a property bound that was hard to find, he should clear the area and perhaps prune around it to help others be able to find it easier.

Mr. Crane said that they have done away with having the owner recognize and sign off on monitoring parcels. Mr. Deegan said that it was because it takes a lot of time getting the landowners to sign them. The Upper Valley just sends a letter letting the owners know that their parcel had been monitored. He noted that another change was that the question about violations on the easement has been removed. He said that stewardship is expensive and is always evolving.

Mr. Deegan said that if they make changes to their monitoring structure, he would let them know so they could make similar changes to theirs.

Mr. Anderson said that at the last CAC meeting some members of the Budget Committee were present and there was a sharing of philosophical approaches regarding the budget. The topic of the Master Plan came up and they all agreed that long-term view should drive short-term decisions. Mr. Stanley said the new Master Plan project has been completed and the document is being assembled into a final document. It won't be online until they have a final document. Mr. Anderson thought that the Budget Committee and the Board of Selectmen would take cues from the Master Plan, as it was their guideline.

Mr. Stanley said that the Budget Committee had taken over the CIP in the past few years, but that it is a Planning Board function by statute and town warrant. He has had to steer the conversation back during the CIP meetings to remind people that the Master Plan is an important element in planning.

Next 2011 meeting dates

The remaining meetings for 2011 would be held at 9:00am on November 16 (Wednesday) and December 21 (Wednesday).

2012 dates

The third Wednesday of the month at 9:00am seemed to work for the majority of the members. He would reserve the room for these times for 2012.

IT WAS MOVED (Laura Alexander) AND SECONDED (Andy Deegan) to adjourn the meeting. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

The meeting adjourned at 10:27am.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristy Heath, Recording Secretary
Town of New London