



# TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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## **DRAFT Minutes of the April 15, 2015 Conservation Commission Meeting**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Bob Brown (Chairman), Mike Gelcius, Mark Vernon, Dan Allan, Terry Dancy, Ruth White, Jane McMurrich, Laura Alexander, Andy Deegan

**MEMBERS ABSENT:**

**OTHERS:** Lucy St. John (Planning & Zoning Administrator), David Cook (New London Resident)

Chair Brown opened the meeting at 8:30am.

Mr. Cook reported an enormous amount of logging had been done at the Cantor residence (a privately owned piece of land) over the winter. He plans to build a bridge across the Langenau Brook at the bottom of the ravine, with Ms. Cantor's permission. Before this can be done, there is a need to clean up the area and he welcomed help from the Commission and anyone else who they thought might be available. Mr. Cook believes there has been some damage to the property due to the extensive logging that was done. He commended the logger on the job he did, as it was a big job and he did a good job cleaning up and sparing many of the trees that were blazed.

Chair Brown asked if parts of the trail were not passable due to the logging. Mr. Cook believed this to be true and estimated about a quarter of a mile of rubble that needed to be removed to make the trail usable again. He thought two or three sessions of a few hours each would get the trail back in shape. Chair Brown said the task seemed to require physical labor and a little bit of chainsaw work. Mr. Cook confirmed this; he would like to be present during the work to guide those helping to know where the trail was/is. Chair Brown suggested perhaps the workers from the Merrimack County Department of Corrections could help with this project. He would look at the schedule and see if it would work out.

### Permit Applications – Lucy St. John, Planning & Zoning Administrator

Ms. St. John reported that the Planning Board, along with the Regional Planning Commission (RPC), is still discussing the overlay districts and the RPC put all of them on a map. She showed the Commission a draft version of the map. Ms. St. John said there had been some discussion between the Planning Board Chair, Bill Helm, and Chair Brown about streams and which streams should be included in the maps.

Chair Brown said past member, Rick Anderson, was very interested and involved in this project. He added that he has indicated to the Planning Board that the Conservation Commission would like to move forward with this mapping project and are interested in helping to compile and work with the data. Ms. Alexander said several years ago it was decided not to map the intermittent streams. At this point in time, with climate changes being taken into consideration, perhaps they should be mapping them. She suggested using intern help from the college to acquire this information.

Ms. St. John thought it important to name the streams to bring attention to them and make people aware they are there. After some discussion, it was agreed that the streams should be named.

Mr. Vernon asked if vernal pools would be considered on the maps. Ms. St. John said not all the wetlands are on the current map. State permits may still be needed if someone's property has wetlands and they wish to build or modify their home/property. They don't have anything in their regulations currently that addresses vernal pools, but provisions in their ordinance could be added to protect them. Ms. St. John felt that public awareness and education about all of these issues was vital, as they all must work together.

Ms. White thought this would be something good to put in the Intertown Record. Ms. Alexander agreed and said it might be useful to list some of the things people could see on their own property during this transitional time of year; it might get them out and learning more about the land and the creatures they share it with.

Mr. Dancy said intermittent streams should be protected with buffers because they can affect erosion in areas. He said he would be available to attend meetings when discussing the subject, but his ability to get out in the woods was limited.

It was thought that mapping vernal pools at this point was not the thing to do, but defining them for the ordinance may be something they should look into.

Chair Brown said the Messer Pond Protective Association has been trying to get inlets to the pond mapped. Perhaps they could help with this during the mapping of the streams.

Ms. St. John said the Planning Board went on some site visits for tree cuttings and found some inaccuracies in the maps the tree-cutting applicants have provided. She said the ballot at Town Meeting will have suggested amendments regarding the definition of “family” and the sign ordinance. She noted that all the information discussed at Planning Board meetings is available on the Town’s website.

#### Minutes of March 18, 2015

**IT WAS MOVED (Mike Gelcius) AND SECONDED (Mark Vernon) to approve the minutes of March 18, 2015, as circulated. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

#### Terms

Chair Brown said they have seven voting members currently, and two alternates. There is one more opening if there were any interested people willing to join them.

#### Land Management Policies

Chair Brown said it seemed there were sufficient state laws to control open fires on Town-owned land. He gave some flyers to Mr. Gelcius stating the RSA. Mr. Gelcius said he would add this information to the website. There is currently an RSA on the website explaining the rules about camping on Town-owned land.

#### Easements & Land Acquisitions

Mr. Deegan said he has not heard anything from Mr. Hale even after letters, calls and emails. The property still needs to be cleaned up. Chair Brown was concerned that this was dragging on and had thoughts of volunteering to help the property owner get the area cleaned. It was thought that this may become an expensive endeavor. Mr. Deegan said he knew of someone who might be able to help.

#### Trail Maps & Updates

Chair Brown said they have talked in the past about an intern mapping for them. There were four applicants from Colby-Sawyer College who applied for the internship. Owen Krol was chosen and has accepted the position and will start in late May subject to his schedule, working about 20 hours per week.

Chair Brown said that Tom Coverdale has agreed to come back again this summer as their Trail Maintenance worker. This was good news as he did a great job last year.

Chair Brown said an email from Karen Ebel came in regarding the Beaver Deceiver pipe. She said it was working, and Chair Brown thought it was fortunate that she looked in on it to be able to provide a positive report.

#### *Powerline Trail*

Mr. Vernon hoped to get stakes put out soon and wanted to invite the members of the Conservation Commission to the site to check it out. He would then plan to invite other stakeholders, like the hospital, PSNH and the Recreation Department to see the route and get familiar with it.

Mr. Vernon asked people to start thinking about a different name for the trail.

#### *Trail Adopters*

Chair Brown said John Raby was doing a great job monitoring his trails. He wished others were as involved. Mr. Deegan said he would send a reminder to the adopter list the following day to remind them to go out and check their designated trails.

#### *Pleasant Lake High Trail*

Mr. Vernon agreed to contact Mr. Cook about this trail and the work that needs to be done. After a site visit, he would have an idea of whether or not it would be a good job for the Merrimack County Department of Corrections workers.

#### *Outing Club/Lyon Brook Trail Connectors*

Mr. Vernon said the Outing Club has agreed to allow a connection between the Lyon Brook Trail and the trails at the Outing Club. He hoped that at the next meeting they could plan date for a walk on these connecting trails and have the event publicized in the Intertown Record. Ms. Alexander thought perhaps the Colby-Sawyer Trail could be added to the map, although there are no connectors to the trail. This trail is about a mile long and runs around the Kelsey Forest. She thought since it is well-used, it would make sense to add it to the map.

Mr. Gelcius said he has someone who will mow the overlook again this year.

#### Town Meeting

Chair Brown said he has heard there would be a movement towards changing the meeting back to March due to low voter turnout for the school vote when New London's meeting is in May. The fiscal year will remain as it is even though the meeting may change.

Mr. Vernon asked if the Conservation Commission would like to create a poster with their goals and other information for display at Town Meeting. Ms. White said she would help put this together. Mr. Gelcius suggested an online company he has used in the past for the Elkins Fish & Game Club events, which was not expensive and worked out great. There was some discussion as to things that could be put on the poster.

#### Bohannon Easement Amendment

Mr. Deegan said they had discussed the Bohannon easement a while ago. The easement specified no fencing but they have now received approval for an amendment from the Attorney General's office to allow temporary fencing for agricultural purposes that would not inhibit the view of Burpee Hill. Mr. Deegan said this would be discussed at the April 27<sup>th</sup> Selectmen's meeting which would be held at 6:00pm. Chair Brown thought getting approval from all the abutters would be beneficial.

#### Duck Boxes

Mr. Gelcius said one of his Elkins Fish & Game Club members (who is also with NH Fish & Game) has identified that Messer Pond could support six duck boxes and Clark Pond could support five. If the Conservation Commission was in favor of it, he would have his club do the work.

#### Events

Ms. White asked if the Commission wanted to hold any nature walks. Chair Brown said there are a lot of other similar things going on and he wishes they could do these events in conjunction with the other organizations. No events were planned.

The meeting adjourned at 9:47am.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristy Heath, Recording Secretary  
Town of New London