

TOWN OF AMHERST
Conservation Commission

November 10, 2021

APPROVED

In attendance: Rob Clemens – Chair, John Harvey, Jared Hardner, Rich Hart, Frank Montesanto, Peter Lyon – BOS Ex-Officio, Bill Widmer, Mike Cohen (Alternate, remote), and Bill Stoughton (Alternate).

Staff present: Kristan Patenaude – Recording Secretary (remote).

Chairman Rob Clemens called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm.

ADMINISTRATIVE:

1. Chair Comments

Rob Clemens congratulated Bill Widmer on being named to a full Commission member by the Board of Selectmen. He also noted that he recently received a large donation from Bill & Candice Rapf to the ACC for continued work. The Commission thanked the Rapfs for their very generous donation.

Rob Clemens noted that Christian Littlefield has applied to become an alternate Commissioner. He thanked Mr. Littlefield for his interest in serving. The application will be reviewed by the Board of Selectmen on November 22, 2021.

2. Minutes: October 27, 2021

John Harvey moved to approve the meeting minutes of October 27, 2021, as written. Rich Hart seconded.

Voting: Rob Clemens – aye, John Harvey - aye, Frank Montesanto –aye, Bill Widmer - aye, Rich Hart - aye, and Jared Hardner – abstain; 5-0-1 motion carried.

Bill Stoughton sat for Lee Gilman.

3. Treasurer's Report

The Commission reviewed the Treasurer's Report. Bill Widmer noted that there are three items of revenue yet to be added to the budget, including two Land Use Change Tax (LUCT) fund payments. He asked that the Commission consider additional public relations outreach items for Kristan Patenaude's budget.

Jared Hardner moved to approve the Treasurer's Report, as submitted. Frank Montesanto seconded.

Voting: Rob Clemens – aye, John Harvey - aye, Frank Montesanto –aye, Bill Stoughton – aye, Bill Widmer - aye, Rich Hart - aye, and Jared Hardner – aye; 7-0-0 motion carried unanimously.

4. Planning & Permitting

Bill Stoughton stated that the Planning Board last heard a preliminary application for the Clearview development. There was no action taken at that time. He believes that the applicant

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will come before the Commission to discuss the proposal, as well as the Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for wetland crossings and buffer encroachments.

The Master Plan public forum will take place on Monday, November 15, 2021, at 6:30pm at the Amherst Middle School. All are encouraged to attend and participate.

TOPICS

5. Hollis Conservation Commission Update

The Commission welcomed Joe Connelly and Tom Davies, of the Hollis Conservation Commission.

Joe Connelly explained that the Hollis Conservation Commission uses 100% of the town's LUCT funds to acquire property. The Commission also tries to work proactively with landowners to obtain land in advance of it going on the market.

Tom Davies noted that the Commission contracts out its property monitoring. The Commission has a separate Trails Committee to do necessary trail work. He noted that the Commission also works with a local Fish & Game person regarding what management activities should be done on parcels.

Jared Hardner explained that the Town recently voted to approve an Open Space Warrant Article for \$6M in bonding authority. He asked how the Hollis Conservation Commission convinces their Board of Selectmen to agree on a property price for acquisition.

Tom Davies stated that the Hollis Board of Selectmen recognizes the Conservation Commission for its work and the importance of conservation in town. Joe Connelly stated that the Conservation Commission pursues acquisitions for less than the appraisal amounts and has been successful, even in this market. The Conservation Commission never pays full price for acquisitions and often works with landowners before properties go on the market in order to get the best price. Tom Davies noted that the Conservation Commission has a list of the top 50 properties around town to pursue, based on various criteria.

Bill Stoughton explained that the ACC does its own monitoring of properties. The goal is to monitor each property once every three years.

There was discussion regarding e-bikes. It was noted that the ACC may eventually need to revisit its regulations in regard to motor vehicles on trails, and what constitutes a motor vehicle.

Tom Davies asked how the Commission polices developers to adhere to mitigation practices during construction. Rob Clemens explained that the Commission weighs in on applications to the Planning Board, in regard to potential wetland and stormwater impacts. Bill Stoughton stated that the Commission recently revised its stormwater regulations, requiring 90% sediment, 60% phosphorus, and 60% nitrogen be removed before water on these sites goes into the ground. By

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design, this requires developers to have a stormwater plan that includes State Best Management Practices. It is then up to the Town's Code Enforcement Officer to enforce these items. It is unclear to what extent this is being followed up on. Bill Stoughton stated that the Planning Board is aware of enforcement being an issue and plans to review this in the future.

Rich Hart noted that the ACC has, in the past, recommended that developments near Witches Brook add additional shade trees to keep the water temperature cool, and asked that buffers remain undisturbed. Tom Davies noted that the property owner in Hollis that borders Witches Brook has approached the Conservation Commission asking for protection of the land. This is on the Commission's list of properties.

Bill Stoughton stated that developers often like to place stormwater features in the buffer, which is not good for keeping water temperatures cool. This has also been addressed by the Planning Board.

The ACC thanked the Hollis Conservation Commissioners for their visit. An invitation was extended for an ACC members to attend a Hollis Conservation Commission meeting in the future.

6. Eagle Scout Project Guidance

The Board reviewed the revised document.

John Harvey moved to approve the current draft of the Eagle Scout Policy as submitted. Frank Montesanto seconded.

Discussion:

Bill Widmer noted that he has listed himself as the point of contact for those with questions about the policy or with project proposals.

The Commission thanked Bill Widmer for his work on the policy.

Voting: Rob Clemens – aye, John Harvey - aye, Frank Montesanto –aye, Bill Stoughton – aye, Bill Widmer - aye, Rich Hart - aye, and Jared Hardner – aye; 7-0-0 motion carried unanimously.

7. Trail Steward Program

Rich Hart stated that he sent an initial email to all trail stewards. He will email them again tonight to try to reach any he did not initially hear from. He suggested that the Commission hold a get together for the Trail Stewards in the spring.

8. Other Business

Rich Hart stated that he has been in communication with a teacher at Souhegan High School regarding having Commissioners come in to present to the class about invasive species. The teacher is interested in helping with invasives management around the High School.

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John Harvey noted that the side path on Amherst Street is complete. The crosswalk to connect it to the Atherton Trail will be created next week. John Harvey also noted that the Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee has received its first easement for a public trail on private land. The Committee is working to reroute the B&M Trail around six private properties that bisect where the trail splits. The Committee is interested in anyone who wishes to help with the endeavor.

There was discussion regarding an overlook at Grater Woods. This item will be further discussed with Lee Gilman at a future date.

Rich Hart noted that the Souhegan Watershed Association is looking to new leadership and to reorganize. Anyone interested can attend a meeting on Friday afternoon.

Frank Montesanto stated that he examined the Sawyer Cabin at Peabody Mill Environmental Center. He will complete roof repairs to the structure.

Frank Montesanto moved to expend \$42.96 for 1'x4's to repair the roof of the Sawyer Cabin from the Infrastructure line. John Harvey seconded.

Voting: Rob Clemens – aye, John Harvey - aye, Frank Montesanto –aye, Bill Stoughton – aye, Bill Widmer - aye, Rich Hart - aye, and Jared Hardner – aye; 7-0-0 motion carried unanimously.

Rob Clemens explained that the Bennison memorial bench has been ordered. It will take approximately 9 weeks for the bench to arrive. It will then be placed in a location at Buck Meadow.

Robin Nahill addressed the Commission regarding what she believes is surveying taking place at Pond Parish. Jared Hardner stated that he will go out and take a look, but believes that this may be from some invasives management that is occurring on the property.

9. Non-Public Session per RSA 91-A:3, II, (d) - Consideration of the acquisition, sale, or lease of real or personal property which if discussed in public, would likely benefit a party or parties whose interests are adverse to those of the general community.

Rob Clemens moved to enter Non-Public Session, per RSA 91-A:3, II, (d), at 8:13pm. Bill Stoughton seconded.

Voting: Rob Clemens – aye, John Harvey - aye, Frank Montesanto –aye, Bill Stoughton – aye, Bill Widmer - aye, Rich Hart - aye, and Jared Hardner – aye; 7-0-0 motion carried unanimously.

No actions or decisions were made, and no votes were taken.

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176 **Rob Clemens moved to exit Non-Public Session, at 8:20pm. Jared Hardner**
177 **seconded.**
178 **Voting: Rob Clemens – aye, John Harvey - aye, Frank Montesanto –aye, Bill**
179 **Stoughton – aye, Bill Widmer - aye, Rich Hart - aye, and Jared Hardner – aye; 7-0-0**
180 **motion carried unanimously.**
181
182 **John Harvey moved to authorize the Commission to expend up to \$15,000 for real**
183 **estate appraisals on three individual properties. Rich Hart seconded.**
184 **Voting: Rob Clemens – aye, John Harvey - aye, Frank Montesanto –aye, Bill**
185 **Stoughton – aye, Bill Widmer - aye, Rich Hart - aye, and Jared Hardner – aye; 7-0-0**
186 **motion carried unanimously.**
187
188 **Frank Montesanto moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:24. Bill Stoughton seconded.**
189 **Voting: Rob Clemens – aye, John Harvey - aye, Frank Montesanto –aye, Bill**
190 **Widmer - aye, Rich Hart - aye, and Jared Hardner – aye; 6-0-0 motion carried**
191 **unanimously.**
192
193 **The meeting was adjourned.**
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195
196 *Respectfully submitted,*
197 *Kristan Patenaude*
198
199 Minutes approved: December 8, 2021