



TOWN OF
NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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NEW LONDON CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, May 20, 2020 via zoom

9:00 AM

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

OTHERS PRESENT: Nicole Gage, Zoning Administrator, Debbie Stanley, Ausbon Sargent, Greg Griggsby, Pelletieri Associates, Erin Darrow, Scott Steffey, Greg Rusnica, Sue Andrews, Dode Gladders, Max Collins

1. Call to order – Chair Brown called the meeting to order at 9:00am. Michael Kennedy and Stanley Morono will be voting members today. Dode Gladders is in attendance today as he has expressed an interest in joining the Conservation Commission. Committee appointments are done by the Selectmen and are not being done at this time due to COVID-19.
2. Public comment – None
3. Permit applications updates
- **18 Camp Sunapee Road –beach replenishment**

Greg Rusnica attended the meeting via zoom to discuss his beach replenishment project. This is an existing beach on the southeast corner of Little Lake Sunapee near Bucklin Beach. It is a relatively small beach and the replenishment amount is well below the limit of 6 cubic yards that is mandated by the town. Mr. Rusnica is requesting a permit by notification to the State Wetlands Bureau and part of that requirement is that the town's Conservation Commission signs off on the project.

IT WAS MOVED (Michael Gelcius) AND SECONDED (Michael Kennedy) to approve an expedited permit for the beach replenishment project on 18 Camp Sunapee Road. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY. Bob Brown: Yes, Michael Gelcius: Yes, Michael Kennedy: Yes, Joseph Kubit: Yes, Stanley Morono: Yes, Mark Vernon: Yes, Ruth White: Yes

- **241 Lamson Lane –Parcel ID062-004-000 –Becky Rockwell 3/9/20 –Shoreland Permit Application for removal of an existing house and construction of a new house and garage. Impervious area will increase from 20.1% to 27.6%.**

Nicole Gage stated that she informed Pete Blakeman and Harry Snow about the meeting today. Both were of the mindset that they already received confirmation from the town a month ago and that the Conservation Commission may give input, but it is not required. The Planning Board has already reviewed the storm water and erosion plans and they were approved. They are finishing up their building permit application to move forward with this project.

- **466 Otterville Road** – Max Collins attended the meeting via zoom. Mr. Collins explained that his house was built on 1836 and is set on a fieldstone foundation. It has settled about 9 inches in spots over the years. The house is not level and starting to have structural issues. He is working with a contractor to pick the house up, dig out the crawl space into a full basement and put in a new foundation and drainage. There is currently no erosion control or gutters on the house so this will be a big improvement. Crushed stone will go around the new foundation and a drain will be installed. No trees will be cut and the lawn area will remain the same. The impervious area of the property will be the same. The dirt from the foundation excavation will be used to level the yard and gravel steps will be put in.

Erosion control measures taken during construction will be silt fencing around disturbed areas and shallow trenches will be dug to divert water away to allow for natural infiltration. Mr. Collins is only using a contractor to have the house lifted and he plans to do all the excavation and foundation work himself. He estimates this will take approximately 2 months. He plans to have it back to normal and seeded by the fall. The erosion control plan has been approved by the Planning Board. Nicole Gage expressed her concern about the amount of time this is going to take and what can happen during this time if this project is drawn out for months.

- **Pingree Road Bridge Project** – Erin Darrow attended the meeting via zoom to discuss the Pingree Road Bridge project. Ms. Darrow stated she has sent in the application for a standard dredge and fill permit for the removal of the pair of culverts on Pingree Road. The culverts will be replaced with an open span bridge. The base of the culverts is deteriorating and is not structurally sound. The proposal is to install a Hanson Bridge which is an engineered wood bridge. The abutment would span behind the stream channel itself. The resulting open span of the stream is going to comply with NH DES stream crossing guidelines. There is no known trout or fish spawning in this area. After the bridge is in, any aquatic organism passage will be substantially improved.

The wetlands permit was recently sent in and Bob Harrington received one of the copies and has already had it signed by the town clerk. A temporary bridge will be used to provide access while construction is going on. The work should take about 4-5 weeks to complete.

- **133 Lighthouse View Road** –Parcel ID 126-013-000 –Robert K. Martin & Carol Thrane Revoc. Trust 3/20/20 –Wetland Permit Application for the installation of an H shaped dock and in-kind replacement of an existing deck. 3/30/20 –Wetland Permit Application accepted by NHDES.

Greg Griggsby from Pelletieri Associates attended the meeting via zoom. He explained that this is a wetlands application that was filed on March 30, 2020. Previous approval from the Planning Board was granted to obtain access to the waterfront for the replacement of a deck. There is also approval from the Zoning Board for replacing the deck on the house. They received all state approval on this application as well.

There is currently a crank up dock that is tethered to a tree. The application proposes to replace this crank up dock with a permanent U shaped dock placed almost in the same footprint with one leg of it further from the property line. This dock will provide three slips and comes off an existing deck. The intent is to rebuild the deck in kind, although the intent is to put the deck in at one level. It currently has 3 steps in the middle of it which creates a

hazard. This is all part of a broader project to improve the site characteristics. There has been a meaningful reduction in impervious area.

- **Town of New London –Eversource–Alteration of Terrain -AoT–17693/20/2020 – NHDES granted approval for M127 Transmission Line Structure Replacement project.**

The town of New London is doing transmission line work and has submitted an alteration of terrain permit. Work is being done actively and some of the areas about New London trails. Eversource is mindful of the trails and hikers.

- **112 Herrick Cove Lane –Parcel ID 091-023-000 –Steffey Investment Realty3/30/20 – Wetland Permit Application submitted for the repair of existing dock cribbing’s and the installation of a seasonal dock to the existing dock. NHB (NH Natural Heritage Bureau) recommends completion of work in spring or fall to avoid impact to American water-awlwort.4/2/20 –Wetland Permit Application accepted by NHDES.**

Scott Steffey attended the meeting via zoom. He stated that they currently have a crib dock that is in need of repair and rebuilding. They have about 175 feet of waterfront and want to add a seasonal dock to the crib dock that runs roughly east and west. It will be two 20 foot sections of seasonal dock. The New Hampshire National Heritage bureau recommends having the work done either in the spring or the fall. Mr. Steffey stated they are currently finishing a house there now so this work will most likely happen in the fall. The wetland permit application was accepted by NH DES on April 2, 2020.

INDIVIDUAL SEWAGE DISPOSAL SYSTEM

- 1835 Little Sunapee Road –Parcel ID 043-023-000 –BarryFugere1/30/2020 –NHDES Approval of Operation
- 1845 King Hill Road –Parcel ID 137-018-000 –LawrenceFindeiss1/6/2020 –NHDES Approval of Operation
- Burpee Hill Road -Parcel ID 071-023-000 –Katherine & Marylin Carr2/6/2020 – NHDES Approval of Construction–
- Stone House Road –Parcel ID 130-021-000 –MarkBrunell1/31/2020 –NHDES Approval of Operation
- Knights Hill Road –Parcel ID 094-018-000 –RobertPalo2/27/2020 –NHDES Approval of Construction
- 151WilmotCenter Road –Parcel ID 065-003-000 –Cameron Kent3/3/2020 –NHDES Approval of Construction
- 125 Tracy Road –Parcel ID 117-008-001 –Daniel grace3/11/2020 –NHDES Approval of Construction4/28/2020 –NHDES Approval of Operation
- 38 Knights Hill Road –Parcel ID 082-003-000 –ElizabethStikeman3/23/2020 –NHDES Approval of Construction
- 316 Bog Road –Parcel ID 106-011-000 –BethGreenawalt4/23/2020 –NHDES Approval of Operation
- 362 Shaker Street –Parcel ID 111-019-000 –AndyLubrano4/27/2020 –NHDES Approval of Construction–
- Columbus Avenue –Parcel ID 081-004-000 –Robert & TheresaSienkiewicz5/6/2020 – NHDES Approval of Operation–
- 654WilmotCenter Road –Parcel ID 040-003-000 –Michael Murphy5/1/2020 –NHDES Approval of Construction–

- Blueberry Lane –Parcel ID 097-004-000 –Samuel Drive,LLC5/5/2020 –NHDES Approval of Construction–
- Hall Farm Road –Parcel ID 086-022-000 –Samuel Drive,LLC5/6/2020 –NHDES Approval of Construction–
- 466OttervilleRoad -Streams Overlay District -Max Collins

4. Review, accept and approve the February 19, 2020 meeting minutes.

IT WAS MOVED (Michael Gelcius) AND SECONDED (Michael Kennedy) to approve the minutes of the February 19, 2020 meeting. Bob Brown: Yes, Michael Gelcius: Yes, Michael Kennedy: Yes, Stanley Morono: Yes, Mark Vernon: Yes, Ruth White: Yes. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

5. Trails:

- **High usage** – It was noted that there has been usually high usage of trails due to the current situation. There have been some complaints about traffic and parking at trail heads.
- **Summer Trail Intern 2020** – There have been five applicants for the trail internship position. The town currently has a hiring freeze that would impact this unless we choose to pay for this out of our own budget. Chair Brown is unsure if it makes sense to spend private funding for this. There is one applicant that needs an internship as a requirement to finish his schooling and is willing to work for no pay.
- **MCDOC work days –2020 (Postponed)** - The Merrimack County Department of Corrections work schedule has been postponed.
- **CSC Student Project -Hiking Trail Directory** - Michael Gelcius reported that this was a student project that produced a PDF trail directory that would be beneficial to have on our website. A student went out on all trails and did a synopsis of the trail and included pictures.
- **Spofford Easement -storm water management** – Mark Vernon stated that at a previous meeting he mentioned that the Greenway was given a bequest of money for trail improvement. The Greenway has approached the Conservation Commission for projects. One of the projects will be to improve the drainage on the Spofford access road which is part of the Bunker loop, a heavily used trail. Mr. Vernon has met with Public Works Director Bob Harrington and he and his staff will do the work. This will improve this very steep, wet route.

6. NLCC/ASLPT Invasives program "Invasive Upland Species in NH", July 30, 2020 @ 6:00pm-Tracy Memorial Library -Douglas Cygan, Invasive Coordinator, NH Dept. of Agriculture

Michael Kennedy reported that this presentation is at risk due to the COVID-19 situation but he would like to hold off on canceling it just yet.

7. Sheppard Spring, PHSC –The Pine Hill Ski Club has made a request to construct a permanent structure for storage. Michael Gelcius, Bob Brown and Kim Hallquist have been working with them to try to come up with an agreeable plan. It will need to be well defined with definite rules especially regarding clean up. They have estimates to do a Quonset hut type building.

8. Projects:

- **Conservation Land Acquisition projects** - Mark Vernon discussed the Hamel parcel and stated they talked about it a year ago but the price was very high. He continues to feel this is a strategic parcel for the Conservation Commission to acquire. It is located off of South Pleasant Street and Lyon Brook trail and Lyon Brook run through it. Mr. Vernon asked if the Conservation Commission might want to explore the idea of a conservation easement purchase of the northeastern segment. Chair Brown stated it is worth having a conversation with the seller about it. Mark Vernon will contact the realtor.
- **Gnome Doors** – Ruth White stated she has been in touch with the Recreation Department, the Outing Club and Knights Hill. Recreation Department Director Scott Blewitt is concerned that summer programs will be canceled so would like to consider a competition that includes the Gnome houses and the trails. This would help get kids out and active but individually as opposed to a group activity. Chair Brown recommended putting an article in *Municipal Matter* that would include a picture of what the doors look like.
- **Messer Farm Project-Debbie Stanley -ASLPT Updates**

Chair Brown stated that information regarding the Messer Farm project has been distributed to the group and he asked Debbie Stanley of Ausbon Sargent to provide an update and overview of this important project. Ms. Stanley stated the Ausbon Sargent Land Trust was formed in 1987 and their beginnings really came from the Conservation Commission. The town was rapidly changing and developing and the Selectmen, the Conservation Commission, the Planning Board and the Budget Committee made the decision that a land trust should be created. In 1987, New London Conservation Commission created a list of the top eleven properties in town that should be conserved. Of the top five, four have already been conserved. The one that is left is Messer Farm.

Messer farm has been a town priority since 1987 and work has continued behind the scenes for many years. Various deals have fallen through between then and now. Negotiations with Len Dorr started a year ago and an appraisal of the property was done. It was determined that the parcel is valued at 1.5 million. There is a budget of 1.6 million due to transaction costs and transfer tax. If all the money is not raised they will have to borrow.

The land trust has started the private fundraising for the project and has raised \$650,000. Ms. Stanley spoke with Chair Brown and asked that the Conservation Commission consider a \$500,000 contribution to the project. Ms. Stanley discussed the use of the Mary Haddad fund since the closing date is October 30, 2020. Chair Brown discussed this with the Conservation Commission and came back with lower numbers which is disappointing to Ms. Stanley. If a \$300,000 contribution is made, that is only 18% of the project. Given the significance of Messer Farm and the fact that this property is important to everybody she was hoping it would be higher. This property has the best soils in New London that are available for growing. The other opportunity for the property is recreation which is in the interest of the Conservation Commission. There has been a lot of feedback regarding the importance of this property to the community. She would like the Conservation Commission to consider a contribution of at least 25% of the project which would be \$400,000.

Chair Brown asked if asked if any of the funds would be from grants. Ms. Stanley stated no, the issue with grant funding is that they drag out for a long time and some of the funders are setting conditions that are of concern. He also asked if all the money isn't raised, what plan is in place. Is taking out a loan an option? Ms. Stanley responded that one of the conditions of the purchase

and sales agreement is that by July 1, they have to indicate that the financing is in place. They went to three local banks and if there is a shortfall, Ledyard Bank will allow them to borrow. This potential loan is at an acceptable interest rate. Chair Brown stated that based on this information, this project is not at risk and will happen. It will just be a matter of how much money will be borrowed if needed. The goal would be to borrow as little as possible. Chair Brown absolutely feels the Conservation Commission needs to support this project.

IT WAS MOVED (Bob Brown) AND SECONDED (Michael Gelcius) that the Conservation Commission support the Messer Farm project financially. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY. Bob Brown: Yes, Michael Gelcius: Yes, Michael Kennedy: Yes, Joseph Kubit: Yes, Stanley Morono: Yes, Mark Vernon: Yes, Ruth White: Yes

Joe Kubit stated the way this is being proposed, he doesn't think the Mary Haddad funds could be used if Ausbon Sargent is going own the land 100%. Unless the town owns part of the land he's not sure if this would be viable. He offered to bring the information before the Attorney General's office to get a ruling from them. Andy Deegan stated that the Attorney General should know that the Town would hold the conservation easement on this property.

Chair Brown is concerned about using all their funds on this one project. There is about \$426,000 in the Mary Haddad fund and about \$226,000 in the Conservation Land Acquisition fund. He personally doesn't think it is responsible to spend \$500,000 and leave only \$150,000 for other projects.

Michael Gelcius agrees that if the Mary Haddad fund isn't available and they use all the funds in the Land Acquisition fund, it puts them in a bad position. It would take a very long time to build up funds again especially in the current economic climate. His thought is to take a portion of the Land Acquisition fund and a portion of the Mary Haddad fund if allowed, and make a contribution of \$300,000. Chair Brown noted that initially it was thought that it would be allowable to use the Mary Haddad fund. There are two parts to this fund. One part discusses trail maintenance and the other is the acquisition of land of a recreational nature, which this is. More research will be done to determine if the fund can be used.

Ruth White stated this project has been the priority forever. Ms. White would like the Conservation Commission to consider giving the full \$500,000. It is the most desirable land in New London and she feels the town would support it. Even if it uses all of our funds it is worth it. Chair Brown stated there is a possible loan option so it seems unlikely that the project will fail. The question is how much money would need to be borrowed.

Debbie Stanley addressed the Conservation Commission's concern that they would drain their fund by contributing too much to this project. She stated she attended the budget committee meeting this year to help get support for the commission. For many years, with the exception of the last 12 years, the commission got a sizeable amount of money from the voters. Most recently, the budget committee looked at the Haddad money and the Land Acquisition fund and sees there is a pool of money available. Here is an opportunity to spend some of the money so the next time the Commission goes before the budget committee they will see a project that was acted upon. It will present a better case to the voters about why they should be setting aside money every year in the conservation fund. Every year, Sunapee sets aside \$50,000 in their conservation fund. When they get up to \$250,000 they spend it. They have no problems with getting this appropriation. New London used to be the leader in the local communities for setting aside money for conservation. This is an opportunity to show success and how the money is being used on an important project that appeals to everyone.

IT WAS MOVED (Bob Brown) AND SECONDED (Michael Gelcius) to contribute to the Messer Farm project in the amount of \$300,000, subject to availability of funds. There would be discussions around trail maintenance and stewardship fees. Bob Brown: Yes, Michael Gelcius: Yes, Michael Kennedy: Yes, Joseph Kubit: Yes, Stanley Morono: Yes, Mark Vernon: Yes, Ruth White: Yes. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

IT WAS MOVED (Mark Vernon) AND SECONDED (Stanley Morono) to contribute to the Messer Farm project in the amount of \$350,000, subject to availability of funds. There would be discussions around trail maintenance and stewardship fees. Bob Brown: No, Michael Gelcius: No, Michael Kennedy: Yes, Joseph Kubit: Yes, Stanley Morono: Yes, Mark Vernon: Yes, Ruth White: Yes. THE MOTION CARRIES.

IT WAS MOVED (Ruth White) AND SECONDED (Mark Vernon) to contribute to the Messer Farm project in the amount of \$400,000, subject to availability of funds. There would be discussions around trail maintenance and stewardship fees. Bob Brown: No, Michael Gelcius: No, Michael Kennedy: No, Joseph Kubit: No, Stanley Morono: No, Mark Vernon: No, Ruth White: Yes. THE MOTION FAILS.

Chair Brown noted that \$350,000 is a lot of money and he hopes Ausbon Sargent is not disappointed in that contribution. Debbie Stanley thanked the Conservation Commission and stated that their support means a lot.

9. Next meeting date -Wednesday, June 17, 2020

10. Motion to Adjourn

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

The meeting was adjourned at 11:43AM

Respectfully submitted,

Trina Dawson

Recording Secretary
Town of New London