



TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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APPROVED Minutes of the May 20, 2015 Conservation Commission Meeting

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: Andy Deegan

OTHERS: Lucy St. John (Planning & Zoning Administrator), Greg Grigsby, Pelletieri Associates, Ms. Raby

Chair Brown opened the meeting at 8:30am.

Minutes of April 15, 2015

IT WAS MOVED (Laura Alexander) AND SECONDED (Mark Vernon) to approve the minutes of April 15, 2015, as circulated. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

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

Ms. St. John said the Pike Brook Road Revocable Trust is looking to do a lot merger and some demolition permits. They Planning Board is having a site walk at 10:30am to go to Owls Nest and Pike Brook to do a site walk. She turned the floor over to Mr. Grigsby to explain the application.

Mr. Grigsby said they have two shoreland applications in with DES and submitted to the Town for the same property owner, which is Pike Brook Realty Trust. There are three properties purchased and two of the southern lots merged will be presented on June 9th Planning Board meeting. The third lot will remain a separate lot.

Mr. Grigsby showed a map of the proposed conditions of lot 10. There is 107' of frontage, although it was listed with the town as having 170'. There is about 2,000 sq' of unaltered area and 31.4% impervious area, comprised of a "tiki hut" that sits on the beach. The beach is about 120' deep and is very broad. The primary dwelling, parking, roadway and garage was shown on the map. None of the buildings meet the side or front setbacks. Next, Mr. Grigsby showed a map of the proposed plans of the lot. There is about a 4,500 sq' reduction of impervious area after their plans to take down the buildings. The "tiki hut" will stay. An open air patio and pergola would be put on lot 10. There will be a drop to 11.8% impervious area.

The Town requires 50% or less impervious area on waterfront properties, which is less restrictive than the State's requirement of 25%. He added that there would be no house put on this lot. This is the lot that will not be merged; the home will be put on another lot, to be described a little later on.

Mr. Grigsby showed a map of lots 8 and 9 which are to be merged into one lot. A house on the lot is too close to the road and doesn't meet the setbacks. A garage on lot 8 is also too close to the road. An existing structure crosses the 50' buffer and is also non-conforming. The two homes and garage on the lots are to be taken down. Currently the two lots are at 16.65% impervious area and the unaltered area is about 18,997 sq' in size. The proposed configuration eliminates all three non-conforming structures. They have dug test pits for a new septic system and they found a lot of sand. He showed where a proposed barn and garage would go, as well as the main house and patios. There is a reduction of unaltered area down to 11,880 sq' in size. They would need only 8875 sq' from the State's requirement and 11,547 sq' for the Town's requirement.

Mr. Grigsby said that five non-conforming structures will be going away, as well as three dubious septic systems. The footprint of the new house is about 8,000 sq' in size.

Ms. St. John said an email came from June Fichter from the Lake Sunapee Protective Association about an event being held that the Conservation Commission was invited to. It appears they will have Nate from the Regional Planning Commission there and others are welcome to attend.

Ms. St. John said the Planning Board had two amendments presented at Town Meeting. The definition of “family” was amended, but the sign amendments did not pass. She reminded the Conservation Commission that Town Meeting has been changed to March so the Planning Board would be working on zoning amendments.

Ms. St. John said another application came in for the Schimberg property on Pike Brook Road. She had asked that someone representing the Schimberg be present to answer questions that morning but no one was there.

Chair Brown noted that Leo Maslin was hired to look at the Clark Lookout access road to look for hazardous road conditions or trees. There is one area that has some exposed roots, but everything looks average to him. Mr. Maslin said a lot of the trees are flagged which he interpreted as being scheduled for cutting. There was some discussion about the easement that exists at the access road and the deed.

Ms. St. John said the Planning Board CIP Subcommittee will be taking a couple of tours of Town departments and buildings to take into consideration the broad needs for planning for the future. All were welcome to attend the site tours.

Mr. Vernon asked about going from impervious to pervious; if the replacement surfaces are heavily herbicided space, was that a good thing for the water quality? Ms. St. John said these are the types of things that should be explored with the ordinance. She said the shoreland overlay district is the only place in the Town that looks at pervious versus impervious surfaces. She feels this should be looked at within the ordinance.

Chair Brown asked Ms. Raby if she had any requests of the Garden Club for the Conservation Commission. Ms. Raby said there weren't any at this time. There are about 130 members of the Club. Chair Brown asked what the group does. Ms. Raby said in the community, they create “pocket gardens,” herb and cutting gardens, and the garden at Tracy Library. They do fundraisers and give scholarships for people in New Hampshire who want to go on to graduate work in agriculture or horticulture.

Mr. Vernon asked if they did any wildlife plantings or encourage the growth of wild flowers. Ms. Raby said they encourage people not to pick flowers along the trails in town. They try to educate people and keep the little gardens going around town.

Easements and Land Acquisitions

Mr. Deegan was not present but may be later in the meeting. He is concerned about land acquisition and their ability to move forward. They have had some stumbling blocks maybe it is something they will have a smaller committee work on to figure out what they can do to gain some ground. Ms. Alexander suggesting hosting a program like Sutton has where land conservation is discussed and people can grow to understand what conservation is, who pays for it, and whether or not it is good for the town or the land owner. They could invite the owners of those properties on their desirable land list to attend, as well as current easement holders.

Ms. Raby suggested a presentation could be made at a Garden Club meeting as there are many members who are also land owners. There are also others not directly associated with the Club who attend the meetings who might be interested in conservation and easements.

Trails/Maps

Owen Krol was present and is the trail intern for the summer. Chair Brown explained that the Conservation Commission is working to update some of their maps and they were hopeful that he could help with this task. Their master map, an interpretive map for Clark Pond and the Webb Forest, and a Phillips Preserve map need to be created or updated. Cordingly Preserve, and the Colby-Sawyer trail could be added as well. There was

further discussion as to which maps could be updated and how. There was further discussion of which trails should be tended to first and what Mr. Krol should be working on.

Mr. Gelcius said the water level is where it should be at the Low Plain. There had been some talk about adding bike usage and wheelchair accessibility to these trails. He said they need to move ahead with buying signs to keep bikers out of the ancillary trails. He is happy to put the signs up. He has seen bike marks on the secondary trails. He is concerned that if people ride their bikes on ancillary trails, they could disturb the wildlife.

Mr. Gelcius said they had discussed using Davis Path as a wheelchair accessible path by adjusting the boardwalk. He has been in touch with some groups that do this kind of thing. He has found that the trail is not appropriate for wheelchair accessibility; there are problems with surface area and roots. Without some major work (including resurfacing about 50% of the trail) it would not work. There was some work he suggested be done at _____ and he would speak with Mr. Lee (Public Works Director) about the possibility of getting some help.

Mr. Vernon said the powerline trail has an initial proposal of the location that was offered to the hospital and it has been revised a bit.

The Outing Club connectors are good to go. He and Dan Allen worked together on this the other day. He is working on signs for these areas. This is something that could be included on the new maps. Mr. Vernon would work with Mr. Krol on adding these.

Mr. Vernon asked about the Merrimac County workers. Chair Brown offered that the first available date was June 23rd. Mr. Vernon suggested they work on putting new boardwalks on the new section of trail. Chair Brown said if they could get the materials to the trail prior to their arrival, they could carry it in.

Chair Brown said there was a report of more beaver activity in the area which was stopping up some of the flow. They anticipated this due to it being such a narrow channel. He contacted Skip Lyle who came immediately and cleaned out the Beaver Deceiver. It is easy for the beavers to block this up; they will follow up on this.

Mr. Vernon said there are a lot of trails beyond Kidder/Cleveland/Clough. He would be interested in “officializing” some of these trails and connecting them to the Kidder/Cleveland/Clough trails. Mr. Allen said years ago it was determined that those trails were the responsibility of the Recreation Department and suggested talking with Scott Blewitt, Recreation Director. Chair Brown thought the property owner should be identified prior to any trail maintenance. He also warned against adding more miles of trails as they have a difficult time maintaining what they have already.

Mr. Gelcius asked if there was a need to have the chain at the Mountain Road side of the Low Plain trail left open. Chair Brown said it should be locked. It was only open so the Town can mow it. Mr. Gelcius said that John Schlosser uses the area during the winter for his cross-country skiing program and thought it might have been left open for him. Mr. Gelcius said he would lock up the chain.

Town Meeting Review

Chair Brown said they had 27% come out to vote. About 5% of registered voters came out to Town Meeting. As was mentioned by Ms. St. John, the meeting has been changed from May to March. They will need to budget earlier next year. The end of the financial year stays the same.

Other

Mr. Vernon said he hasn't seen the dog waste bag dispensers yet although Mr. Lee has said he has it on his list of things to do. Chair Brown said he should just order them himself or put a purchase requisition in to Ms. Johnson (Finance Officer).

Wednesday, June 17th is the next scheduled meeting of the Conservation Commission. Chair Brown said he would not be there but would try to get a notice out before he went away.

Mr. Vernon thanked those who helped with the poster for the Conservation Commission that was displayed at Town Meeting. He said he has spoken with Ms. Heath at the Town Office about putting it up somewhere in the lobby.

The meeting adjourned at 10:02am.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristy Heath, Recording Secretary
Town of New London