

TOWN OF AMHERST  
Conservation Commission

March 13, 2024

**DRAFT**

In attendance: Jared Hardner (Chair), Rob Clemens, John Harvey (alternate, remote), Peter Lyon (Board of Selectmen ex-officio), Steve Lutz, Lee Gilman, Rich Hart (alternate)

**Administrative:**

**1. Chair Comments**

Jared Hardner opened the meeting at 7:00pm. He thanked all involved in Town Meeting yesterday. He stated that Article 39 passed, which includes updates that will help the Commission in achieving the intent of the Wetland Ordinance.

Jared Hardner stated that he received a phone call from Kevin Curran who is selling the Town parcels near Grater Woods. There is still an intention for the Town to buy a last parcel in that area and the administrative work is in process for this.

**Minutes Approval**

**Rob Clemens moved to accept the minutes of February 14, 2024 as amended [Line 177: change “plantings” to “planning”.] Seconded by Steve Lutz.**

**Vote: 4-0-0; motion approved.**

**Lee Gilman moved to accept the minutes of February 28, 2024 as amended [Line 23 and 28: change “UNH intern” to “student at Antioch University”.] Seconded by Steve Lutz.**

**Vote: 4-0-0; motion approved.**

**Special Topics & Presentations**

None at this time.

**Other Business**

- **Spring cleanup day update**

Steve Lutz stated that the plan is to hold Clean Up Day on April 20-21, to align with Earth Day. The hope is to extend the dates and times to allow for additional cleaning. Planning is underway. There will be drop off stations at the Stearns Road Fire Station and on the Green for the entire weekend. A number of local partners have agreed to be part of the event this year in an effort to expand Clean Up Day. Certain roads in Town will be targeted for cleaning by specific groups. Postings on social media will occur shortly and supplies will be available at locations around Town shortly after that. There will likely be a third trailer at Buck Meadow, to align with a proposed invasives workshop on April 20<sup>th</sup>.

- **Trail stewards invasives class update** – *The Commission took up this item at this time.*

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Steve Lutz explained that Buck Meadow has been reserved from 7am-3pm on April 20<sup>th</sup> for a workshop. The primary purpose is to get the trail and nature stewards together as a thank you and review of the year. There will also be an invasives workshop on that day, with help from Lee Gilman, John Harvey, and Marion Kastner. This will mostly deal with identification, along with discussion as to what mechanical items should be done when invasives are found. Steve Lutz asked the Commission to consider invasive sites around Town to expand efforts in once the workshop is complete.

Rich Hart asked if poison ivy maintenance will be included in the workshop, especially around Lindabury Orchard. Steve Lutz stated that the goal for the workshop is to pick 3-5 invasive species for the stewards to become experts in.

- **Integrated Vegetation Management Plan update** – *The Commission took up this item at this time.*

Lee Gilman explained that the Commission should expect a proposal next week from Davey Resource Group, an arm of Davey Tree Experts. Jared Hardner explained that this is a partnership project with DPW, NRPC, and the Amherst Garden Club. NRPC will create an interface on the Town's GIS system specifically for inputting locations of invasive species around Town and when they are treated.

Steve Lutz noted that John Harvey has created something similar with iNaturalist. He asked if this would replace the iNaturalist item that has been created. Lee Gilman explained that the purpose of this work is to integrate efforts and support NRPC while adding data into the Town's GIS system. The two programs can be developed together to support each other. Jared Hardner explained that this information needs to be useful to a contractor doing work in Town. The Commission agreed to continue to discuss this further at a future meeting.

Lee Gilman stated that the mowing plan for the Bertha Rogers plot will start the week after next. Some mowed stump treatment may occur during this process. Jared Hardner stated that he would post information about this on the ACC website and signs would be placed at the property.

- **Agri leases update**

Jared Hardner explained that Christian Littlefield spoke with one farmer and will meet with another on Saturday. The leases should be finalized soon. The Commission will hear more about this at a future meeting.

Steve Lutz stated that the Commission will likely soon have a discussion with Bedford regarding the vision for the trail surface that has been eroded at Joppa Farm.

Rob Clemens stated that the small raze and rebuild on Baboosic Lake that the Commission previously reviewed has been approved by the Planning Board. The Vonderosa development has

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requested to come in front of the Commission at its next meeting. Commission comments regarding the property on Chestnut Hill that has proposed to build a residence mostly in a wetland buffer have been sent to the Community Development Office. Someone may need to be available to speak to the Commission's comments at the ZBA meeting on this topic.

Rob Clemens stated that there are some flooding concerns on the B&M Trail along Pettingale Lane. A complaint was placed with the Town. It was determined that beavers have diverted water across the trail into a marsh which is backing up onto a resident's property. The beaver dam and potential blockages to the B&M culvert will be examined.

Rob Clemens stated that the owner of 12 Baboosic Lake Road where the Commission has an easement is concerned with people entering the area to hike where there is not currently an accessible trail. Rob Clemens stated that he will draft signs stating that the trail is closed.

Rob Clemens explained that the Souhegan River Local Advisory Committee is working on a Souhegan River Corridor Management Plan. This is partially funded by an NRPC grant. The group will meet at NRPC to review specific erosion risks along the Souhegan in Amherst, culverts and their conditions in Town, along with GIS mapping information to support the plan.

Rich Hart stated that on April 6-7 there will be a tree pruning workshop at Lindabury Orchard.

Steve Lutz noted that a trail area of Joe English near the parking lot has significant erosion and a blocked culvert. He is working with trail stewards to see how to remedy this.

Jared Hardner noted that Christian Littlefield has secured a shipping container which can be placed in the DPW yard for Commission storage.

Jared Hardner noted that he will attend the Heritage Commission meeting tomorrow evening to address the train depot item.

- **Vernal pools class update**

John Harvey stated that on April 13<sup>th</sup>, the Chief Scientist from the Dublin Harris Center will conduct an educational session on how to identify and certify vernal pools. There are a couple of potential spots in Buck Meadow that will be reviewed. The hope is to use this to leverage a larger vernal pool workshop throughout Amherst. Charlie Koch, Town Forester, has identified approximately 30 potential vernal pools on conservation lands. This has been added to the GIS data.

**Rob Clemens moved to adjourn at 8:00pm. Seconded by Steve Lutz.**

**Vote: 4-0-0; motion approved.**

*Respectfully submitted,  
Kristan Patenaude*