



# TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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## **DRAFT Minutes of the January 20, 2015 Conservation Commission Meeting**

**MEMBERS PRESENT: Bob Brown (Chairman), Laura Alexander, Mike Gelcius, Mark Vernon, Terry Dancy, Dan Allen, Ruth White**

**MEMBERS ABSENT: Andy Deegan**

**OTHERS: Lucy St. John (Planning & Zoning Administrator)**

Chair Brown opened the meeting at 8:30am.

### Minutes of December 17, 2014

**IT WAS MOVED (Laura Alexander) AND SECONDED (Ruth White) to approve the minutes of December 17, 2014, as amended. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mark Vernon asked that Davis Hill Path be referred to Davis Path.

### Terms Due in 2015

Chair Brown noted that terms were up in 2015 for Dan Allen, Terry Dancy and Andy Deegan. He suggested these individuals contact Kim Hallquist (Town Administrator) soon, letting her know if they wished to stay on the commission or move on. He reminded those at the meeting that there were two additional openings on the commission that had not yet been filled.

### Possible Zoning Ordinance Amendments – Lucy St. John, Planning & Zoning Administrator

Ms. St. John said the Planning Board is currently discussing possible zoning amendment changes. She is suggesting some analysis of the watershed and the many overlay districts that surround it. She thought they should look at the watershed provisions in a broader approach as the streams, wetlands and shoreland are all connected.

Chair Brown felt the difference in definition of a boat house from the Town and the State was confusing. Ms. St. John said this issue has been given to the Planning Board to discuss. She felt that per the Town's language, a seasonal boat canopy was not allowed in New London.

Chair Brown said people have been camping at Clark Lookout and have been having campfires. He has heard reports of people camping in the field at Phillips Preserve. There seems to be nothing that addresses camping on Town property. He was confused as he thought this should be included in an ordinance but has since heard it was a Selectmen's issue. Ms. St. John said this could be a zoning issue but in speaking with the Town Administrator, it could be part of a conservation easement violation. Chair Brown thought perhaps there should be some permission or permit required to be able to camp on Town property. People camping could become a nuisance or there could be health issues involved. This would provide a mechanism to remove people, should that become necessary.

Ms. St. John said people typically attain permission to hold events and do things on Town property, such as the Town Green. Chair Brown wondered how the policies or procedures would be enforced if someone were to bypass the permit process. He thought some rules regarding camping on Town properties should be written somewhere to assist with enforcement, should it be necessary. Ms. St. John said this issue was brought up at the last Planning Board meeting.

Ms. St. John noted one of the ideas she is suggesting to the Planning Board for changes in the zoning ordinance. She offered the example that the only place the ordinance talks about impervious is in the shoreland

areas and up to 30% is allowed. She thought this should be looked at in other areas, such as those near streams and wetlands. Ms. Alexander thought this was a good idea as it is more than one small piece of shoreland that will affect the water, but also steep slopes and streams.

Ms. St. John said there are issues she has taken note of since she began working for New London in 2012. She feels that from a planning perspective, some changes need to be made. Mr. Dancy said he felt the Conservation Commission was in support of these ideas and would support the Planning Board on making these changes. Ms. St. John said change takes a long time and she wasn't sure if any of these changes would be made this year, but she was eager to get discussions started and to get things moving forward.

**IT WAS MOVED (Terry Dancy) AND SECONDED (Ruth White) to support the definitive study of an environmental overlay study. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

#### Phillips Access

Chair Brown said the access road is now open after an individual in a travel trailer had parked there and was eventually moved from the area with the assistance of the New London Police Department. Due to the access road being blocked, the field was not mowed.

#### Clark Lookout

Chair Brown said he understood that the signage was taken down but the owner's lock on the gate remains. There is a person who has asked to have a wedding at the lookout next July 4<sup>th</sup>. He would discuss this with Ms. Hallquist as there was no way to know if full access would be permitted at that point.

#### Trail Maps & Data

Ms. Alexander said Dan Allen walked the trails and they had the data to update the Vicinity Map. Chair Brown said the trail map in the Phillips Forestry Plan could be compared with what they have for information. The only area that was missing was the Clark Pond Trail. The idea was to update the electronic version of the map so when they need to print more copies, it would be up to date. The Commission still has about one box of maps remaining so will not be printing right away.

Mr. Vernon wondered if the Conservation Commission could get an intern who could work on updating the maps online. This idea would be discussed further at a later date. Ms. Alexander noted that now is the time students from the College start looking for their internships. She added that all students at Colby-Sawyer College have to do an internship of at least 160 hours and prefer a paid internship versus unpaid. Mr. Vernon offered to forward a draft intern job description to Ms. Alexander and Mr. Brown.

#### Low Plain Forestry Wildlife Plan

Ms. Alexander said she and Mr. Deegan would get together on this.

#### Trails

##### *Lyon Brook/Power Line Trail*

Mr. Vernon said he has received positive feedback from the Selectmen and Richard Lee (Public Works Director) after providing his project overview to them. He has walked the trail and feels the best egress to Newport Road would be from Huberts. He would like to contact the property owner of Huberts to see if permission could be granted should the trail be put in. The Conservation Commission agreed that this would be a good thing to do. Ms. White opined that the only question the owners may have is in regards to parking and whether or not people would be parking in their lot to access the trail. After some conversation, Mr. Allen suggested that the Commission let the owners know that people would be asked to park in the big parking lot at the hospital if they wanted to access the trail during an event where many people would be present.

Mr. Vernon thought they would need to wait until the snow melts before they can map out where the culverts would be.

*Table at Clark Pond Trail*

Mr. Allen said the table has been moved closer to the pond. Some site work will still be required, but the table is there.

*Trail Project List*

Mr. Vernon said he got some feedback from his trail project list. He said he would keep a running chart of projects.

*Trail Adopter Reports*

Chair Brown said trail adopter reports don't seem to be coming in, which seems to be an ongoing issue. No report doesn't really mean that everything is OK, it could mean that they aren't walking the trails. Ms. White recalled years past when the members of the Conservation Commission would go out every week on the trails and work on them. Mr. Allen said at least they do have someone dedicated to trail maintenance during the summer months. Ms. White agreed and opined that the person they have doing this work currently does a fabulous job.

*Tool Inventory List for the Conservation Commission*

Mr. Vernon said suggestions came in for some tools the Conservation Commission should have in stock for their own use. He read the list to the group. There was discussion as to whether they should purchase a chainsaw or not due to safety issues and training of individuals. Mr. Vernon agreed that a chainsaw was a dangerous tool, but all tools could be dangerous. Chair Brown said he would contact Mr. Lee to see how individuals within the Public Works Department are trained to use chainsaws.

*Pet Waste Dispensers*

Mr. Vernon said he got a call from Richard Lee about ordering dog waste bag dispensers. They are \$67 each, plus a little more for the bags. Chair Brown said this was a worthwhile expenditure and three should be purchased for the Clark Pond trail head, Great Brook trail head, and Parkside/Lyon Brook. Mr. Vernon will forward request to purchase three to Mr. Lee.

*Signs*

Mr. Vernon said he had volunteered to help Chair Brown on signs and would like to get a lesson from him on how he makes them. Mr. Vernon said he could search online for templates that would allow for larger letters, as he had requested. Mr. Dancy offered the use of a Conservation Commission router he had possession of. Mr. Allen also had one that could be used.

Mail/Correspondence

Ms. Alexander noted a workshop on the Emerald Ash Borer beetle, which is an invasive species that is coming this way and would affect their forests. It may be a good one to attend.

Other Business

Ms. White wondered about making a Clark Pond brochure like they do have at the Bog and Low Plain. She suggested they include about 10 items on the trail to identify. She thought they could discuss this and it was suggested this could be added to the internship job description.

The next meeting of the Conservation Commission would be held on Wednesday, February 18<sup>th</sup> at 8:30am.

**IT WAS MOVED (Dan Allen) AND SECONDED (Terry Dancy) to adjourn the meeting.  
THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 9:28am.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristy Heath, Recording Secretary  
Town of New London