

New London Conservation Committee Permit Sub-Committee Meeting Minutes for Monday, February 12, 2018

Present:

Nicole Gage, Zoning Administrator
Michael Gelcius, NLCC Permit Sub-Committee Chair
Andrew Deegan, NLCC Permit Sub-Committee
Michael Kennedy, NLCC Permit Sub-Committee
Maggie Ford, NLCC Permit Sub-Committee

The meeting was held at 9:00 AM in the Sydney L. Crook Conference Room at the New London Town Office building at 375 Main Street.

Nicole Gage opened the meeting by thanking the Sub-Committee members for getting together to discuss the subcommittee's request to see all permits related to wetlands, steep slopes areas, floodplains, streams, and shore lands. Nicole said she plans to attend the Conservation Commission monthly meetings, as needs dictate, and is particularly interested in hearing applicants discuss their project as it relates to their State DES (Department of Environmental Services) permit applications, which she may eventually see for zoning compliance or building permits.

Nicole Gage noted she is fairly new on the job as Zoning Administrator and is working closely with replacement Land Use & Assessing Coordinator, Cary Lagace, to look at all the permitting processes and to understand how DES correspondence comes into the town. She wants to be sure to take time to understand to New London's processes for implementing changes.

There was a discussion of the types of permits the Sub-Committee would like to review, which are ones related to properties with shore land, protected streams, wetlands, or steep slope, and DES related requests and tree cutting requests that may have conservation concerns. Nicole noted that tree cuts within 50-feet of shorelands are handled by the Planning Board which is now managed by the Town Planner, and that if the Commission is interested in being involved with Intents to Cut they would need to talk to the Assessing Department who handles all Intents to Cut. Mike Gelcius said the Conservation Commission had created a "Decision Tree" document which outlines items the commission wants to see and how they should be handled, based on the current town Zoning Ordinance. Nicole requested a copy of the Decision Tree. For now, she will email a courtesy copy of building permit applications that involve the overlay districts as an FYI, just as she sends demos to the Health Officer and Archivist, but it is not clear what type of response she would be waiting for. At a minimum, she wants to make sure that every time the zoning ordinance states the commission may or shall be involved, that we follow through. Mike noted the sub-committee members used to get a copy of these types of permits, via email, so that they could be reviewed prior to the monthly Conservation Commission meetings. The sub-committee members did not plan to have separate meetings about the permits but rather wanted to identify items

that might need discussion at a regular meeting. Michael Kennedy noted the sub-committee was not making any decisions or having any discussions about permits. It would only look to save time at regular meeting by identifying items in question or of concern.

Nicole Gage said she was working to better understand the flow of permits, including items DES was sending to the town, and how the various town departments and boards handle these items. She wants to be sure the Conservation Commission is properly included in the flow of information without overburdening the commission with tasks that are not required by statute or ordinance.

Nicole Gage asked how DES applicants get onto the Conservation Commission meeting agenda. Mike Gelcius said the requests are given to the Conservation Commission by the town clerk's office, mostly for items that need "expedited" processing. He noted that it was a policy of the Conservation Commission to require applicants, or their representatives, to come to a Conservation Commission meeting to be able to receive an expedited permit for submission to DES.

There was further discussion on how the town receives and distributes DES permits and correspondence and Nicole Gage noted that new processes are being put into place to have more DES information attached to our online GIS system. She asked for a copy of the Commission's Rules of Procedure. She also offered to recommend conservation training for the sub-committee members if they felt it would help.

Nicole Gage noted the question of the permit review process would not be resolved in one meeting and there needed to be additional meetings before a final process is put in place. Everyone agreed this was a good approach to take. In the interim, Nicole will see that information gets distributed to the sub-committee, via email, for items that would be of a concern to the Conservation Commission.

The meeting closed at 10:05 AM.

Respectfully submitted,
Michael Gelcius
New London Conservation Commission