



TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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APPROVED Minutes of the September 25, 2013 Conservation Commission Meeting

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: Andy Deegan, Mike Gelcius, Rick Anderson, Emma Crane

OTHERS: Greg Grigsby, Peter Garre

Chair Brown opened the meeting at 9:02am.

Expedited Permit Application – Greg Grigsby

Greg Grigsby, a landscape architect, has a client who would like to take advantage of the scheduled drawdown of Pleasant Lake to break down some rocks which are in the path to their boat slip. Clayton Platt has surveyed the five rocks in question, after speaking to DES, who suggested an expedited permit application be requested. The rocks are considered navigation hazards and their plan is to break them up by hand and relocate them somewhere else in the water where they will not be in the way. Mr. Grigsby read the summary of the project to the Conservation Commission. They plan to drill holes in the boulders, fill with water, and use a fracking-type explosion to break the rock apart. DES also allows the removal of rocks by dredging, but the client wishes to try this method first for minimal disturbance.

Mr. Grigsby said rock #1 was 3 cu', rock #2 is 3.2cu', rock #3 is 2 cu', rock #4 is 4cu', and rock #5 is 7.2cu'. This would total about 76sq' of disturbance.

Ms. St. John had no comments. The Conservation Commission agreed that they would sign the expedited application.

IT WAS MOVED (Terry Dancy) AND SECONDED (Laura Alexander) to approve and sign the expedited permit application. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Low Plains Culvert Replacement – Richard Lee (Public Works Director)

Mr. Lee said he was looking to get a permit by notification to replace a culvert from Low Plain to Pleasant Lake. 2' of the middle of the culvert is missing and the bottom is in bad shape. This wasn't known until the drawdown had taken place. Mr. Lee said his department has noticed the abutters and plan to replace the culvert with the same circumference culvert but it will extend about two additional feet, which is allowed by this permit. They will be removing the foot-bridge and will put in a regular sidewalk in this area.

Mr. Clough thought larger culverts were recommended due to larger storm activity in recent years. Mr. Lee said he only recalls this culvert failing once and it was because it got plugged up with debris. A larger culvert would require more work through DES with an expedited permit application. He said there were other culverts in the town that had been upsized and he also commented that some pipes are being switched from metal to plastic, which allows for larger flow through the culvert; the plastic is thinner than the steel.

IT WAS MOVED (Laura Alexander) AND SECONDED (Ruth White) to sign the permit by notification application for the culvert from Low Plain to Pleasant Lake. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Chair Brown thanked Mr. Lee for the help he gave the Conservation Commission with the bridge at Low Plain.

Poor Road Property

Ms. St. John updated the Conservation Commission of some permit by applications that she had been informed of, one of which was a property on Poor Road. Mr. Dancy thought the Conservation Commission should go this site to get more details. The cutting is extensive and there were not many details regarding the renovation of the boat house. It was thought they could have a site visit with the owner or the engineer and, if at the visit they find the project to be of no concern, they could give approval then and there. Ms. St. John would contact the owner with two possible dates and times that a site visit could occur.

Seasonal Canopy, 229 Pilot House Road

IT WAS MOVED (Laura Alexander) AND SECONDED (Ruth White) to approve the permit for Conderosa Property Trust at 229 Pilot House Road for a seasonal canopy on their seasonal dock. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Intent to Cut

Ms. St. John informed the Conservation Commission that an Intent to Cut permit had been submitted for the Ohler property. Several members of the Commission indicated that the property was a registered tree farm and that cutting had taken place in the past. There were no concerns.

Knights Hill Park

Ms. St. John said at Knights Hill Park they would like to block off one end of the parking area as there seems to be a problem with people going in and leaving litter there after hours. If one end was blocked off, they could gate the other end and keep people from entering the area after hours. It was noted there is a conservation easement deed on the property.

Water Working Group & Workshops

Ms. St. John noted that the water working group has been meeting regularly. She also said she attended water quality and lake issues workshops last week. Lake quality issues are affected by the amounts of impervious surfaces and septic issues.

Burpee Hill Road – Terms of the Carroll Property Easement

Chair Brown said that it was determined that the practice of grazing animals on this property has been allowed but there was some question as to the presence of a trailer on the property and whether it's being there went against the terms of the easement. Mr. Garre, an abutter, has come to the Town to complain about the trailer. Chair Brown said he has talked to Mr. Carroll and found that there are some animals grazing there that belong to Mr. Patten from Springfield. The animals are a mixture of beef and milk cattle and it was noted that there have been animals on the property for about 50 years. Mr. Carroll had indicated in the past that the trailer was there in support of the animals on the property. Mr. Deegan has a scheduled meeting soon with Mr. Carroll to get more details about the trailer and how it is being used. He noted that Ms. Hallquist was available to meet with any neighbors to talk about the issue but until more details are uncovered after the meeting with Mr. Carroll, not much new information can be shared.

Mr. Garre referenced the minutes of three meetings ago where Mr. Carroll had indicated the trailer was being used to shelter the animals. Chair Brown said that was not correct and he may have misspoken. The trailer was supposed to be used for food, medicine and materials to care for the animals. Mr. Garre said the trailer was recently moved about 30' closer to his property line. If it is not providing shelter for the animals and if there is no evidence that things are being stored in the trailer, it adds more questions as to the purpose of the trailer. Mr. Garre said the deed says that no structure or improvements can be constructed, placed or introduced onto the property unless for agriculture, forestry or conservation. Chair Brown said that these are the details Mr. Deegan will find after meeting with Mr. Carroll.

New Conservation Commission Member

Mr. Clough was welcomed to the Conservation Commission. It was noted that he has helped with trail work for a long time and he was thanked for giving his time then and now in his current capacity.

Review of Minutes of August 21, 2013

IT WAS MOVED (Laura Alexander) AND SECONDED (Ruth White) to approve the minutes of August 21, 2013, as circulated. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Planning & Zoning Administrator's Role

Chair Brown indicated that Ms. Hallquist would come in to talk with the Conservation Commission about the role of the Planning & Zoning Administrator with respects to the Commission, and would also explain the Commission's responsibility in regards to the review process of applications. This discussion would hopefully take place at the next meeting when more members would be present.

Easements, Acquisitions, Desirable Land List

Chair Brown said he had a list from Mr. Deegan of the nine properties they had recently sent letters to, which are on their desirable land list. They have received a reply from one individual stating that no changes would be made at this time as their property was currently in a trust.

A letter was going to be sent to the people who own the property adjacent to the Phillips property.

Chair Brown said things were moving slowly with things at Big Hilltop. Ms. Hallquist had some questions on the language they had suggested, which was not extensive. A map cannot be recorded in the deed, so GPS coordinates must be found and an appraisal could then be done by the Forest Society. The Town would pay 1/3 of this appraisal.

Trails

Mr. Allen said the Nodding Ladies Tresses (an exotic orchid) are blooming on the Norman Trail.

The latest trail intern, Steve D'Angeli was now back in school. He did work a little over the allotted number of hours, which was not a problem. Chair Brown said that Mr. D'Angeli did a lot of good work and took initiative to do many things without having to be asked. He was very pleased with his contribution to the Town's trails.

Low Plain Bridge – Chair Brown said they need to put some supports in and trim off the end of the boards on the new bridge. Mike Gelcius put in two days there and did a lot of work. He appreciated the Town's help with this project. Mr. Allen said that Mr. Jerry Gold had forwarded some photos of the bridge construction to him, which he has passed on to others. The bridge and ramp that had been built was about 50' long and cost about \$350.00.

Phillips Preserve – Chair Brown said there was a work day at the preserve recently that was put on by a trail maintenance training program, organized by Gerry Gold of the SRKGC and supported by the New London Conservation Commission. There was only one attendee present at the training.

Trail Maps – Ms. Alexander said she and Steve D'Angeli would work on updating the map, of which she has the original.

Trail Adopter Questionnaire – Ms. White suggested they send out a questionnaire to trail adopters to fill out instead of asking them to check in with the Commission on how things are going with their trails. There was concern that adopters are not communicating well with the Commission.

Mowing – Chair Brown noted that Mr. Gelcius did a great job mowing the landing area in Low Plain. Phillips hadn't been mowed last year and if the Town can't do it this year, he felt they should hire someone to do it. Mr. Allen said he may be able to do it with his tractor. Chair Brown said this was a big project and it would cause wear and tear on someone's personal equipment. He thought they should pay someone to do the work.

Workday in September – Merrimac County Department of Corrections

The day prior to the workday, they cut a lot of brush in the parking area of Low Plain. The inmates didn't show up on Friday due to some staffing issues. They hope to come on October 4th when Rick Anderson and Richard Lee will work with them at the DPW yard disposing of knotweed.

Website

Chair Brown said Mr. Anderson has been adding quite a bit of information to the website. Ms. White agreed and remarked that Mr. Anderson has done a great job.

Programs, Media, Mail

Ms. White said she would put together an article for the paper regarding the new bridge at Low Plain. Chair Brown agreed to provide names and photographs to Ms. White.

Chair Brown noted that the Phillips Memorial Preserve has been accredited by the American Tree Farm System. This is the first Town parcel that has been approved as such. They thought it appropriate that they have some kind of dedication to celebrate this with Ausbon Sargent. On the morning of October 23rd Leo Maslan, who did a lot of work for the application, Malcolm Milne from the Tree Farm Association, the Board of Selectmen, and representatives from Ausbon Sargent will be invited to gather in celebration of the Tree Farm status. He hoped they would be able to go to the summit to hold the ceremony but would wait to find out if this would be possible.

Chairman Position

Chair Brown said the position of Chairman is getting to be time-consuming. The warrant article says they can appoint seven members but it did not specify the number of alternates that could be added. He said a lot of Conservation Commissions have a vice-chair and they can be chosen by the Conservation Commission. He would propose at the next meeting that Laura Alexander be nominated as vice-chair. He would be grateful to anyone who could offer additional time and effort with the goings-on of the Commission.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 16, 2013 at 9:00am.

**IT WAS MOVED (Ruth White) AND SECONDED (Dan Allen) to adjourn the meeting.
THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 10:48am.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristy Heath, Recording Secretary
Town of New London