



TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, January 17, 2018

8:30 AM

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

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Ruth White

OTHERS PRESENT:

Wayne Morrill, Jones & Beach Engineers
Karla Allen, Garland Lumber Co.
Mike Black, Continuum of Maine
Luke Hurley, Gove Environmental Services
Grace and Noah Cooper
Gerry Gold

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

Roll Call: Chair Brown called the roll.

Public Comment

- Noah Cooper attended the meeting to discuss a project to reroute a small section of the Kidder Cleveland Clough trail. Mr. Cooper is part of Boy Scout troop 71, based out of the First Baptist Church. This trail is located behind the old Middle School. Near the Spring Ledge section he'd like to add a footbridge and reroute about 20 feet of the trail to the left so it is on harder surface.

Chair Brown asked if there was a sketch available to illustrate what Mr. Cooper is proposing. They currently don't have one but can provide one. Mr. Cooper stated that he will have other members of his troop helping and the project should take about a week.

- Gerry Gold would like to know when the draft Pleasant Street East Easement would be available. He was advised to check with Kim Hallquist, Town Administrator. Mr. Gelcius presented the proposal of placing a conservation easement on the Pleasant Street East property at the November Planning Board meeting. A vote was taken and was unanimously supported. On January 7, 2018 the Board of Selectmen met and Mr. Vernon presented the proposal and they also supported it, so now it will be placed on the town warrant. This will give the voters the opportunity to vote on it. This is a draft only. The content will not be discussed at town meeting. After agreeing to put a restriction on development of the property it will then go to the Conservation Commission, Ausbon Sargent and the Board of Selectmen to agree on what's included in the easement.

New London Hospital Senior Housing Project

Mike Black, representing Continuum of Maine attended the meeting to discuss the proposed Senior Housing project. Continuum owns four assisted living facilities in Maine. They are working with New London Hospital to develop an assisted living facility in New London.

Wayne Morrill, a representative of Jones & Beach Engineers, discussed the project and the piece of property to be developed. The location is the on the back part of the Hospital land in between County Road and Parkside Road. Along the roadway there will be an assisted living facility, memory care unit and individual cottages. The back Hospital parking lot will also be reconfigured. They have determined

what parts of the land are considered wetlands and noted that there will be 7 areas affected and that equates to approximately 8,500 feet of wetlands being impacted.

Luke Hurly attended the meeting to give an overview of the delineation of wetlands. There is a system of intermittent and seasonal drainages flowing through the site. A lot are seepage driven. The underlying soils are silt and clay and the water table is perching on top of the underlying layers and running off into the drainage areas. In the summertime most will dry up and when they were there in the fall some had a little water due to rain. There were no rare or endangered species and for the most part the wetland drainages don't have any vegetation within them. They are mostly lined on the sides with red maple, eastern hemlock and some yellow birch. They are not considered rare wetlands and are standard wetland systems.

All the impact areas are going to be crossings. They will have a large openness ratio to maintain the flow of water and any wildlife that goes through the systems. All access areas will be compatible for aquatic dependent wildlife passage. The configuration was done to have minimal impact.

Karla Allen discussed the proposed trail system that would be on Continuum's property. She is proposing to eliminate part of the existing trail where you enter on Parkside Drive. It will be reconnected elsewhere so there would be better parking and be more aesthetically pleasing. These trails could be used for cross country skiing, hiking and snow shoeing. Continuum would also like to have a picnic area, outhouse and a playground area. Continuum will be maintaining the trail system.

Mike Black stated that these trails are an important part of the community they are building as they want the people living here to be active.

Chair Brown asked what the total number of units would be. Mike Black responded that there will be 36 cottages, 20 memory care, 50 assisted living, 16 independent living units so 122 total.

Mark Vernon asked if residents would be allowed to have dogs. Mr. Black stated that yes, it is pet friendly. Mr. Vernon explained that they have had dog waste issues on their trails and asked if they would have mutt mitt stations? Ms. Allen stated that those would be put in as well as resting benches. This will all be the responsibility of Continuum staff to maintain.

Michael Gelcius asked if any segment of the trails would be ADA compliant. Mr. Black stated that they are not at the point yet to address this, as they need to figure out what type of surface it is. It is however, a good candidate as it is already flat.

Ms. Allen will be writing a management plan for the rest of the property and this will be shared with the group upon completion.

Chair Brown asked what the target start and completion date would be. Mr. Black stated that once the project started it would take 18 months to build the assisted living and memory care building and then the cottages would be done in phases. They are hoping to start late summer, early fall.

Approval of Minutes

IT WAS MOVED (Maggie Ford) AND SECONDED (Michael Gelcius) to approve the minutes of November 15, 2017 with the amendments discussed. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Permit Application/Review Committee

Michael Gelcius reported the following:

- 810 Pleasant Street – A stream running into the lake is blocked and they'd like to dredge 15 cubic feet of sand out. According to the ordinance, this shouldn't be a problem.
- 2 separate permits were submitted to put in a u shaped dock, walkway and boatlift. This also includes a seasonal canopy that will need to be researched to see if allowed.

- 115 Lamsen Lane - An approval for a permit for a project that has already been done. This will need to be addressed by the town.
- A beach replenishment application was submitted but had errors so will need to be fixed and resubmitted.
- Tim Paradis will speak with Adam Ricker, Town Planner, regarding communication and assisting with some of these issues.

Strategic Plan

A questionnaire was sent out and only four responses were received. Chair Brown wanted to make sure everyone got it. Maggie Ford agreed to send it out again.

Trails & Projects

Trail Grooming for Skiing and Snow Shoeing – A volunteers had been doing this in the past but has now retired. This is expensive and the equipment is costly. Having someone do this at their own expense seems unfair. There was a suggestion that this might fit better under the Recreation Commission. A snow machine was purchased a few years ago, but after an accident the machine is out of commission. Chair Brown spoke with Scott Blewitt, Director of the Recreation Commission, who stated they have no resources in terms of people or funding to do this.

Clark Lookout – The posts have been set for the kiosk but not for the gate. This will have to wait until the spring.

PMP Update – Chair Brown stated that Ausbon Sargent helped with sending a letter to the Trustee that handles the land. They haven't heard back but wanted to make it clear that we are interested in this parcel if it is ever available for sale.

Trail Connector, Highland Ridge to Lyon Brook Trail – Mark Vernon wanted to discuss a trail connector from Highland Ridge to Lyon Brook. If members like the idea, he would speak to the two land owners involved. One of our goals is connecting our neighborhoods to trails and this would help facilitate that.

Andrew Deegan stated that there are cornfields on the land during the summer and there may be concern with people walking through there. There is also the issue of the removal of the section of trail on the other side due to the Senior Housing project. It may make more sense to go down the driveway and connect it to Knights Hill but that would be putting a trail right beside a driveway which may defeat the purpose.

It was decided that Mr. Vernon will reach out to the landowners to see if they would be willing to allow the connector trail on their property.

HB 1343 – Mark Vernon presented a letter asking the Conservation Commission to sign on with other Conservation Commissions to strengthen an existing Beaver protection law. There are three noteworthy changes to the bill and he would like to vote in favor of signing the letter and joining other Conservation Commissions in supporting these changes for Beaver protection.

Michael Gelcius stated the NH Fish and Game and the NH Wildlife Federation are opposed to the bill. The things that they are looking to do with Beavers are things that Fish and Game tries to do but don't always have the resources. By changing this, it would give them less flexibility.

Chair Brown agrees with Mr. Gelcius. He doesn't want to see more restrictions and questions who would enforce it? He feels we know what our mission is and we have enough on our plate locally.

Mr. Vernon was in favor of signing the letter. Four members were opposed and four abstained. The Conservation Commission agreed to pass on signing the letter.

Budget

Chair Brown reported that the joint Budget Committee/Board of Selectmen meetings have been productive. The final meeting will be at Whipple Hall in early February. This meeting will be the last time to make any changes. Chair Brown will try to attend and encouraged other Conservation Commission members to attend as well.

Desirable Lands List

Chair Brown discussed the Hamel parcel and stated at one time they were going to see if there was any Conservation Commission member who was willing to talk to the owner/realtor. Mark Vernon volunteered to speak with the landowner.

Land Acquisition Funding

Chair Brown stated that this year they did not put in a request for land acquisition funding. Michael Kennedy put together a statement stating that it is a need for us and we will be asking for a moderate amount next year.

2018 Conservation Commission Meeting Dates

The meetings will continue to be held on the third Wednesday of the month for 2018.

Other

Mark Vernon would like to represent the Conservation Commission regarding a discussion about wood fired boilers for municipal use and harvesting wood off of town property. He contacted the Energy Committee and they are interested in discussing it. All were in agreement.

Motion to Adjourn

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

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 21, at 8:30am.

The meeting adjourned at 10:40am

Respectfully submitted,

Trina Dawson
Recording Secretary
Town of New London