

# Amherst Conservation Commission Minutes

April 13, 2014 - Town Hall - Approved

**Meeting called to order** at 7:06 PM by John Harvey

**Attendance:** John Harvey, Jim Bowen, Bill Wichman, Rich Hart, Jack Gleason, Anne Krantz, Alternates Bruce Beckley, Lee Gilman, Selectman Dwight Brew, Guests - Will Ludt, AHC, Chris Buchanan 673-7519, and Paul Indeglia

**Chair remarks - membership** John reported that Gary wished to become an alternate for his next term and that Bruce will move up to full membership. Paul Indeglia ([paul.indeglia@assist-international.org](mailto:paul.indeglia@assist-international.org)), is applying to become a member.

**Minutes** - approved as sent

**Treasurer** – Bill

- Land - \$250,668 (NOT INCLUDING ~\$4,000 stumpage at Caesar's Brook OR \$2500 REBATED FROM LAND ACCOUNT TO ARBOLEDA)  
Gift 11,365.91  
Budget 4,839.00 (to year end June 30) Approved

Bill researched the unknown land line items in the 3013 Town Annual Report

- \$72,000 in a concentration account from the Sports Authority Project –intended for open space
- \$150,000 from Lowe's project for land purchase by town – not specified for conservation. Some of this fund has been spend on a bond payment on land purchase – now about \$110,000.

Discussion – ACC hereby notifies the Selectmen that they want to be a party in the decision making and expenditure of these two open space land accounts.

Dwight will ask Sarah to look up the history of these two agreements – he understands the idea was to remove potential developable land from being developed.

**Planning Board** – Rich announced that Sarah Marchant has resigned to take a similar position with Nashua. Her last day will be May 8. All express dismay at losing her as she has been a wonderful assistance to the Conservation Commission; among other achievements she wrote a successful grant to review and simplify the language of the Town's many layers of wetlands, watershed, aquifer and flood zone ordinances.

The PB heard a design presentation by representatives for Connor Court elderly housing development on the corner of Merrimack Rd and Rt. 122 that now consists of 3 lots totaling 16 acres including Smith Lane and the historic Smith house. Proposed are 2 house lots on Rt 122 and 30 units of elderly housing.

**Plans & Permits** – Jim

Copies of expedited notifications for DPW for routine culvert maintenance in preparation for summer road work on Cricket Corner Rd, County Rd, North Meadow and Boston Post Rd between Cricket Corner and North Meadow. No comments

**Meadow Management** – Jack

Three items:

1. Steve Blaise had some health problems in his cattle and wondered if it had anything to do with the wood ash application to the fields – Jack is researching and has been assured by several university experts that it is very unlikely that the fertilizer had anything to do with it. No more wood ash is needed this year.
2. Upper Bragdon – Experimental Chestnut trees – Jack is going to spread wood chips to control weeds. He plans to use only urea (nitrogen) this year on the fields and needs \$750 that will be reimbursed by Steve after he sell the hay
3. Also on Upper Bragdon, behind the field, Jack wants to continue to clean up the overgrown islands of trees so they can mow tight around the remaining trees to knock down brambles and invasives – a day's work with Mike at \$750.

Bill moved and Jim 2<sup>nd</sup> that ACC allocate \$1,500 for the above 2 requests. Discussion – John asked if this will create more pasture – no it is the abandoned land above the upper pasture. Jim asked if there any plans to clear to old ski hill that is covered with autumn olive; Jack – a future goal. Motion approved.

## Topics

**Conditional Use Permit** for the Larsons, 37 Broadway, Map 25, Lot 61, presented by Tom Carr, Meridian, to raze the existing waterfront house on Baboosic Lake and rebuild with a slightly larger footprint. The redevelopment requires:

1. DES Dredge & Fill permit to rebuild failing sea wall
2. Shorelands Protection Act permit for all disturbances to the ground surface; the existing house and proposed replacement house are within the 50' building set back line.
3. A ZBA variance for the increased size of the footprint, and the new deck that will encroach further into the shoreline setback.

This project comes under the Town's new Watershed/Wetlands zoning ordinance: Section 4.11. The house has a standard well and was hooked up to a community septic several years ago.

This redevelopment will improve present water impact conditions:

1. Replace asphalt driveways with pervious drives
2. Will use pea stone under deck to reduce erosion from rain filtering through the decking
3. Roof gutters will discharge stormwater into a recharge basin area
4. The 12' wide lawn next to the beach will be replanted with shrubs to better infiltrate storm water. Lee suggested that a layer of low plants/groundcovers like native low-bush blueberries would be better than the bark mulch indicated

Tom noted that the present ratio of impervious surfaces is in the 28% range and will increase slightly to the 29% range.

No further comments at this time.

**DPW Permitting Process** – review of current process; Bill is authorized to sign off on behalf of ACC on DES Expedited Permit applications (that require a local conservation commission signature) submitted by DPW for maintenance work along roadsides. He does any necessary investigation of the proposed project. He can complete the review in a day or so thus expedite the process. He is willing to continue to perform this task – all agreed.

**CIP Input** – John asked what ACC wants to request for the next CIP cycle 2015 -2020. Much discussion about the process, the strategy for making long-range requests, etc. ACC can submit multiple requests for various future projects. Rich is going to represent the PB on this committee so will gain insight about the process. Suggested that ACC phrase requests around a goal or outcome. For example: “if the town wants walking paths to connect various sections of town like schools to the Village, we need to allocate \$\$\$\$ to build a footbridge over the Souhegan.”

John will draft a proposal and email for comments.

### **Joe English Highland Trail Bridge**

Bill received an anonymous handwritten note about the failing condition of the bridge – although it is sturdy enough to withstand annual spring flooding. John alerted Rick Crocker who may be able to help bill with repairs as needed.

### **Joe English Trail Challenge** race in May – ALT fund raiser

Need to vote to approve this public use of JE trails. Discussion – how many registered – 40 so far, expect 80 to 100. Race begins and ends at Taylor’s horse farm at top of Mack Hill so no traffic on Brook Road, except for service folks at water stations. Does PMEC know? ALT responsibility to notify. Bruce moved and Rick 2<sup>nd</sup> to permit the road race to use the JE trails. Approved unanimously.

### **Trailhead signs – John**

After further investigation John realized that the poles cost as much as the signs and needs more \$\$\$. Anne moved that John be authorized to spend up to \$2,000 for the signs and posts. 2<sup>nd</sup> and approved. John will check several suppliers in addition to the prison sign shop.

**Trail News** – John invited members to join the “ACC Trails & Places” Facebook page, or join the email distribution list.

Trail Stewards – all are continuing and several new volunteers are ‘generalists’ who help on all trails as needed.

Sarah set up a live GIS interactive web site for Amherst maps that shows ACC parcels and trails – he will send the link again: <http://www.mapgeo.com/nrpcnh/>

Chris Buchanan has been working with John to set up an online document of potential long connecting trails that includes maps with lots to facilitate trail design and then the permitting process for crossings. John suggested that if the Selectmen are interested in this initiative that this is the means to move forward. Questions and discussion about the ‘Safe Routs to School’ project – what sort of progress, should these similar efforts be better coordinated? Contact Rick Katzenberg and Carolyn Mitchell.

**Caesar’s Brook timber harvest** – complete, now need to design trails – use skidder trails?.

John and Trail steward Vic Bennison are going to inspect the situation on April 26<sup>th</sup> and try to develop a plan and recommendations. Bill reminded John that the Souhegan students are often in need of service hours at the end of the year – there is certainly plenty of slash that will need to be removed from any potential trails.

Guest Will Ludt from AHC

1. The two commissions agreed to hold a joint meeting with the state archeologist to look at Peabody Mill and the Grater woods cellar hole – rescheduled for June 14 at 9:00 AM at PMEC; 1 hour indoor instruction , field work at the Mill, lunch and then visit the Grater woods site.
2. The GIS public program cosponsored by AHC & ACC, instructed by Sara Siskavich from NRPC was well attended – 30, and great success.
3. Planning Board Scenic Road public hearing for ACC timber harvest at Haseltine on Austin Rd. is next Wed., April 16. To permit the logging equipment to get access, ACC is asking permission to breach a stone wall and rebuild after. Specifics need to be worked out. Will sees this as an opportunity to demonstrate how two town commissions can work together to achieve an outcome satisfactory to all parties. Andy Oulette who lives on Austin Rd. will represent the AHC.

### **Round Table**

**Bruce** asked if anyone knows anything about the Chuck Bacon Library Fund that was established when he died, for the purpose of buying environmental/nature books every two years or so. He also asked who monitors the maintenance the pervious parking lot at the Sports Authority Mall. He mentioned that the city of Manchester has closed trails near the reservoir to horses.

**Rich** –It is salmon release time again and he will be again working with school groups – volunteers are always welcome

The pruning workshop at Lindabury orchard had 14 paying clients = \$70. Lee attended too. Scientific American magazine just had an article about a DNA technique for developing American chestnut trees immune to the disease.

**Anne** found her first tick of the season crawling on her hand last week. She passed out tick & mosquito prevention posters that she got free – Jim will put up at trailheads. Anne will get more of the plastic tick removal spoons to pass out on the Fourth.

**Jack** – the beaver deceiver is working well and also serves as a fish ladder!

UNH professor Matt Tarr is presenting a Vernal Pool program in May – Jack will send details.

**Lee** – is finding small isolated outbreaks of knotweed that are hidden by tall weed later in the season – so now is a good time to be looking. If any found, get a GPS reading so he can apply for a permit to treat later.

Meeting adjourned,  
Respectfully submitted,  
Anne Krantz,  
Secretary

