



TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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NEW LONDON CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, July 19, 2017

8:30 AM

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bob Brown (Chair), Ruth White, Michael Gelcius, Tim Paradis, , Mark Vernon, Andrew Deegan, Maggie Ford, Stanley Morono

MEMBERS ABSENT: Laura Alexander, Michael Kennedy

STAFF PRESENT: **OTHERS PRESENT:**

1. **Call to Order:** Chair Brown called the meeting to order at 8:30 am.

Roll Call: Chair Brown called the roll.

2. **Approval of Minutes**

The May 17, 2017 minutes were sent out for review. Under Trails and Projects on page 3, the fourth item down says logging trail area and it should say Low Plain logging trail area. Also, Bob Brown should be listed as excused from this meeting.

Approval of the June 21, 2017 minutes will be deferred until next meeting.

Chair Brown reminded the commission that we can't distribute information among ourselves unless it's a posted meeting.

IT WAS MOVED (Mark Vernon) AND SECONDED (Michael Gelcius) to approve the minutes of May 17, 2017 as circulated. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

3. **Permit Application/Review Committee**

- Peter Blakeman attended the meeting on behalf of The Seasons at Lake Sunapee, and spoke about their permit application to replace a six-foot arched culvert that was put in in 1986 or 1988. A wetlands permit was obtained at that time and Ross Stevens did plans for it, as he was doing the plans for the roads and for the Seasons at that time. The Culvert has failed as the bottom is rusted out. Water is getting underneath and around the culvert and it's starting to wash gravel in, and an area around the road itself is starting to sink in. It's already been repaired a few times. A Wetlands Permit has been sent to the DES. The State allows you to take out and replace with a minimum impact permit. The pavement will need to be cut back. The road will need to be shut down and it will be done during the dry time of the year so will be minimal water flowing. Going forward they will need to submit the wetlands application and go to the Zoning board. The size of the culvert is 6 feet tall by 9 feet wide. Stanley Morono asked if this was a migrating stream? Peter Blakeman responded that he isn't aware if it is and it often dries up during the Summer. There is not a large drainage area above it. Michael Gelcius stated that he is familiar with the area and this isn't the type of stream that requires a special culvert. Chair Brown asked if he was requesting an expedited application and Mr. Blakeman was unsure if he can do an expedited application but if he can, he will have it at the next meeting. The next step would be to submit the application to the Zoning board because they have to wait 30 days after this meeting.

- 316 Bog Road – Gavin Campbell attended the meeting to answer any questions that the Conservation Commission has regarding 316 Bog Road. Chair Brown asked where they stand on the permit process. They don't have a building permit in hand. They have septic approval, a Shoreline Permit and all state mandates have been met. Chair Brown asked if they are doing anything within 60 feet of the water? Mr. Campbell does not think so. He would need to look at the site plan to be sure. All structures on that property are completely gone. The plans had been set to start the project last year but then homeowners decided to wait. The plan will be to build a two-story structure. Mr. Campbell will attend next month's meeting.
- Two tree cutting permits and 7 septic system permits have been submitted. All but one of the septic permits have been approved by DES.

4. Rules of Procedure Discussion

- The draft was sent around and the recommended changes Mark Vernon made at the last meeting had been included in this revision. According to the document the procedures will take effect immediately upon approval and can be revised at any time. It was asked if there were any questions or comments on the proposal. Michael Gelcius noted the two outstanding issues-discussed with Kim Hallquist, Town Administrator. Based on her input, changes were made to the document. The main one was duties of Chair, which clarifies if the chair is not available at a meeting that the Vice Chair will take over. The second change was regarding the length of the meeting time which was updated to say it may be extended by a majority vote. Chair Brown thanked Michael Gelcius for taking the lead on this. All the various committees/commissions are going through the process of creating Rules of Procedure to get more organized. Maggie Ford asked if an adoption date should be added to the document. Chair Brown agreed we should put a date on it so if there are revisions we will know what copy is most recent.

IT WAS MOVED (Michael Gelcius) AND SECONDED (Maggie Ford) to accept the Rules and Procedures. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Chair Brown discussed the Strategic Plan and reminded the Commission that Maggie Ford volunteered to work on the Strategic Plan. A draft plan was distributed for review and ideas were grouped into areas that make sense, such as Land management, tree cutting, wetlands management, wildlife management, Trails management and Land Conservation and permitting. It was suggested the plan is something the NLCC could share with Board of Selectman so they know what we are working on. Suggestions were to add marketing and communications, Water Quality and Invasive species, and collaborations with other town organizations. For the next meeting, Ms. Ford asked everyone to collect their thoughts as to what the objectives are. She would like individual feedback from each member. Maggie would like this to be a three year plan.

5. NLCC Meeting with NLBOS 7/10/17

On July 10, 2017, seven members of the Conservation Commission attended the Board of Selectman meeting. The Conservation Commission was originally told they could have an hour and a half but the allowed time ended up being 40 minutes which was fine. Chair Brown focused a lot on Low Plain project as he wanted the selectman to understand the scope of the project. He wanted them to fully understand it was two years in the planning and to know what was actually accomplished. The project ended up earning \$11,000 and that pleased everyone. Mark Vernon

spoke about trails. This is another area that many are not aware of. Mike Gelcius addressed the NLCC website and the improvements there. Laura Alexander spoke about land acquisition and conservation easements and our plans to address Pleasant Street East. She noted the property was very wet and studies had been done on the property in the past to delineate wetland areas, which may now be larger due to runoff from abutting properties. Chair Brown tried looking on tax cards for when the buildings on Cottage Lane were done noting the property had a large amount of impervious surfaces and culverts that drain into the Pleasant Street East property. Water flow has changed so the issue may be that there is more water. He stated that we may want to speak with Stevens Engineering to see what would be involved to update that. There may be a big change and redoing the delineation of wetlands on that property makes sense. Andy Deegan, who is the Land Protection Specialist for Ausbon Sargent, had addressed the commission to say the best way to get a conservation easement for the property going forward is to know what you want to do with the property. It is important for the NLCC to come together as a group to decide what the best use of property will be. It would also be important to touch base with the Recreation Commission. Another consideration is that for each reserved right that is put on the property, the steward contribution may be more costly. Following the discussion of putting a pond on the property at the last NLCC meeting, Mike Gelcius noted that studies have shown that when man-made ponds are put in upstream from major bodies of water, there is greater exposure to contamination from invasive species. He noted care should be taken so that problems are not created for Pleasant Lake. Chair Brown stated that there will be a wide range of opinions on how the property should be used. We should check with Stevens Engineering to look at the wetlands delineation issue again. We need to inquire about the cost as well. Colby Sawyer has an environmental science program. Andy Deegan suggested checking with Colby Sawyer to see if that could be something they could work on.

Ruth White asked if the next step would be forming a subcommittee to meet with organizations for input? Chair Brown stated that when talking about a subcommittee at the last meeting, the consensus was to keep it as part of the regular meeting. As a commission, part of our objective is to conserve property. We spent money set aside for conserving lands. A big push was made at a town meeting to get town support to do an easement. Perhaps next step will be a wetlands review. It would seem hiking trails, a pond; maybe a bog would be reasonable use. Once we start discussing the construction of buildings, it has crossed the line. Chair Bob will give Stevens a call to redo survey.

IT WAS MOVED (Michael Gelcius) AND SECONDED (Maggie Ford) to pursue Stevens Engineering to having the Wetland delineation done again on Pleasant Street property. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Laura Alexander discussed-whether the Conservation Commission should make recommendations to the Zoning and Planning Boards when construction or changes will take place that may affect conservation properties that abut the permit request properties.

6. MCDOC – Work Schedule

Mark Vernon reported that the MCDOC workers were here Monday and Tuesday. Work was done on Clark Lookout and workers will be coming again for three days next week. Mike Gelcius will use two of the days to work on Low Plain activities and the third day Mark Vernon will be doing Morgan Hill drainage work. He has been working with Tom Coverdale one day a week. A lot of effort was put in at Kidder Cleveland Clough and the trail is more passable now.

7. Trails

- Beavers continue to be an issue at the Kidder Cleveland Clough trail. Stanley Morono asked if it was possible to relocate a portion of the trail? Mark Vernon is unsure of where it could be relocated to. It was noted there is the problem of keeping the trail in good condition without the ability to get machinery in that area, and the problem of keeping water flowing so that it doesn't flood out portions of the trail.
- With Dan Allen's retirement, the NLCC no longer has someone to do cross country grooming at Clark Pond. There will be two cross country grooming opportunities. Chair Brown recommends talking to the Recreation Commission. Mark Vernon will communicate with Scott Blewitt.
- Chair Brown has a replacement sign for the one vandalized at Clark Pond.
- Gates – Chair Brown spoke with Richard Lee yesterday. The recent storms have been putting pressure on DPW. They are ready to go to Clark Lookout and work on the trail there. Richard Lee said he will try to put in an additional inch or two of stone on the trail and work on the tasks needed for the new entrance. There is a need to get a twelve-foot gate and Chair Brown and Mike Gelcius discussed going to the Tractor Supply Store or Running's in the next week or so to pick one up. Mark Vernon asked what the purpose was in upgrading and fixing the road. The reasons were to cover all the exposed roots, making it easier to walk and drive, and to fix a wet area by putting in a culvert. It was noted that part of the conservation easement goal was to provide people with mobility issues easier access to the Lookout.
- Mark Vernon also stated that Richard Lee will be putting in a culvert at the Hubert's entrance to the Hospital Community Trail. He will get that done when the ground dries out.
- Mark Vernon spoke with Greg Burger about continuing the trail through the Spring Ledge campus. He is fine with this and Mr. Vernon has signs to put up.
- Mike Gelcius reported that he has received a few emails regarding finding trails. People are unsure how to get to the trail heads. He feels we should update the website to add specific directions to get to trailheads since some are hard to find. Another idea was to add a rating of easy, moderate, moderately difficult, or difficult to the trails. The ratings will be added to the web site information. There was also an email asking about the location of the Kelsey Forest Trail. Mark Vernon said he was working on getting that trail on the next version of the trail map and will give the information to Mike Gelcius so he can put it in on the NLCC web site.
- Michael Gelcius wanted to discuss the issue of dog waste at the Low Plains Trail. People are not using dog waste bags and it's getting to the point where the Commission may consider banning dogs from the trails. Tim Paradis suggested putting an article in Intertown Record to express concerns. Michael Gelcius will find out if there are any RSA ordinances. It is important to explain the reasons, such as health issues and hazards to children. Michael Gelcius offered to put an article together to include the negative effects of dog waste and the possible banning of dogs on trails. The more popular dog walking trails are having the most issues. Signs were put up and dog waste bags were supplied and there have not been improvements.
- Chair Brown will follow up with Leo Maslin about getting an assessment of the forest of the South end of Low Plain and Shepard pit area. This was discussed with Selectmen and they agreed that it would be a good thing to do. He would like this done by the end of the Summer.

NL Planning Board Update

Tim Paradis reported that at the last Planning Board meeting there was a lengthy discussion about Blueberry lane, a road off of Seaman's road. There is a driveway there that is an access point for multiple homes off the same driveway. There was discussion about what constitutes a town road, a private road, and should there be rules around how many homes can access a single driveway. Concern is that traffic is increasing too much. He brings this up to for the Conservation commission to think about as we explore our master plan and for future consideration.

The next meeting of the Conservation Commission will be held on Wednesday, August 16, 2017 at 8:30am.

Motion to Adjourn

IT WAS MOVED (Maggie Ford) AND SECONDED (Michael Gelcius) to adjourn the meeting. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

The meeting adjourned at 10:07am

Respectfully submitted,

Trina Dawson
Recording Secretary
Town of New London