



TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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NEW LONDON CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, October 21, 2020 via zoom

8:30 AM

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 Mark Vernon, Joe Kubit, Andy Deegan, Michael Kennedy

MEMBERS ABSENT: Stanley Morono

OTHERS PRESENT: Zoning Administrator, Nicole Gage, Public Works Director, Bob Harrington, Donna Weaver, Doug Gamsby, Erin Darrow

1. **Call to order** – Chair Brown called the meeting to order at 8:30am.
2. **Public comment** – None
3. **Permit applications updates**

Michael Gelcius reported on the following projects:

38 Beaver Pond - Doug Gamsby from Greenline Services attended the meeting via Zoom on behalf of the property owner, Donna Weaver to discuss a project that includes a deck and expansion of a structure on this property. Mr. Gamsby explained that currently there is a very small house with a detached garage on the property. They have received state approval for shore land and septic and also Zoning Board approval. The plan is tear down the existing house, use the existing foundation and move the detached garage over and attach it to the house. Currently, the impervious area is 32% and that will be reduced to 25% impervious area. There will be the installation of a pervious driveway.

They are proposing to use a small bobcat machine to dig out two foundation walls and replace that part of the foundation. They will put a 6 inch layer of woodchips over the whole area so there should be minimal damage to the area. Native plantings will be done on all the disturbed areas around the house. The existing house also has an oil tank in the basement that will be removed and replaced with a propane tank.

Goosehole Road Bridge Project – Erin Darrow attended the meeting via zoom to discuss the proposed bridge construction project for the Goosehole Road Bridge. This bridge is located upstream from the Goose pond dam. The impact needed in the wetlands are primarily associated with the installation of a temporary bridge. The new bridge is going to be installed over the existing bridge. The elevation of the road will be raised about 18 inches. A temporary bridge will be located downstream from the existing bridge. The impact associated with this bridge requires impacts in the jurisdictional wetlands, however it is anticipated this will not be in the water itself. This is the only

point of access to several single family homes on the other side of the bridge so there has to be a temporary bridge during construction. Approximately ten trees will need to be removed and when the temporary bridge is taken out, the stream bank will be restored. Ms. Darrow anticipates that this project is a minimum impact expedited project. If the Department of Environmental Services classifies this as a stream crossing this may change but she is asking the Conservation Commission to sign an expedited permit. This project will be done next spring and will take about three weeks.

IT WAS MOVED (Bob Brown) AND SECONDED (Michael Gelcius) to approve the plan as presented. Chair Brown: Yes, Michael Gelcius: Yes, Michael Kennedy: Yes, Joe Kubit: Yes, Dode Gladders: Yes, Mark Vernon: Yes, Ruth White: Yes. THE MOTIONS WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

161 Shaker Street – Michael Gelcius stated there is a request for an intent to cut on this property. Chair Brown would like more details regarding this request.

4. Review, accept and approve the September 16, 2020 draft meeting minutes

IT WAS MOVED (Michael Gelcius) AND SECONDED (Mark Vernon) to approve the minutes of the September 16, 2020 meeting. Chair Brown: Yes, Michael Gelcius: Yes, Michael Kennedy: Yes, Dode Gladders: Yes, Mark Vernon: Yes, Ruth White: Yes. THE MINUTES WERE APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

5. Trails:

➤ **P/C Bog –boardwalks** – Mark Vernon stated that Michael Kennedy has been working on this trail and they are hoping for one more work day before it gets too cold. Mr. Kennedy is hoping by spring they will have pressure treated lumber to do the necessary repairs.

➤ **Bike/Multi-Use** – Mark Vernon reported that he will be reaching out to a contact person at the Upper Valley Regional Planning Commission. He thinks that nice looking bike racks at a few of our trails is a good idea and he would like to pursue this.

Michael Kennedy has reached out to Kingdom Trails in Vermont but has not heard back. Kingdom Trails is the premiere mountain biking system in New England and they advocate for multi-use trails. Mr. Kennedy is in favor of multi-use trails as well. The idea of bike trails is supported by the UNH Cooperative Extension and one of the reasons is that it is good for the economy. Mr. Kennedy stated if we are going to plan to use some of the trails in New London, some things to consider are that they have stable trail surfaces, the topography of the trail is ideal and landowner permission has been obtained. There is a lot to consider but it would be good for the town.

➤ **Clear field perimeters** – Perimeter clearing was done at Phillips trail about six weeks ago. At Clark Lookout field the lower part has not been done but some work has been done on the upper field.

➤ **Spofford Easement -storm water management** – Mark Vernon stated this is currently being worked on.

➤ **Pleasant St. East** - there is still concern about digging due to the town water main and Public Works Director Bob Harrington would like to put this off until spring.

➤ **October 10, 2020 trail race** – Mark Vernon noted that the trail race went smoothly.

- **New trail volunteers** – Mark Vernon stated there are two new people interested in volunteering.
 - **Lumber** –Chair Brown stated pressure treated wood is not available and the price has just about tripled. Chair Brown stated they found a company that was willing cut some 2X8 pieces of Hemlock for them so they were able to order some. Chair Brown will watch the price of pressure treated lumber to see if it comes down.
 - **Kidder Cleveland Clough Trail** - This trail has been out of commission since 2016 despite a lot of resources and effort. Mark Vernon stated this is a continuing problem. Chair Brown suggested taking some aerial shots once the leaves are off the trees so we can determine where the water is being held back. Something has changed in the past five years since it is now so wet.
- 6. Easement Monitoring** - Easement Monitoring - Mark Vernon stated he would like to resign from being the easement monitor. This is not terribly time consuming but there is data that needs to be submitted. Chair Brown and Mark Vernon will discuss this further.

7. Projects:

- **Conservation Land Acquisition projects** – Messer Farm - - Chair Brown has no update about this project. He will follow up.
- **Hamel Parcel** – Chair Brown reported he spoke with Bob Harrington and David Cleveland about this parcel. The asking price on the property is \$130,000 and it is 8.5 acres. It is accessible off of Pleasant Street over a town owned land right of way. If this were to be developed the owner would need to put in a driveway and bring in utilities which would be a significant expense. Bob Harrington stated they don't need the property right away but may be worth taking a look at. The Conservation Commission's interest would be to protect the trail and the stream. Mark Vernon asked if the parcel could be split into two parcels and annex the part the Conservation Commission is interested in which is the brook and northward. The issue would be access across town land. Chair Brown will discuss this further with Bob Harrington.
- **Other** - Chair Brown stated there is a parcel on the east side of Low Plain that has been on our desirable list for a long time. It is 23 acres with some wet areas. Michael Gelcius has been in touch with the owner and they have stated they would consider selling the property. The land is assessed for \$150,000 but the Realtor has a much bigger number in mind. Chair Brown asked the realtor for a professional appraisal to see what it is truly worth.

Low Plain - Mark Vernon stated he received an email from Fred Slayton who requested a meeting. A meeting was held yesterday morning and his concerns are the use of Esther Currier's name as compared to the Low Plain name at that location. On the signage, the wording Low Plain occurs six times and Esther Currier appears just once. The second part of the complaint was questioning whether timber harvesting is an appropriate thing to be doing at Esther Currier and are they giving full consideration to wildlife habitat and wildlife as part of timber harvesting plans. Mr. Vernon has forwarded a copy of the management plan which demonstrates a lot of attention to wildlife habitat and wildlife.

Michael Gelcius stated Mr. Slayton sent an email a while ago stating he didn't think the Low Plain should be used at all and the Esther Currier name is not used enough. Mr. Gelcius wrote him back a letter explaining that they understand the concern and would work on signage but would not eliminate Low Plain as that is a historical aspect of that property. They would make an effort to increase the visibility of Esther Currier. Mr. Gelcius redid the signage on the Andover Road side to include Esther Currier's name and the name is also on the kiosk on Mountain Road. A sign and picture was also

made and a monument for Esther Currier was put up by the granite bench on the main trail. All of this information was sent to Mr. Slayton and there has been no response back from him. Chair Brown finds this offensive as they have made a lot of effort to change the signage.

➤ **Trail Patch Program**- No update

➤ **Low Plain Timber Harvest** - Chair Brown has talked Leo Maslin and the difficulty is finding a logger right now. The hope is that the harvest will happen late winter.

8. The American Chestnut Foundation -Restoration

The seedlings have been in the ground for two weeks at Shaker Street and Clark Lookout field. Chair Brown thanked Fire Chief Jay Lyon, Michael Kennedy and Michael Gelcius for their help with this. Chair Brown has already contacted the foundation for seedlings for next year.

9. Low Plain 200 -NHF&G CE amendment – This has been approved and should be finalized by New Hampshire Fish and Game soon.

10. Other Business

Mark Vernon proposed doing another winter hiking series for December, January and February. Michael Gelcius also suggested the idea of taking people out on Beaver Pond to do duck boxes and talk about the trail. Mr. Vernon will put together a schedule to put in Municipal Matters and the Shopper.

Michael Gelcius noted that at a previous meeting he received approval to purchase dog leash signs for Low Plain. One of the signs was stolen and he would like approval to replace it. The cost is approximately \$25 each and Chair Brown suggested ordering the replacement sign and also a spare.

IT WAS MOVED (Michael Gelcius) AND SECONDED (Bob Brown) TO SPEND UP TO \$50 TO REPLACE THE DOG WALKING SIGNS AT LOW PLAIN. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY. Bob Brown: Yes, Michael Gelcius: Yes, Mark Vernon: Yes, Ruth White: Yes, Michael Kennedy: Yes, Dode Gladders: Yes

11. Next meeting date -Wednesday, November 18, 2020

12. Motion to Adjourn

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

The meeting was adjourned at 10:23AM

Respectfully submitted,

Trina Dawson

Recording Secretary
Town of New London