



# TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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## NEW LONDON CONSERVATION COMMISSION

### Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, December 16, 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, Mark Vernon, Joe Kubit, Andy Deegan, Michael Kennedy, Dode Gladders

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** None

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 project:

- It was originally thought that the Goosehole Road project could be expedited but when the Department of Environmental Services reviewed the information they deemed it more complex than the town did. There were issues with the location and water movement so a full review is required.

4. **Review, accept and approve the November 18, 2020 draft meeting minutes**

Mark Vernon noted that he submitted edits to the easement paragraph.

**IT WAS MOVED (Michael Gelcius) AND SECONDED (Michael Kennedy) to approve the minutes of the November 18, 2020 meeting with the modifications that Mark Vernon has suggested. Chair Brown: Yes, Michael Gelcius: Yes, Michael Kennedy: Yes, Mark Vernon: Yes, Ruth White: Yes. Andy Deegan: Yes, Joe Kubit: Yes. THE MINUTES WERE APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY**

5. **Trails:**

- **Winter Hiking Series** – Mark Vernon informed the group that they held the first hike of the Winter Hiking series at Clark Pond. There is another hike coming up on January 5 but the scheduled leaders have decided not to lead this hike due to COVID. Michael Kennedy agreed to co-lead the hike with Mr. Vernon.
- **P/C Bog –boardwalks** - Mr. Vernon stated they have one more work session at the bog. They will replace two remaining boardwalks and that will be it for the season.

Ruth White stated last month they discussed the idea of closing the bog in the winter. Has any more thought been given to that? Chair Brown stated he understands the concern but is unsure how we would enforce it. Mr. Kennedy stated it is a safety and liability concern. Chair Brown will check with the Town Administrator about this issue. Mark Vernon noted that the Boardwalks can be treacherous no matter what time of year it is. There are also boardwalks on other trails so do we have concerns about those structures as well? Mr. Kennedy suggested posting signs to warn people about the risks. Chair Brown stated we could add this to the safety information in the trail maps as a reminder to be cautious.

- **Trail Maintenance Lumber** – Chair Brown noted he has been watching the price of pressure treated lumber. They were paying between \$10-\$12 a board and that has almost doubled. It has come down a little but he will wait and watch to see if it will come down further.
- **Spofford Easement -storm water management** – Chair Brown asked if the storm water management effort was productive. Mr. Vernon stated he has been keeping an eye on this and most of the ditches have been draining according to plan. He would estimate it is 75% better than it was.
- **American Chestnut Foundation** – Chair Brown stated last year it seems the Foundation didn't have stock available due to COVID. February 1 is the day to order and usually sells out quickly. They need to decide how many seedlings and/or nuts they would like to order.
- **Pine Hill Ski Club** - Michael Gelcius stated he met with two representatives from Pine Hill Ski Club and together they walked Low Plain. They identified some problem areas. A large tree was removed by New London DPW. Mr. Gelcius removed some smaller trees and signage issues have been fixed.

Mr. Gelcius noted that beavers have built a dam on the lower end of the stream exiting the pond so it is backing up and water levels are high.

#### 6. **KCC Trail - Flyover** – Peter Bloch

Chair Brown stated he contacted Peter Bloch as he has done videos for various easement applications. Chair Brown explained the situation to Mr. Bloch and stated they needed to get an aerial look at what is going on and find the blockage. They met and he did an initial flyover of both sides and he was able to identify the blockage quickly. Mr. Bloch went back out again and did more video sent it to Chair Brown. It has answered questions and now the issue is how to deal with it.

#### 7. **Easement Monitoring**

Mark Vernon stated the only outstanding report for 2020 is for Spring Ledge Farm. Once this is done they should be all set for this year. Some volunteers have expressed a willingness to help with this so they would have a more robust roster of easement monitors which would be great. Ruth White stated it might be helpful if the same people can do it for consecutive years.

#### 8. **Projects:**

- **Conservation Land Acquisition projects**

- Chair Brown discussed the parcel on Andover Road on the East side of Low Plain. The hope was that it would be coming up for sale. The asking price was estimated to be between \$300,000 - \$400,000. Chair Brown asked the Realtor if an appraisal could be done and if the cost could be shared but they were not interested in doing that.
- **Hamel Parcel** – Chair Brown stated this parcel is now being looked at by a few different departments in the town. The Conservation Commissions interest was in protecting the trail and the brook but it was discovered there is an existing easement that protects both already. The Building and Facilities Committee is looking into getting an appraisal and a wetlands study on this property.
- **Other** - Michael Kennedy sent Chair Brown information last month on parcel 091-035, Columbus Avenue which is 24 acres. Chair Brown suggested reaching out to Ausbon Sargent at that time. Mr. Kennedy reached out to Andrew Deegan who responded that he would find out more information and get back to him. Mr. Deegan stated it is a property Ausbon Sargent would like to see conserved but fundraising might be difficult at this time.

➤ **NL & Vicinity Trail Maps**

Mark Vernon stated work is still being done on the maps. He is currently waiting for an estimate from RC Brayshaw to print 1500 new maps. There are several trails on the map that are not New London conservation Commission maintained trails. He would like to depict those trails differently so that will be a change from the current edition. He also asked if we would be willing to pay more to have some of the printing done in color. Chair Brown asked how much more it would cost to do that and Mr. Vernon will let him know.

- **Dr Trimmer** - This machine was offered to them to purchase for \$200. Michael Gelcius stated DR makes a whole line of trimmers and they are great for keeping brush cut back. This would be a good investment if it is indeed in the condition stated. There are many trails it could be used on. The machine is located in Wilmot and the person selling it is moving. Chair Brown recommended taking a look at it and having someone go through it to see if it is in good shape.

➤ **Low Plain – Forest Management Harvest**

Chair Brown noted they are making progress with this. The southern end was not harvested back in 2016 but it is all marked and Leo Maslin is in the process of marking the new 30 acre Low Plan 200 area as well. An adequate buffer was left between the parcel and Route 11 and a large buffer was also left between where the cutting stopped and the houses on Shaker Street. The intent to cut is ready.

**9. Budget hearing – January 6, 2021**

The first budget hearing will be held on January 6, 2021. The Selectmen approved the Conservation Commission budget. Last year, the Conservation Commission told the budget committee they would like a \$50,000 contribution to the Land Acquisition Fund for the next five to ten years. The Selectmen made a recommendation of \$25,000 for the upcoming budget. A motion can be made at Town Meeting to increase or decrease this amount. Michael Gelcius state although he would like to see the \$50,000 he understands the current environment and would be comfortable with the \$25,000 contribution. Mark Vernon stated he wouldn't want it to be any less than that.

**10. New business**

Michel Gelcius discussed signage regarding having pets on a leash. The signs have been damaged and these signs have been vandalized several times. He will be submitting photos to the Police Department and would like to post information on Facebook.

11. **Next Meeting Date** - The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, January 20, 2021.

**12. Motion to Adjourn**

**IT WAS MOVED (Michael Gelcius) AND SECONDED (Ruth White) to adjourn the meeting. Bob Brown: yes, Michael Gelcius: yes, Mark Vernon: yes, Ruth White: yes, Michael Kennedy: yes, Joseph Kubit: yes, Andy Deegan: yes, Dode Gladders: yes. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:44AM

Respectfully submitted,

Trina Dawson

Recording Secretary  
Town of New London