



TOWN OF  
NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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**BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
Citizen Advisory Committee  
MEETING MINUTES**

**August 12, 2017**

**7:30AM**

**PRESENT:**

G. William Helm, Jr., Chairman  
Nancy Rollins, Selectman  
Janet Kidder, Selectman  
Kim Hallquist, Town Administrator  
Wendy Johnson, Finance Officer

OTHERS PRESENT: Jason Lyon, Katharine Fischer, Tracey McKenna, Thelma Kaplan, Norm Bernaiche, Paul Linehan, Richard Lee, Mark Vernon, Robert Brown, Edward Andersen, Rose Bernard, Kate Turcotte, Joe Kubit, Scott Blewitt

Chair Helm called the meeting to order at 7:30am.

**Town of New London Chief Assessor – Norm Bernaiche provided the following report:**

Norm has been the Assessor for thirteen years. The last revaluation of New London properties was done in 2014 and another will be done in 2019. According to the state this needs to be done every 5 years. The market appears to be very strong. Sales especially around the lake have been very good. The trend seems to be aggregation. In the early 1900's when the lake was established, there were large lots that started getting divided up until about ten years ago. Now people are aggregating lots and going back to larger properties.

There have been a few lawsuits, some we lost, and some we won. We try to avoid going to court and litigating on assessments.

**Finance – Wendy Johnson provided the following report:**

Wendy has been the finance officer for the past six years. Her job primarily is to keep track of money coming into the town and going out. About 22 million is collected per year. 9.5 million goes to the school district, 3.5 million goes to the county and the rest is spent in town. This year we have taken on another loan with a favorable interest rate. Many projects have been able to be done as a result.

**Fire Department – Jason Lyon, Fire Chief provided the following report:**

The New London Fire Department is busy; last year we did 743 calls. This year so far we've done 504 calls. There has been an increase over the years. Two things that drive the amount of calls are weather and ice storms and population. As the population increases, calls for service increase from May until June as the college ends and summer residents arrive. One of the major projects is the acquisition of an engine tanker. In the early 90's it was decided to combine pieces of apparatus which makes them multifunctional. The issue is that as the fleet was decreased from five pieces of equipment to three, the calls increased. With this

acquisition which we should have by June 2018, the town will have two engines, a ladder and a tanker. The budget is over in the category of part time wages. Two full time employees had to be trained and one didn't work out. As a result per diems were used. It is a six month training program. There was also an increase of calls for support. Chief Lyon thanked everyone for their support.

**Police Department – Edward Andersen, Chief of Police, provided the following report:**

The department is busy. Last year they responded to 13,000 calls for service. The highest he has seen is 14,000 so they are just under that amount from the year before. They have had 350 arrests. This ranges from domestics, DUI, minor incidents. One of the newest additions is a K-9. Obtaining the K-9 was all done by fundraising. One month ago the dog was purchased and is now in a Vermont State police academy training program. The first part of the training to become control certified for about 8 weeks and then he will go back to become certified in Narcotic Drugs.

K-9 Vilo attended the meeting. Joshua Fischer, the Police Officer assigned to the K-9, explained that a community needs a K-9 to help with major crimes, felonies, attempted murders, stolen vehicles. It's important to find the right officer to work with the dog. The dog lives with the officer 24/7 and becomes part of his family.

Officer Joshua Fisher explained that in Control school the dog is working on tracking, bite work and also evidence searching. Drug school will be in the Spring. His breed is a Dutch Shepard and is already as big as he will get. He is currently 20 months old and is from Slovakia.

Chief Andersen continued his report by noting that there has been a lot of effort over the past three years with regard to Dispatch and improving the infrastructure. Last year phase two was completed. A new communications tower was put on Kearsarge which has resulted in better radio coverage. It is a single transmit site so if the radio goes down it's a long way up to fix it. However, it greatly improved the coverage in Wilmot, Sutton and Newbury. A 100% grant was obtained to add a second site which is stand alone. There are many reasons to have our own dispatch and citizens like to be able to come to the window and talk with someone. If there wasn't dispatch here, the calls would go through Merrimack County Dispatch which is in Boscaawen. Chief Andersen thanked Janet Kidder and Chief Lyon for all their work on this.

**Public Works – Richard Lee provided the following report:**

Selectmen and the town voted to borrow money to do paving. In the last 2 months they have done about \$500,000 worth of paving. Currently monitoring major projects including the Pleasant Lake Dam, Brookside drive culvert replacement, and sidewalks on Parkside and Seamans roads. The facilities person has done a lot of work on Elkins post office and will paint it in another month. He continues to monitor the town buildings and next Spring will put a partial roof on part of Whipple. They are actively looking at infiltration which is water coming into the sewer pipes and eventually goes into the Sunapee Wastewater Treatment Plant. We have cut our flows to Sunapee by almost 10%, saving considerable money for sewer users.

Chair Helm stated that Mr. Lee informed us that he intends to retire at the end of the year. He has been asked to stay until June 2018 and has agreed.

**Recreation – Scott Blewitt provided the following report:**

The 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Strawberry Festival was a success. It's a great way to start off the summer.

The beaches have been busy this summer. Bucklin and Elkins beach offer swimming lessons for kids and sailing lessons are offered at Bucklin Beach. There are day camps that run for 8 weeks, five days a week. Mr. Blewitt believes a community center would be much utilized in the New London area. A little over a year ago the recreation van was obtained using a \$15,000 donation so that van is used for kids in the summertime and also used for adult trips.

He is always looking for new ideas. A lot is happening with the Rec Department and there is a Facebook page for more information.

**Town Administrator – Kim Hallquist provided the following report:**

Ms. Hallquist stated that her job is to support and advise the selectmen, all of the department heads and citizens. Her job is to speak with and answer any questions citizens have for any issues. All the department heads are experienced and dedicated to their jobs. There are a lot of projects going on. Down in Elkins, the Pleasant Lake dam is a project the state of NH has been anxious for us to do. Ms. Hallquist thanked Richard Lee for staying on to help finish many of these projects. There is a dashboard online and she advised everyone to look at it and if there are any ideas you think we should do, let us know. It makes it easier if there is public input.

Chair Helm introduced Bob Brown, Chair of the Conservation Commission, to provide an update.

- Membership on the Conservation Commission consists of seven members and three alternates, appointed by the selectman. They meet once a month on the third Wednesday of the month at 8:30am and they are all volunteers. Chair Brown encourages anyone that wants to attend to please do so.
- Chair Bob Brown gave an overview of what the Conservation actually does. The Conservation Commission operates off of the 2011 master plan and their job is to protect and manage open space which means fields, mountains, undeveloped land, water resources, scenic areas and natural habitat. The most visible thing is our trails. We have about 30 miles of hiking trails in our area. These trails are a constant challenge for maintenance. Every storm can potentially cause issues.
- Another important area is land acquisition. There is a fund where money is put aside to purchase land outright or for a conservation easement. There is a list of over 50 parcels. It takes a willing seller and the availability of funds. We went 8 years without a land acquisition and the two years ago we had two acquisitions. These were the Pleasant Street property and the parcel on the other side. Both sides flow down to Red brook and eventually end up in Pleasant Lake so it's a very important watershed. Our intent will be to propose a conservation easement on the east side of the Pleasant Street property. It's very wet and needs to be conserved and protected. The other piece acquired is very exciting. Clark Lookout is a ridge top over by the park and ride at exit 12. It is a relatively short hike, about 3/10<sup>th</sup> of a mile and part of it is steep. Recently the trail surface has been stoned with blue stone which makes it an easy walk. This was gifted land and part of the gift was that the trail would be maintained. Anyone with mobility issues can drive a car up there. A key can be obtained at the town office. It is a spectacular view of both Lake Sunapee and Mount Sunapee. A lot of work has been done clearing the view. There were issues with the right of way with the abutting land owner, but with the acquisition we were able to resolve the issue by purchasing the road and adjacent property. Each municipality should reserve and conserve 25% of their land mass. Currently New London is roughly at 18%.

- The Department of Public Works has been a big help. They were instrumental in helping to get two major bridges built and we are appreciative of their help.
- Chair Brown discussed the map of trails has been recently revised and is available at the town office. He also discussed that work has been done on the Conservation Commission website over the past three years. He encourages everyone to check out all the information about trails and projects on there.
- Phillips Memorial Preserve is another gifted parcel located at the end of Otterville road. When it was gifted it was stated that the view would be maintained and the view had become overgrown. We knew we had to do something but wanted to do it properly, using best practices to benefit wildlife and forest. It is important to bring in professionals to assess the forest. A lot of timber is diseased and it needs to be thinned out. This was done in 2013 and it was a selective cut. Two acres of wildlife habitat was affected. The products taken out were low grade pulp wood. About 30% of the pine was diseased. The forest is better and wildlife is back. \$7,000 was netted for the town. These projects have to be cash positive.
- Another project that was done was Low Plain. There are 169 acres preserved under a conservation easement held by New Hampshire Fish and Game. Since 2015 there has been talk about a forestry harvest and doing a better plan for wildlife management. It was discovered that Beavers could be an issue. A flow device is there and is an important wetland. The habitat for the Beaver is slowing going away and if they leave it will affect the wetland. If they leave, and even if it is fixed, it could take 7 years for them to come back. This was a very complicated process and there is a long permitting process. Fish and Game wanted us to re-write a forestry plan and include a wildlife habitat plan. The Conservation Commission didn't feel informed or qualified to write it so called on people who had the knowledge to do it. 270 seedlings were planted. When project was done a check in the amount of \$11,000 was made payable to the Town of New London.
- Mark Vernon provided an overview of the Trails. There are almost 30 miles of trails that are maintained. A few of the popular ones are Philbrick-Cricenti Bog which is located beyond Hannaford on the way to Newport and also Low Plain. Clark Lookout has a clear and glorious view. Great Brook Trail is a gateway to many miles of trails. A new trail that was recently created is the Hospital Community Trail. It is all on hospital land and a partnership with Eversource since some of the trail runs under the right of way and the Town of New London. The trail takes off from the East side of the hospital parking lot, loops around and goes along Parkside road and connects to Lyon Brook Trail. Many of the trails are remote but there are in town trails as well. Benches have been put at Phillip Memorial Preserve on Otter Pond. The town has a nice piece of land there right on the water. Nine "you are here" maps have been put at some of the trailheads and some out in the woods at some of the more complicated intersections. There has been a dog waste campaign. There is a lot of dog waste on some of the more popular trails, especially late winter, early spring.

We have extended the Kidder Cleveland Clough trail through Spring ledge to Main Street. Connectors have been done from the Lyon Trail to the Outing Club. There is a cross country ski trail at Clark Pond.

- Trail Maintenance – There is a team of volunteers and they go out every Wednesday morning. The email distribution has about 20 people and about 2 or 3 shows up to help. Mr. Vernon asked if anyone is interested in helping, please let him know. There is also a trail adopter program where each adopter

owns a trail, reports problems and does light maintenance. There is also a stewardship program where some trails are upgraded and tended to more often. Merrimack County of Corrections has sent prisoners to work on trails for 5 days this year. There is a paid trail worker that works during the Summer and we also make good use Colby Sawyer interns. There is a budget for materials. We do our best to reuse materials we already have.

- Projects for the future – There will be a new entrance for Clark Lookout right across from the Park and Ride. There is one more piece to do on the Hospital Trail which is behind Hubert's to be able to access the trail from Hubert's and walk up to the business district. Bog will have signs upgraded.
- Trail usage –New London is behind as far as multi-usage trails as most are suited for walking and hiking but less so for biking. It's difficult to determine how much the trails are being used. Should marketing be done to increase usage? There has been discussion about putting advertisements in the shopper but this has not been done yet. Do we want to expand our trail system? Mr. Vernon would like incorporate trail planning into the Master Plan and we are also creating our own Strategic Plan.

Chair Helm thanked Mr. Brown and Mr. Vernon and commented that they are a tremendous resource to the town with all their efforts.

Signs – Janet Kidder discussed the Welcome to New London signs that are being designed for us by Bonin Architecture. The signs will have granite posts. They contacted five different sign makers and one was interested and we accepted the estimate of \$5,000 for two signs. One sign will be at four corners and the other will be at the transfer station. Bonin Architecture has also offered plantings and will plant them around the signs. The state will need to sign off as they are both in the State's right of way. The hope is that they will be installed by this Fall.

#### **Public Comments:**

- A question was raised regarding a previous discussion regarding the former school. Ms. Hallquist reported that the 1941 building is owned by the school district. Various efforts over the years have been made to save the building. These efforts failed and that building will be coming down in the coming weeks. The process has already begun and the building will be demolished.
- There was a question regarding snowmobiles usage on the trails. There currently is no policy regarding snowmobile usage on trails. Ms. Hallquist asked for clarification on what the concern was. Police Chief Ed Andersen stated some snowmobiles are used on trails to go up to service equipment.
- A question was asked to the DPW regarding equipment on the road. In the winter, Richard Lee stated that they use very little salt, they use mostly sand. In the spring it needs to be cleaned up as draining can be affected. Ditches need to be cleaned out and this is normal maintenance.
- Clarification was needed with regards to the 25% of land that should be conserved. Was this private land part of the 18%? That number includes all land under conservation easement, both private owned and town owned.
- Is there any collaboration between the Conservation Commission and Recreation? Could work on trails or walking be done by the Recreation Department? Scott Blewitt stated that the trails are utilized in conjunction with the Recreation department.

- When the Conservation Commission makes money on a project, why don't they get to keep it? Ms. Hallquist stated that State law requires that funds that come into the town go into the general fund unless other funds have been established by a vote of town meeting, or the money is gifted to the Town. A special fund account could be established and this would take a vote at Town meeting. This all goes into the general fund to reduce taxes.
- Chair Helm discussed the resignation of our Planning and Zoning Administrator a few months ago. Ms. Hallquist reported that recently the Selectman entered into an agreement with the regional planning commission; the planning portion will be staffed by Adam Richter. He started last week and will be supporting the Planning Boards efforts. The Zoning portion of the position which is the part that enforces the zoning ordinances, sign permits, etc., the town is looking to share a person with the Town of Sunapee. On Monday evening, the Selectmen will be meeting jointly with the Town of Sunapee selectmen to talk about the potential of having one full time employee working for the Town of New London and Sunapee. This will be a good way for New London to get a full time, experienced person and share the cost with the Town of Sunapee. New London would have this person for 3 days and Sunapee would have the person for 2 days.
- Chair Helm also asked Ms. Hallquist to explain why New London doesn't have a building inspector. She stated that the Town of New London voters have not voted to adopt an enforcement mechanism for the state building code. The state building code is applicable for all structures; however, towns do not have to enforce the state building code. New London has not voted to enforce it. We could not send a town employee into a building to inspect state building codes. The Fire Chief does inspect for fire safety issues. Some new homeowners coming into the area are surprised we don't. We don't issue certificates of occupancy since we don't do inspections. Plumbers and electricians are licensed by the State of NH so presumably they follow the state building code. They should be following the state building code by virtue of their state license.
- The meeting was adjourned at 8:44am.

Respectfully submitted,

Trina Dawson, Recording Secretary  
Town of New London