



# TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

375 MAIN STREET • NEW LONDON, NH 03257 • WWW.NL-NH.COM

## CONSERVATION COMMISSION

### Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, August 15, 2018

8:30 a.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Bob Brown (Chair), Michael Gelcius, Andrew Deegan, Stanley Morono, Ruth White, Mark Vernon, Maggie Ford, Michael Kennedy

**MEMBERS EXCUSED:** Tim Paradis

#### **OTHERS PRESENT:**

Erin Amadon - Peter S. Jensens Associates

Joseph Kubit – NL Planning Board

Tom Coverdale – Trails

Nicole Gage – Zoning Administrator

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

**Roll Call:** Chair Brown called the roll.

**2. Public Comments - None**

#### **3. Elevated Walkway Project – Kidder Cleveland Clough Trail**

The Kidder Cleveland Clough Trail continues to have ongoing issues. Last Spring the water was lowered and maintenance was done on the boardwalk and it lasted through the summer, however these same things were done this spring and it has flooded. Tom Coverdale has gone in several times a week to lower the water level and it is still very wet.

Erin Amadon from Peter Jensen & Associates which is based out of Washington VT attended the meeting. They travel around New England building pedestrian trails. They focus on three main aspects of trail construction which are accessible trails, technical rock work structures, and elevated boardwalk structures. Ms. Amadon presented a slide show of completed projects and stated that helical anchors may be possible solution for our trail.

Chair Brown asked what the maximum load rating is on these. Ms. Amadon stated if the helical anchors are driven down and achieve a torque value of 1,000 foot pounds, that's 10,000 pounds of weight, that one anchor can hold and there are two anchors per header. This meets the load capacity for snow, ice and foot traffic. Chair Brown asked what a ball park cost would be. Ms. Amadon estimated the cost to be between \$75-\$85 per square foot. The length would be about 3,000 feet from Pleasant Street to the flow device. She commented that the helical anchors may cost more than some other structures but feels the low impact nature and longevity help balance that. Composite decking material may be an option but some issues are that it can be slippery and the railing system can warp if it's not supported correctly.

Ms. Amadon would like the Conservation Commission to think about what width and type of material they would like if this is an option for this area.

Andy Deegan noted that there is the potential to use Quabbin to Cardigan grant funds for this. Conservation Commissions can apply and we are a town that is in the corridor.

#### **4. Permit Applications**

Nicole Gage, Zoning Administrator attended the meeting and provided a log from the land use office regarding all DES notifications, all zoning applications and building permits with their status. There are several still waiting for information from the applicants. The Conservation Commission will see the DES notifications before the actual building permit applications come into the town.

##### Bittersweet, 92 Pleasant Street

Nicole Gage registered a complaint about work that was done on the drainage alongside the parking lot. She did a site visit earlier this year and spoke with the General Manager who confirmed he hadn't obtained any permits. It appears to be wetlands. DES has been in contact with them and asked for remediation that includes getting a wetlands soil scientist but two deadlines have passed and this has not happened. With regards to the town's response and looking at it further, there is to be no activity on a wetland and the Conservation Commission should see plans and weigh in on them.

From a zoning perspective, at a minimum it states that you can't alter or disturb the area without state permits and without plans reviewed by the town. Chair Brown stated that it was brought up by a resident that established a walking trail and then all of a sudden a berm was there so access was difficult. The residents asked for a stairway to get to the trail but it is on private land.

Ms. Gage stated she has been guided to send a memo detailing all the violations. If there is no response the next step is that they can be fined per day and if they don't respond to that they can be turned over to legal counsel for not complying. She is unsure what happens if they don't respond to the demands of DES.

##### Georges Mills Cottages

Nicole Gage reported that this has been reviewed by the Planning Board six times since April 2018. After the cottage burnt down in December, the applicant spent a lot of time deciding what to rebuild and what he has chosen is not zoning compliant. He would like to expand. He has had lawyers involved, they've have been motions for re-hearings that have been granted and at the most recent meeting an amendment to a motion for rehearing. The zoning board has had to reconvene to clarify their decision. He has been denied each time.

Chair Brown stated there is a tent trailer onsite and another stored in between buildings. Another concern is that the rubble hasn't been cleaned up and with the recent rain this isn't ideal. Ms. Gage noted that the town has done everything they can possibly do. Silt fencing has been installed and she feels it is adequate. For the last six weeks she has been told the excavator is coming any day and the whole site will be cleaned up. He has received a violation notice on behalf of the towns of New London and Sunapee. The trailer is promised to be moved by this Friday. He has until December 2018 to clean up the ruins and it was on August 7, 2018 that he was given the final denial from the Zoning Board. She hopes to see progress soon.

Nicole Gage wanted clarification with regards to if there is a permit review committee or subcommittee. Chair Brown stated we do have one. She would like to know when it meets and if there are minutes because a committee has to be transparent if it is a public body meeting and falls under the same requirements as other meetings.

Michael Gelcius commented that the reason there aren't minutes is that there haven't been any formal meetings. The reason for this is that there haven't been items that need to be discussed outside of the normal meetings. If there was something of importance, they would call a

subcommittee meeting. The permits are sent out and reviewed but aren't discussed until the meeting is held.

Ms. Gage stated her understanding is that meetings have to be transparent and emails can't be going around outside of a meeting.

Owls Nest – Mr. Gelcius is questioning if proper procedures were followed. A complaint was sent to DES about work being done without proper authorization. Ms. Gage is aware of the legal situation with DES permits and abutters. She recently sent a reminder to them that they need to go through plan review and asked for an update stating the Conservation Commission is eager to hear from them. It could be a while before the legal issues are resolved.

Lighthouse View Road – Ms. Gage has a question about retaining walls. The Conservation Commission will see the DES permitting first and have the opportunity to comment and give feedback. For Town permitting, Ms. Gage will send them to the Conservation Commission. She sent them a letter saying they need a plan review and asked the status.

Chair Brown discussed an elevated boardwalk across wetlands on Messer Pond. He went out and looked at it and it's on supporting pads and aluminum. There is a building permit there but he thought it was strange that they hadn't heard anything about this project. Chair Brown stated it is wetlands so he's wondering if any permitting was required. Ms. Gage stated they got a building permit and DES permits. She believes it was a replacement system but would have to confirm this. If this was the type of permit for the Conservation Commission should review first, she would be willing to put a process in place for this to happen.

Chair Brown received a call from the President of the Messer Pond Protective Association about a storm water management project they are planning to do on County Road by the inlet to Messer Pond. It involves storm water retention and filtering on the North side. The MPPA President asked if a permit was needed from the Conservation Commission. An engineering company drew up a plan and met with Adam Ricker and got approval. On September 11, 2018 they are scheduled to meet with the Planning Board for approval. The town will be doing the physical work. This project abuts wetlands all around and they haven't been notified about this. This project abuts town land which is managed by the Conservation Commission and is under a conservation easement. Ms. Gage is not familiar with this project so she will have Kim Hallquist or Adam Ricker reach out.

Ms. Gage is willing to do what it takes to improve processes and communication. She suggested meeting with the appropriate parties to review this further.

## **5. Approval of July 18, 2018 Minutes**

**IT WAS MOVED (Michael Gelcius) AND SECONDED (Mark Vernon) to approve the minutes of July 18, 2018 meeting with edits. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

## **6. Intern for Mapping**

Mark Vernon reported things are progressing slowly. Chair Brown would like to know a completion date and Mr. Vernon stated updates should be done by August 16, 2018.

## **7. Planning Board Update**

Joe Kubit reported that several things are underway. The Master plan questionnaire is being finalized and should be sent out soon.

The Lighthouse Road land was discussed as they are looking to subdivide property into nine lots of 2+ acres each. The issues were water drainage and an increase in traffic.

Peter Christian's Tavern is advertising for help. They came for a site review for a patio. Currently the New London Senior living development is the biggest project going on. A presentation will be held on Tuesday, August 21, 2018. They will make specific presentation on particular topics such as drainage, water capacity, sewer capacity, trails and wetlands. The workforce housing project has been put on hold.

Tim Paradis is working on a zoning amendment for solar panels for town meeting in March.

## 8. Strategic Plan

Maggie Ford distributed the final version of the action plan to members.

The next step will be to start implementing them.

## 9. Trails and Projects

Mark Vernon reported that the trails are in good shape with the exception of the Kidder Cleveland Clough trail. A lot of effort was put in early in the season. This is Tom Coverdale's last week and Mr. Vernon thanked him for his work all summer. Mr. Coverdale appreciates the job sheet that Mr. Vernon creates to prioritize work. The jobs are organized and helps direct where the focus should be.

Chair Brown and Bob Harrington were recently at Clark Lookout and the cairns are back, there is a big pile of brush and evidence of fires. Tom Coverdale commented if he sees a fire pit he destroys it. Chair Brown suggested putting bark down at the entrance.

They also visited Clark Pond. Mr. Harrington is willing to put 3 or 4 loads of bark down. Mark Vernon will remove the last of the trees and move the sign if DPW is ready to dump the bark.

They would also like to discuss parking at Pleasant Street East.

Ruth White commented that she has been taking the Gordon Research Scientist group through the Bog every Monday all summer. It is a wonderful area and she is hoping other members of the Conservation Commission would like to help out with that next spring.

Timber Inventory - Chair Brown reported that there isn't a final report from Leo Maslan yet. They are tentatively planning to do the harvest this fall/winter.

Merrimack County Department of Corrections - Chair Brown contacted Merrimack County Department of Corrections and spoke with the Assistant Executive Director about the offsite program. This program is still in place on a limited basis. It was suggested to send another email so Chair Brown sent it.

Trail Library - Michael Gelcius finished the trail library, it just needs to be installed. It was decided to place it near the kiosk.

Dura Crocket Bridge - Mark Vernon reported that there have been two bridge failures this season at Clark Pond. They have both been replaced and Tom Coverdale has done a third one. There may be another one done this fall.

Dura Crockett Bridge is remote and rugged and it crosses at a steep part of the brook. Upstream is flat and narrow and an easy place for a crossing but in many respects would be a shame to relocate it. It is a 24 foot bridge. Chair Brown suggested doing a continuous truss at 24 feet without bolts would weigh about 300 pounds. If the wood was dry it may be 200 pounds although it would be awkward. This could be a solution. He also discussed fabricating a truss out of aluminum and a four foot section weighs 10 pounds. A 24 foot truss would weigh 75 pounds and it could be brought in in pieces. The downside is that it will not

look like a wooden bridge but it will last a long time. It will also cost around \$3,500 compared a wooden bridge that would be around \$1,000. Chair Brown will get some pictures.

Pleasant Street East – Mark Vernon reported that the trail is ready to go and has the signs ready to install. Parking needs to be addressed. He inquired if there should be an opening ceremony for this trail. It was suggested that after the sign is installed the Conservation Commission members get together to take a picture and submit it to the *Intertown Record* and *Municipal Matters*.

Lumber/Materials – Chair Brown reported they have gotten some lumber and will need more. Mr. Vernon will be building benches and more boardwalks will need replacing.

NLCC 2018 Budget Year – The final numbers are in for 2018 and there was less than \$100 left in the budget.

DPW Support – Chair Brown met with Bob Harrington, the new Director of Public Works. They looked at different projects and the Department of Public Works is very supportive and tries to help when they can. They are currently short staffed and have a few big projects they are working on. Chair Brown will be sending in a priority list.

## **10. Desirable Lands List**

Several meetings ago the parcel on Little Sunapee Road was discussed. It is owned by the Mormon Church and is rumored to be coming up for sale. It is currently being leased by Spring Ledge to grow corn. Chair Brown called about it and spoke with an assistant who stated they have subcontracted it to a company in Maine but eventually it will go to Utah. Chair Brown spoke with the company in Maine who stated they will get us the information. An appraisal has been done on this property.

## **11. Other**

Ruth White commented that earlier this summer the Conservation Commission discussed wanting to encourage people to hike the trails to get the patch. They discussed leading walks on 4 different Sunday mornings. She asked if this is something they still wanted to do as she will need to get this into the Shopper. Mr. Vernon voted to still do it and he will do at least one if not two. Ms. White will draft a schedule and send it out.

Nancy Rollins sent a thank you note to Laura Sykes for her 16 years of service.

Two letters were sent from the same person on two different dates. The first letter referenced Low Plain and the Mountain Road entrance. They were impressed with the maintenance but the concern is poison ivy and exposure for people wearing flip flops. The second letter addressed Low Plain and is not in favor of the chosen name for that area. They would like to strongly encourage a sign at Mountain Road entrance that includes the name Esther Courier and would like to exclude the term Low Plain to give the credit to her. Mr. Gelcius addressed the poison ivy issue and had a club member go out and weed whack the area. Mr. Gelcius also stated that the sign that is going on the kiosk says Esther Courier on it so the name will be on there.

The New Hampshire Association of Conservation Commissions has outstanding achievement awards. Mr. Gelcius put together a write up as well as pictures about several projects done as this award looks at activities, conservation and community outreach. He will mail this in soon.

**Motion to Adjourn**

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

The next meeting of the Conservation Commission will be held on Wednesday, September 19, 2018 at 8:30am.

The meeting adjourned at 10:50 am

Respectfully submitted,

Trina Dawson  
Recording Secretary  
Town of New London