



TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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APPROVED Minutes of the September 28, 2011 Conservation Commission Meeting

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bob Brown (Chairman), Ruth White, Andy Deegan, Terry Dancy, Laura Alexander Peter Stanley (Zoning Board Administrator), Andy Deegan, Sue Clough (arrived at 10:20am)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Emma Crane, Rick Anderson, Dan Allen

Chair Brown called the meeting to order at 9:10am and asked if anyone would make a motion to approve the minutes from July 13, 2011.

IT WAS MOVED (Laura Alexander) AND SECONDED (Andy Deegan) to approve the minutes of July 13, 2011, as circulated. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

ASPLT

Mr. Deegan said that ASPLT had a meeting with the owner of the Miller property on King Hill and Stony Brook Road. They voted not to go forward with the project but were fine with having the Conservation Commission see if they could move forward on their end. The son of the owner is familiar with the easement process and will be helping with this should it move forward.

Mr. Deegan said that the Cantor property owner doesn't see the value in her property without road frontage. He also indicated that the Kelley's who have 20 acres on Route 11 (former Pratt property) seem interested in a possible easement. They have been sent a packet of information.

The Conservation Commission and the ASPLT have received an email from a realtor whose clients own a two acre house lot that sits across from Main Street Meadow. It is on the market for \$250,000. Mr. Stanley said that it is scenic and is open field with a potential for agriculture. After some discussion, it was determined that this parcel didn't fit with their goals for conservation and that the price for the property was too high. Had it been a donation, they would accept it, but that this parcel was not high on their list of pieces to conserve. Mr. Stanley suggested talking to the property owners on either side of the parcel in question to see if they would be willing to each pay a smaller amount to purchase the property and then divide it amongst themselves.

Ms. White asked if there was an ASPLT sign on the side of the road and there was no visible trail there, could they go into the woods at that point to find a trail. Mr. Deegan said that a sign doesn't always indicate a trail. It could signify things such as a protection of a water resource. Mr. Stanley said that unless it is posted people could walk on ASPLT property.

Mr. Deegan said they will be having a free program on Saturday, October 15th from 9am to 12pm at Musterfield Farm in Sutton. It will be hosted by Matt Tarr and Tim Fleury from University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension regarding managing land for wildlife habitat. He wondered if there were any people who should be invited to the program.

Mr. Stanley said that the Otter Pond property owner came in to see him a while ago to see when the Town was going to build the right-a-way to his property. He told the owner that he would have to build his own road. He was extremely disappointed and was planning to put a trailer on the property. The owner's sibling wants to sell, but this individual does not. Mr. Deegan said that he has been in contact with the sibling who wants to sell. They know that if the property comes up for sale, they will contact the Conservation Commission to give them the first opportunity to purchase. Mr. Stanley said that when/if this occurs, there will be a coalition that comes together to be able to afford to purchase the land. Mr. Deegan said that L-Chip is not available for this purchase, but that there was a Scenic Byway grant they could possibly get.

Mr. Stanley said that the property owner who owns land around King Hill Brook and Pike Brook is weighing the possibility of doing something but would not be looking for a significant amount of money. He said there is no plan to develop, currently, but there is the potential to carve out one or two house lots from a large piece of land and then hold the rest aside as a gift of a conservation easement. Mr. Deegan felt this property was high on the list for LSPA.

Budget

Chair Brown said that the largest expense was for the intern, but it was under budget. Mr. Stanley said that he received an email from Rich Cook from NH Fish and Game about the easement on the balance of the low plain. It appears they will go forward with it but he hasn't heard any more since that contact. Mr. Stanley had indicated to Mr. Cook that the town was still good to go. The expenditure would be broken into two amounts. The total would be \$5,000. Something would be sent to the town to indicate the amount due.

Chair Brown asked if there was any word on the forestry plan. Mr. Stanley said that progress is being made but it is not done yet. The surveyor has been very busy but he is still working. This has to be completed this year, which he knows.

Chair Brown said that Mr. Allen wanted to get some lumber for a bridge, which needed to be pressure treated. Everyone thought it would be fine for Mr. Allen to make this purchase, since there was money in the budget to do so.

Invasive Species

Ms. Alexander said that she and Ms. White had talked about the best way to publicize awareness. They determined that Doug Saigon from the Department of Agriculture would be the person to get to present a program. She has worked with him in the past and he is an expert in the field and can give indication of what to do to get rid of the invasive species. Ms. Alexander is making efforts to contact Mr. Saigon.

Mr. Stanley said that Doug McKenna cut the knotweed at the overlook at low plain with the intention of there being some re-growth to access the following spring.

Forest Nursery

Chair Brown said that they put in a third row of trees and they should check this fall to see if any mulching needs to be done.

Capital Improvement Program (CIP)

Mr. Stanley said that someone needs to attend a meeting Tuesday or Thursday night the following week to discuss the CIP. The Planning Board needs input from them on what their requests are. He indicated that the desire to limit budget expenditures is still a strong feeling and that they should discuss it.

Chair Brown commented that it would be unpopular now to ask for more money, since they have over \$400,000. He thought they should be working on some active projects and making some acquisitions. He thought perhaps this would be a year to take a break with funding the land acquisition fund, but only temporarily. He thought they should move forward with getting RSA 36A:4-a passed. Chair Brown thought it important to get the Planning Board, the Board of Selection and the Budget Committee to be behind them. Mr. Deegan said that one vocal critic of the RSA from last year is now on board. He said that it needed to be an educational process and shared that he would be meeting with his board of directors to relay this information and cut down confusion. Mr. Deegan added that he could probably speak with the Rotary to help them understand the benefits of the RSA and get them behind the idea as well.

Mr. Stanley said it would be useful for the Conservation Commission to come in and say that their goal was to have \$500,000 in a fund available for conservation. They could explain that since there is no active acquisition in the works, and given the budget constraints, they would assume to be at a reasonable amount in the account and that they wouldn't request to add to the fund. Should they use the funds this year, they would come back the following years to request more money to bring the fund up again. Chair Brown said that he would do this and ask that in return for backing off on the request, he would ask that the Planning Board and Budget Committee back them on the RSA.

Trails & Projects

Adopter list/e-mail/memo/date – Mr. Deegan sent a quick update after Tropical Storm Irene to ask for people to check their trails. There were several blow downs at Lyon Brook between Pleasant Street and Route 11 and have no chainsaw.

Mr. Deegan noted that the Lyon Brook trail from Parkside to Pleasant has some boardwalk that has moved. Mr. Stanley said he has been told there is another beaver in the area behind the school.

Mr. Dancy noted that Mr. Allen had sent an email around explaining that six or seven people went out to find a bridge that had washed out. The bridge was about 200 yards down into the main stream where the Hayes Brook joins Great Brook. They worked, standing in the middle of the river, took the floor boards off the bridge and the main framework was carried back to the original location. Mr. Allen has put together material to raise the bridge up to a higher level and they will re-fabricate it. They should be able to reconstruct the bridge with its hand-rails.

Mr. Stanley said that Mark Vernon spoke with Mrs. Baxter. Chair Brown had an email saying that she was fine with the trail staying where it is but didn't want people around the property close to her home.

Mr. Stanley said that Mr. McKenna did establish an interesting trail that was not on Ms. Baxter's property. Mr. Allen did not like the alternative and wished to keep it as-is.

Sue Clough arrived at 10:20am.

Chair Brown wanted to explain what Mr. McKenna did. Overall, he thought it was a good program. A lot was done and he was a good choice. He thought they should consider doing it again for the following year. Ms. White thought some good PR would be helpful to share all that was done and how successful it was. Mr. Stanley said everything got blazed, cleaned, and he took care of things that needed to be done. Mr. Dancy suggested a memorandum be sent to the Board of Selectmen to indicate the success of the program. Chair Brown said that he had some photos, as did Mr. Stanley, and they would like to include one of these in the next town report. Chair Brown said that he would also like to share the success they have had with the inmates from the correctional facility.

Mr. Stanley said there were two reviews of Mr. McKenna throughout the time he spent working for the town. The reviews were glowing and the only downfall was verbal communication. He did a great job and was a great choice for the position.

Chair Brown suggested a reimbursement of \$50 for the gas Mr. McKenna's used running around during the summer while working for the town. Everyone felt this was appropriate.

IT WAS MOVED (Terry Dancy) AND SECONDED (Laura Alexander) to send a \$50 reimbursement to Doug McKenna for personal time and gas he spent while working for the New London Conservation Commission during the summer of 2011. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Chair Brown said that October 7 and 14 were the next Merrimack County Division of Corrections work days and they needed to get some ideas for projects. Ms. Clough suggested Clark Overlook. Mr. Stanley agreed and suggested they cut the brush and move it laterally. It could also be hauled up the hill as had been done before.

Mr. Stanley said he would be available October 7th to assist in this project to help with cutting, weather permitting. Ms. Clough suggested asking her husband, John, to help with this as well. Chair Brown said he would call Mr. Allenby (someone who wanted to volunteer), and it was noted that Jim Wheeler also wanted to volunteer his time as well. They would check with Mr. Allen on other possible projects to be worked on for the second work day.

Programs

Ms. White said that generally they don't have any programs in the fall, but would plan some things for the winter.

Conservation Commission Files

Mr. Dancy said that the Conservation Commission was not properly using the files they have. They went through all the cabinets and have classifications for every activity that they deal with. Since 1998 they have not been consistently filing things. Ms. White said she didn't know if that

was because they were being saved electronically instead, or if they decided not to keep the files at all.

Mr. Dancy said they have files on the following: Regulations, Other Properties, Minutes, Administration, Trails and Perambulations, Wetlands and Wetlands Applications, Easements, and Town Properties.

Mr. Stanley said that the minutes, specific actions that required a vote of the board, anything to do with prime wetlands or property that the Conservation Commission owns, and the easement documents should be kept in the files forever.

Mr. Dancy said that some antique maps should be unfolded and flattened. Mr. Stanley said there was room in the map drawer for these and he asked that they be labeled. He suggested that these maps could also go to archives. Anything else they find that is unique or interesting should go to archives. Ms. White said she would get rid of the annual reports that were kept, as well as old budget information and the wetland permits.

Next meeting dates

October 19 (Wednesday)

November 16 (Wednesday)

December 21 (Wednesday)

Other

Bill Helm has contacted Chair Brown to meet on October 5th at Clark Lookout. Mr. Deegan said he would also be there. Mr. Helm is the monitor for the trail. The walk will begin at 9am.

Chair Brown said that he received a message from Candace Whitman, who has expressed interest in the Conservation Commission and possibly becoming a member.

Mr. Dancy said that that day from 5:30 –7:30pm there would be a meeting at LSPA on culverts and flooding. Mr. Stanley said that he would be going as would Ms. Hallquist.

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

The meeting adjourned at 11:00am.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristy Heath, Recording Secretary
Town of New London