



TOWN OF
NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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NEW LONDON CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, January 15, 2020

8:30 AM

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bob Brown (chair), Michael Gelcius, Ruth White, Michael Kennedy, Mark Vernon, Stanley Morono

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Maggie Ford, Andrew Deegan

MEMBERS ABSENT: Joe Kubit

STAFF PRESENT: Nicole Gage, Zoning Administrator

OTHERS PRESENT: Erin Darrow, Right Angle Engineering, Leo Maslin

1. **Call to order** – Chair Brown called the meeting to order at 8:30am. Michael Kennedy and Stanley Morono will be voting members today.
2. **Public comment** – None
3. **Forest/Wildlife Harvest 2020**

Chair Brown welcomed Leo Maslin. Mr. Maslin has been managing all of the forestry projects and they have been discussing the possibility of doing a harvesting project this winter. The discussion has been around completing the harvest at the Esther Currier Wildlife management area that was started a few years ago. It wasn't feasible at the time to thin a section in the back behind Wilder Lane due to time and weather. It has all been approved as part of the original plan so they wouldn't have to go through the approval process again. It is approximately ten acres and could generate revenue for the town.

Mr. Maslin noted that the landing to access the property is off of Route 11 but the area to harvest is 9/10th of a mile away. Since it is so far away, this impacts the value of the timber. In order to make this small project feasible, they could tie it into a thinning of the new 30 acre parcel. A rough estimate of the revenue this would generate would be approximately \$8,000-\$10,000. Weather permitting, this could be done at the end of March or early April. Some of the existing skid trails would be used to minimize the impact. Later in the fall might be an option as well but can be muddy at that time. They will try to avoid the hiking/snow shoe trails and Mr. Maslin noted it can be stipulated in a contract that any trails that were damaged will be repaired.

There is a 200 foot buffer that comes up against wetlands and the state only calls for a 100 foot buffer. Mr. Maslin asked a DES representative at a meeting if they can use a skid trail inside the 100 foot buffer of a prime wetland even if they aren't cutting any trees and the answer was no. There is a good amount of timber that could be thinned within the 200 foot buffer. Nicole Gage stated that the New London regulations do allow forestry and tree farming is in the buffer zone as long as best management practices are used to protect the

wetlands. Ms. Gage commented that any cutting or clearing plans should go before the Planning Board as a courtesy.

Stanley Morono asked if once the area has been thinned and harvested could he go in to replant high bush cranberry etc. Mr. Maslin felt this would be a good idea.

Chair Brown asked if we were at the point to submit a proposal and an intent to cut or is it too early? Mr. Maslin stated he brought a contract which needs to be signed and that would be the first step. Once this is done they can file the intent to cut, go to the Planning Board for review and get started once the weather is favorable.

Mr. Maslin submitted an invoice for his services in the amount of \$2,100. Chair Brown noted that they had budgeted money this year and last year for the forest assessments and wildlife plan.

IT WAS MOVED (Michael Gelcius) AND SECONDED (Stanley Morono) to approve the amount of \$2,100 to pay Leo Maslin for his services. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

The Management plans for the two lots on Mountain Road (Shepard Pit lot and the lot abutting the town line in Wilmot) and the new Low Plain 200 lot are complete and have been enrolled in the Tree Farm program.

4. Permit Applications

155 Owl's Nest Road - There has been a change in plans and Erin Darrow of Angle Right Engineering requested that they postpone the discussion about 155 Owl's Nest Road until the February meeting. Ms. Darrow would however, like to discuss another issue. Ms. Darrow is working with the town and Mike Hansen on bridges for Pingree Road and Goose Hole Road.

The existing culvert would be removed on Pingree Road and a Hansen bridge would be installed. This is an engineered wood frame bridge. This is still in the initial phases but this should be a minimum impact project. If this qualifies, they would like the Conservation Commission to sign the application for an expedited review. The bridge has been ordered and the goal is to have it installed in May. The culvert currently there is structurally deteriorated and there are concerns about flow capacity. The brook in this location is a tier 3 stream because it has a watershed of more than one square mile. It is within the Pleasant Lake watershed. Stream crossing rules for a tier 3 are for an open bottom or open span structure. The approach they take with Hansen bridges is they span from behind the stream bank to behind the stream bank so there is no permanent damage in the stream itself. The wetland permit is to actually take the culvert out, not for the bridge itself and the culvert will stay in during construction. When the culvert is taken out, they will have a stream bank restoration.

Ms. Darrow stated that her goal is to have the application submitted to the town in the next two to three weeks.

5. 2021 Budget Request

Budget Committee Meeting – Appropriations and CLAF

Chair Brown stated at the last Budget Committee meeting he asked Debbie Stanley to attend since their request had gone from \$50,000 down to \$10,000. Ms. Stanley gave an excellent

presentation to reinforce the “whys” associated with funding this account that has been talked about many times. The Budget Committee agreed to increase it to \$25,000 from the Board of Selectmen’s recommendation of \$10,000. There is a reconciliation meeting tonight and this number could be changed again. Mark Vernon has agreed to attend the meeting tonight to represent the Conservation Commission. Debbie Stanley also agreed to attend tonight.

6. Review and accept the December 18, 2019 meeting minutes

IT WAS MOVED (Michael Gelcius) AND SECONDED (Mark Vernon) to approve the minutes of the December 18, 2019 meeting. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

7. NLCC Desirable Lands List

Michael Gelcius sent out a copy of the Desirable Lands List so everyone should have the same version. He asked members to send him any corrections, modifications and/or deletions and he will revise the list and send it back out.

8. Trails

Trail Intern – 2020 – Chair Brown discussed the potential trail intern candidate recommended by Leo Maslin. Chair Brown stated he has impressive credentials and is a college student in Unity Maine. At this time, the candidate is also investigating other opportunities so Chair Brown suggested posting the job to encourage others to apply. Mark Vernon reached out to Nick Baer at Colby Sawyer College and he is willing to post it the job there as well.

MCDOC Work Days – 2020 - Chair Brown stated they submitted their request to the Merrimack County Department of Corrections for 8 days of work help this Spring/Summer and MCDOC has agreed to provide help on the following dates: May 4, 5, 12 June 1, 2, 15 and July 6, 7, 2020.

Signage – Chair Brown stated he made 8 or 9 signs and they are ready to go.

9. Updates

- **American Chestnut Program** – The stock we got last spring from the American Chestnut program was not very successful and they have agreed to replace them. Chair Brown will find out the process on how to get them replaced and find out what seedlings are recommended. Stanley Morono went through the catalogue and highlighted items he thought would work best.
- **Invasive Program** – Michael Kennedy stated he has not scheduled anything yet but Doug Cygan is willing to do an educational presentation on invasives in mid-August. Mr. Kennedy feels we need the full support of the Conservation Commission and this needs to be well advertised.
- **Town Meeting Handout** – Stanley Morono created a handout to be distributed at Town Meeting. The information includes the Conservation Commission’s mission statement and accomplishments. He also included the UNH Extension information that

states the benefits to having open space, recreation etc. This will give the public an opportunity to learn more about what we do and how it affects the community.

10. Projects

DPW Projects – There is a list of projects that need to get done once the weather is appropriate.

Fairy Doors – Ruth White stated that her daughter in law is working with preschool age children to create fairy doors. She discussed putting these doors on trees on trails outside of our trail network. Chair Brown stated we can see how this first batch of doors goes to see if we want to expand it further as we go along.

11. **Next Meeting Date** - The next Conservation Commission meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 19, 2020.

12. Motion to Adjourn

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

The meeting was adjourned at 10:20AM

Respectfully submitted,

Trina Dawson

Recording Secretary
Town of New London