



TOWN OF  
NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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**NEW LONDON CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Wednesday, August 19, 2020**

**8:30 AM - via zoom**

Due to the COVID-19/Coronavirus crisis and in accordance with Governor Sununu's Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, this Board is authorized to meet electronically. The public has access to contemporaneously listen and participate in this meeting through the video conferencing platform Zoom.us.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Bob Brown (chair), Michael Gelcius, Ruth White, Dode Gladders, Michael Kennedy, Mark Vernon

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Stanley Morono, Andrew Deegan, Joseph Kubit

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Erin Darrow, Marty Harris, Charles Bucklin

- 1. Call to order** – Chair Brown called the meeting to order at 8:33am. Dode Gladders will be a voting member today.
- 2. Public comment** – None
- 3. Permit applications:**

**163 Morgan Hill Road** - Erin Darrow attended the meeting via zoom. The project she is presenting involves the replacement of a tile that was installed in the early 1900's. This used to be a cattle farm. The clay tile was installed to provide useable agricultural land for the cattle to graze. In the mid 1980's NRCS designed and permitted an agricultural pond on the property that was tied into the clay tile. The outlet for the pond also tied the foundation and cellar drain for the farmhouse. This past fall, it became evident that the clay tile failed and is no longer functioning.

There is a pipe on the existing pond that drains into a sump area where the cellar drain discharges. It goes down a clay tile that is 405 feet long into the stream that is at the outlet of the pond. A new pipe needs to be installed and the clay tile replaced. There was extreme flooding in the cellar in December that was concurrent with the rain storm that caused the pond elevation to rise. The pond elevation was raised because the clay tile had failed. By replacing this pipe it will restore the functions as they were intended. The proposal is to install a plastic 18 inch pipe and to put stone underneath and culvert sand on top to follow best management installation practices.

Ms. Darrow has been working with the Department of Environmental services to get the correct wetland permit classification. It was originally installed for agricultural uses but it appears that with the new rules it will not be able to be classified as an agricultural permit. Most likely it will be a minimal impact expedited wetland permit which requires a signature from the Conservation Commission.

For sediment and erosion control the plan is to put protective mat underneath for the excavator to remove the old pipe and install the new pipe. The area of disturbance will most likely be lined with straw wattles. Ms. Darrow is hoping this project will begin late September or early October.

**IT WAS MOVED (Michael Gelcius) AND SECONDED (Bob Brown) to approve expedited permitting for this project once the proper paperwork is received. Chair Brown: Yes, Michael Gelcius: Yes, Michael Kennedy: Yes, Dode Gladders: Yes, Mark Vernon: Yes, Ruth White: Yes. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**1041 Lakeshore Drive** – Ms. Darrow explained this will also be a minimal impact expedited wetlands permit project. She is still confirming with DES that she is classifying it correctly. There will be two special exceptions for the driveway impact and the wetland buffer zone and steep slope overlay district and sediment and erosion control.

The driveway provides access to two houses on 1041 and 1043 Lakeshore drive. The existing driveway is extremely narrow and very steep. The grade of the existing driveway exceeds 20% and it has several horizontal and vertical curves that restrict visibility.

The owners would like to reconstruct the driveway to address several issues and make it as safe and acceptable as possible. There are several culverts that will need to be replaced as many are undersized. One of the culverts goes through a jurisdictional wetland. This culvert is undersized and is crushed and has failed. The wetland has been growing because the water can't get to the other side of the culvert. Ms. Darrow is proposing an 18 inch culvert with some depth to it to encourage the water to flow. Impact on the downstream should be minimal.

Public Works Director Bob Harrington and Fire Chief Jay Lyon looked at the driveway and have provided feedback. Fire Chief Lyon voiced strong support for this as it will provide better access for emergency vehicles.

During construction, ditching and stone check dams will be installed every twenty five feet going down the hill to slow water down. There will be an increase in impervious surface but there will be treatment and mitigation for runoff and drainage. Currently there isn't anything stopping the water as it runs down the driveway causing erosion and goes into wetlands at the bottom of the hill. This proposal includes paving the driveway.

Mark Vernon stated a site visit seems appropriate for this project. Michael Gelcius agreed.

**IT WAS MOVED (Michael Gelcius) AND SECONDED (Michael Kennedy) approve the expedited wetland permit request with the condition that a site visit will be done and no issues are raised. Chair Brown: Yes, Michael Gelcius: Yes, Michael Kennedy: Yes, Dode Gladders: Yes, Mark Vernon: Yes, Ruth White: Yes. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**Subcommittee Project List** – Michael Gelcius reported that he sent out a revised note about the subcommittee project list. A few still need to be added that include 29 Wallula Road (Shoreland permit application) and 267 Lamson Lane that involves taking down a cottage and putting up a new home. They will install a new driveway and septic system.

Two projects that were discussed at the last meeting (182 Pinebrook Road and 449 Forest Acres Road) were rejected by DES because applications were incomplete and fees were not paid.

#### **4. Review, accept and approve the July 15 & July 20, 2020 meeting minutes.**

**IT WAS MOVED (Ruth White) AND SECONDED (Michael Gelcius) to approve the minutes of the July 15 & 20, 2020 meetings with one correction. Chair Brown: Yes, Michael Gelcius: Yes, Michael Kennedy: Yes, Dode Gladders: Yes, Mark Vernon: Yes, Ruth White: Yes. THE MINUTES WERE APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

## Trails

- **PT Lumber** – inventory, pricing and availability – Chair Brown commented that a fair amount of trail lumber was purchased last fall and another big order was delivered this spring. A significant amount of money has been spent on lumber and a lot of work has been done. PT Lumber is extremely scarce right now and availability is uncertain.
- **Summer Trail Intern** – Liam Fleming’s tenure ended two weeks ago. It was a productive time and a lot of projects were done but there is still much to do. Work needs to be done on the KCC West trail, the Bog, the Great Brook Bridge needs replacement and there has been a lot of blow down from recent storms. High trail usage still continues. For the Great Brook Bridge replacement, Mark Vernon has asked the Greenway if they would fund it and the preliminary response was yes. He is in discussions with them on how that partnership would work.
- **Spofford Easement -storm water management** – This is hopefully still on for the fall. Chair Brown stated he spoke with Bob Harrington and he is very busy. They discussed Pleasant Street East and this is on the list but he hasn’t had a chance to work with the water department yet. He will try to get this in before winter.
- **October 3, 2020 Trail race** – Mark Vernon reported that Brandon Baker sponsored a race last year and he is proposing to do a second annual race. Mr. Baker and Mr. Vernon discussed measures that could be taken for trail races due to covid-19 and asked if the Conservation Commission had any questions. Mr. Vernon stated he would bring it before the commission for discussion. Michael Kennedy stated that a high percentage of trail races for the fall and winter have been canceled. He would like to know the considerations that will be taken to make it as safe as possible. Mr. Vernon will ask Mr. Baker for more details as well as what the actual race route will be.
- **Trails for Biking** – Michael Kennedy stated he sent out information about mountain biking on trails put out by the International Mountain Biking Association. That information might be a good starting point for this discussion. Chair Brown agrees that this is a topic that should be investigated. Mr. Kennedy agrees since we should have guidelines because mountain bikes are going to be on the trails. Mark Vernon suggested that he and Mr. Kennedy discuss this and put a proposal together for discussion at the next meeting.
- **Clark Lookout** – Chair Brown stated they have received complaints that are ongoing regarding camp fires, the moving of rocks and camping which is not allowed without permission. There are signs there and most people are well aware of the rules. Chair Brown suggested that if people see this activity they should call 911. This is against the law and calling could prevent a tremendous risk to the property.

Michael Gelcius asked if the Commission should go up and clean out the branches and debris to discourage starting fires. Chair Brown responded that having people go up and haul it all out is a multi-year project. Ruth White suggested doing education to explain safety issues.

Mr. Gelcius will contact the person who placed an ad in the Shopper about forestry mulching. It would be worth researching the process of grinding down the camp fire material. Mark Vernon commented that downed logs are important for wildlife so before a decision is made he would like to discuss this further.

5. **Invasive plants** – The presentation by Doug Cygan regarding invasive plants has been postponed and will be rescheduled for late spring or early summer of next year.

Chair Brown stated that an inquiry came in to the Planning Board about concerns that a commercial landscaper was applying Roundup at a business and wondered if that was legal. Dode Gladders responded that is legal as long as you have a commercial for hire license. The company is required to have their NH pesticide license number on their vehicle.

- 6. 2020 Budget** -The 2021 budget cycle has just started but the process to start preparing the 2022 has begun. The Conservation Commission's normal budget totals about \$18,000 and the 2022 will probably be that same amount. The second part of the Low Plain forestry work was not done last year and the goal is to do it this year. It is all marked and ready to go. This is good for the health of the forest and wildlife and also generates income.

Mark Vernon commented that will most likely run out of footpath maps by 2021. 1500 maps were printed in 2017 and they are getting low. He requested that money be put in the budget for updating and printing more maps.

**7. Projects:**

Conservation Land Acquisition projects

- **Messer Farm Project** – Chair Brown spoke with Sue Andrews and through fundraising and pledges, they have raised about 1.3 million towards this project. This leaves about \$300,000 more to raise or borrow between now and October 31, 2020.
- **Hamel Parcel** –No update. Chair Brown will follow up with Bob Harrington and the Board of Selectmen to see if there is any interest in this property for future expansion needs.
- **Gnome Doors** – Ruth White shared that she received the first completion of the Gnome door contest and distributed an ice cream certificate.

The missing gnome doors at Knights Hill were replaced but then were stolen again. Ms. White spoke with Town Administrator Kim Hallquist who stated that she has received complaints about items on the trails that not natural. Some people are against this and may be removing the doors as a result.

- **Webb Forest Trails – Timber Harvest** – Mark Vernon stated that he put an article in Municipal Matters and on the website regarding trail closures for Webb Forest forestry activities. It affects Great Brook Trail north of the Dura Crockett Trail and it affects Morgan Hill trail east of the Dura Crockett trail. Trail closure signs have been posted at trail intersections. The work should be done by fall.
  - **Trail Patch Program** – Ruth White reported that two people from Massachusetts earned their trail patches and the patches have been sent to them.
- 8. The American Chestnut Foundation - Restoration** – Chair Brown stated that this past Monday, he and Dode Gladders, Mark Vernon and Michael Gelcius met to look at potential locations for the American Chestnut seedlings. They looked at the field at Low Plain 200 and also the field at Clark Lookout and they appear to be good sites. On Tuesday, Mr. Gelcius took soil samples and the results look good. The American Chestnut foundation sent chestnut nuts to be planted. 15 were started from seeds and about 12 of them are doing well. They should be put in the ground as soon as possible.

Dode Gladders stated that there is a site in Goshen, New Hampshire that has Chestnut trees that are about 20 years old. Chair Brown expressed an interest in visiting this site.

- 9. Low Plain 200 – NHF&G CE Amendment** – Chair Brown noted that it appears NH Fish and Game is still working remotely so it is difficult communicating with them. We have gotten confirmation that they have agreed to accept the amendment to Low Plain to include the new 30 acres that is called Low Plain 200.

**10. New business**

- Ruth White thanked Chair Brown for starting the garden at the trail head. It looks great.

- Mark Vernon stated that in an earlier email Michael Gelcius mentioned a possible bequest for Clark Lookout improvements. Chair Brown responded there is a discussion going on with the attorney or accountant of this family. Chair Brown will follow up in about a month and will report back.

**12. Next meeting date** -Wednesday, September 16, 2020 at 8:30am.

**13. Motion to Adjourn**

**IT WAS MOVED (Michael Gelcius) AND SECONDED (Ruth White) to adjourn the meeting. Chair Brown: Yes, Michael Gelcius: Yes, Michael Kennedy: Yes, Dode Gladders: Yes, Mark Vernon: Yes, Ruth White: Yes. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:36AM

Respectfully submitted,

Trina Dawson

Recording Secretary  
Town of New London