



TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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

NEW LONDON CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, September 20, 2017

8:30 AM

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

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Laura Alexander, Tim Paradis

STAFF PRESENT: Adam Ricker

OTHERS PRESENT: Peter Stanley

1. **Call to Order:** Chair Brown called the meeting to order at 8:40 am.

Roll Call: Chair Brown called the roll.

2. **BSA – Eagles Scout Project – Deferred**

3. **Approval of Minutes**

IT WAS MOVED (Michael Gelcius) AND SECONDED (Maggie Ford) to approve the minutes of August 16, 2017. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

4. **Public Comment** - None

5. **Permit Application/Review Committee**

Adam Ricker reported that he has been busy with several tree cutting applications.

Development Application - Ellen's Interiors is closing and wants to sell the property to a couple that wants to open a bakery there. The site is tight and there is a daycare close by which limits the parking available.

Michael Gelsius reported an intent to cut that is on a 127 acre parcel. It is not in an area of concern. There were 7 septic approvals. The modified for plan for beach replenish has been handled.

There are two wetlands applications. One is a repair of a stone wall that needs to be straightened and cleaned up. The other is a walkway replacement. The walkway repair includes a metal walkway but it has a flow through so it won't change impervious.

6. **NL Planning Board Update**

Adam Ricker reported that at a recent Master Plan Steering committee meeting, it was suggested to invite a member of the Conservation Commission to sit on that committee. Mark Vernon agreed to do this.

The survey for public outreach will be developed by the end of the year so it can be out for circulation during town meeting time. Following the survey, a charrette will be held in town to have a planning activity so the Conservation Commission will be involved in that process.

Mark Vernon inquired about a replacement for Amy Rankin's position since she resigned in September. Mr. Ricker stated that the position was just recently posted.

7. Strategic Plan

Maggie Ford distributed a draft of the New London Conservation Commission Strategic Plan. This draft has only been seen by the Conservation Commission so far and after a few revisions, it should go to Kim Hallquist, Town Administrator, for review. It will then to the Planning board and the Board of Selectmen.

Chair Brown suggested that the 18% conserved land in New London information be included so Ms. Ford will include it.

Mr. Vernon asked if we needed to develop guidelines for the annual budget requests? Chair Brown suggested it be looked at every year.

8. Trails & Projects

- The Low Plain new gates were installed. We have the gates for the Clark Lookout entrance. Richard Lee has been busy getting sidewalks done but they are still planning to install these gates for us.
- Chair Brown received a call from a principal at Pine Hill Ski club letting him know they were going to do trail maintenance. There have been issues of debris being left there in the past as there are feeder trails and they have used pallets over the wet areas. The ski club goes to the Board of Selectmen every year to ask to use the land and Chair Brown feels they should be part of that discussion. He explained to the principal that the Conservation Commission is responsible to maintain that area and they are sensitive to any cuts being made in that area.
- Leo Maslin still plans to do the forest assessment on the south end of Low Plain as well as the Shepard Pit area. We will possibly get a forestry evaluation for a limited harvest.
- Mr. Vernon passed around a roster for easement monitoring. He's hoping those on the list are willing to do it again this year.
- Trail use – Mr. Vernon noticed that during Gordon Research activity season students are walking on Main Street and he wondered if students are given information about the trails. Ms. White knows they do go to the bog and they go to the Historical Society as well. It was suggested that the maps be available for sale at the Hogan center and the bookstore.
Chair Brown asked Ms. White where she saw this and she shared that in Grantham, off of exit 13, there is a town trail by a brook. . At the entrance there is a kiosk. It is a work in progress but there are informational signs and small apple orchard. It is named Brookside Park nature library, and encourages people to "use this, return it".

9. Pleasant Street East

More beaver flow device work has been done and fencing has been added. This seems to be working but it is an ongoing project to monitor. Chair Brown is hoping once the completed wetland evaluation is done it will tell us more about what is going on.

Chair Brown discussed ideas about uses for the parcel. With the discovery of additional water, there was talk about a retention pond to control water flow. It could possibly be used for skating. Trails are fine and structures are permitted for agriculture, forestry, non- commercial outdoor recreation or wild life habitat management.

Stanley Morono discussed the idea of a dog park. He had recently visited a few dog parks in Vermont. There are a lot of upsides to it and many areas across the country are building them. He feels this would be a great spot for it. Chair Brown asked Mr. Deegan how it would fit with a conservation easement or does it need to be excluded. Mr. Deegan responded this has never come up before so he could contact other land trusts to see what they have done. The best way to do this would be a reserved right. The size could be limited and a dog park could be created with a pavilion and picnic tables away from the wetlands. Two issues would be trash cans and the clean-up involved and the other issue would be liability in the event of a dog attack.

10. Other Business

- Clark Lookout – Peter Stanley attended the meeting. He sent Chair Brown a photo and wants to discuss some activity that is taking place at Clark Lookout. He went there Sunday and there were five cairns that had been built immediately below the retaining wall. The stones were taken from the retaining walls to build them. He feels it's an activity that should be discouraged and signs should be posted. The stones need to be put back.
- There has also been an issue with pressure treated lumber being dumped in two different locations.
- At Clark Lookout they have had issues with camping and campfires.
- Chair Brown has discussed these issues with the New London Police Department and the Detective provided suggestions.
- Peter Stanley also commented on the development of the land purchased on the East side of Pleasant Street. He stated the money used was specifically for conservation. He stated the Conservation Commission and the Town of New London could not legally pursue the development of that land. He feels that would be illegal and subject to litigation by members of the community. It is a wet area and provides a habitat for other wildlife in the area which is the primary reason it is being protected. It would be a huge disappointment if it was used for development and not conservation. His hope is that the Conservation Commission stands against that.
- Chair Brown stated that at the last meeting they determined that there was concern about the inflow of storm water on that property. It may have changed since the construction of college housing and parking lots. It is very wet land. He has gotten feedback that a Community Center is needed but this is not a good lot to build it on. Three different engineering companies have been contacted. One felt they didn't want to do more evaluation as they aren't licensed. A wetland scientist was contacted and agreed it was good to do but is too busy and couldn't do anything until next spring. The third option is Horizon's engineering who had previously done work for the town. A meeting was set up and they toured the property with the Engineer. He came back with a proposal that said it would take three months for the review. They have accelerated the plan to get it to us before our next meeting.
- Mr. Vernon wanted clarification of what the definition is for development. There has been talk of a dog park, a parking area or a kiosk. He would like to craft the easement to allow for flexibility. Mr. Stanley is referring more to taking a significant portion of the land to involve buildings and creation of impervious surface. Ruth White commented that at their last meeting they all agreed that this land was purchased with Conservation money and they are obligated to use it that way.
- Chair Brown was notified by Kim Hallquist, Town Administrator that it is 2019 Budget request season. We need to decide if we are submitting a similar request as last year. In that there is funding for the category of land acquisition, environmental assessment or survey. Most years the entire budget isn't used. It was suggested that we revisit requesting some land acquisition funding if that's the consensus. It may be a hard sell but it has been awhile since this has been done.

- Maggie Ford asked if there was latitude with the line items within the budget. Chair Brown stated that yes, there is one account so if we go over in one area, and funds can be pulled from another area, as long as we don't exceed the total budget. Ms. Ford asked how long it takes to access the Conservation money when there is a project. He estimated about a week.

Mr. Gelcius feels that based on the climate of things and cut backs, it would be hard to justify asking for money this year. He feels that instead we should report on the things that are being done by the Conservation Commission.

Mr. Kennedy stated he feels it's important to keep our unique needs in front of the budget committee each year.

Mr. Gelcius feels we should ask for a small increase due to anticipated price changes by 2019.

Mr. Vernon asked if we would be using the full line item amount for a trail intern. He's wondering if we should ask for the same amount since it wasn't completely used. Chair Brown said yes, even if we use less there, we can use it elsewhere.

Motion to Adjourn

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

The next meeting of the Conservation Commission will be held on Wednesday, October 18, 2017 at 8:30am.

The meeting adjourned at 10:31am

Respectfully submitted,

Trina Dawson
Recording Secretary
Town of New London