



**Town of Amherst, NH
Conservation Commission
FINAL MINUTES**

Barbara Landry Conference Room

Wednesday, 14 March 2018, 7:00 PM

*Conservation Commission members in attendance were: Rob Clemens, John Harvey,
Jared Hardner, Vick Bennison, Peter Lyon, and William Widmer - Alternate.
Also in attendance: Kristan Patenaude*

I. Call to Order

John Harvey called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

II. Chair Comments

Chairman Rob Clemens explained that all of the warrant articles associated with the ACC passed. He thanked everyone for their contribution and help.

Mr. Clemens stated that the Woods Forum on March 3rd was a very informative meeting. Ethan Belair was able to give the property owners that attended some good background on general forest management.

III. Minutes (from 2/14 and 2/28)

A MOTION was made by Mr. Bennison and SECONDED by Mr. Harvey to approve the meeting minutes from February 14, 2018 as submitted.

Voting: all aye; motion carried unanimously.

A MOTION was made by Mr. Harvey and SECONDED by Mr. Bennison to approve the meeting minutes from February 28, 2018 as submitted.

Voting: 5 ayes, 1 abstention. Motion carried.

IV. Treasurer's Report

Mr. Harvey submitted the Treasurer's Report as of February 28, 2018. He explained that there are 2 issues with the invasives account. There was a bill from VCS (Vegetative Control Services) for \$2,800 from August 2017 for management at Lindabury. This was an approved expenditure from the previous fiscal year, but the bill came in and was paid in the current fiscal year. After it was paid, \$1,200 was left in the line. There are now 2 more bills

46 from VCS that need to be paid, but there's not enough money in the line to do so. The other
47 issue with these bills is that the expenditures were approved at a meeting last October, but
48 the funding source to pay from was not specified in the minutes.

49
50 The group discussed the ACC's procedure for following up with service providers in order
51 to get invoices on time.

52 Mr. Harvey suggested using the meadow maintenance line, which has some unused money,
53 to fund the expenditures that can't be funded from the invasives line after it is drained.

54
55 *Mr. Lee Gilman entered the meeting.*

56
57 *A MOTION was made by Mr. Harvey and SECONDED by Mr. Hardner to pay two VCS*
58 *invoices (\$1,920 and \$2,384) out of the town budget - invasives budget line and the*
59 *meadow maintenance line, as long as the line item transfer is approved.*

60 *Voting: 6 ayes, 1 nay. Motion carried.*

61
62 Mr. Harvey explained that he has received an invoice for fliers for the ACC's warrant
63 article outreach printed from ACE Printing and an invoice from Ms. Kristan Patenaude for
64 her work on the warrant article outreach items.

65
66 *A MOTION was made by Mr. Harvey and SECONDED by Mr. Hardner to accept the*
67 *invoices from ACE Printing for \$62.50 and from Kristan Patenaude for \$200.00, to be*
68 *funded from the education and outreach line.*

69 *Voting: all aye; motion carried unanimously.*

70
71 Mr. Clemens suggested that, in the future, all vendor proposals have payment terms clearly
72 understood by both parties, and that the ACC be better on top of their vendors.

73 74 **V. Planning and Permits**

75 Mr. Clemens explained that a wetlands permit application was submitted through the Town
76 Clerk to DES. This application is to construct a 900ft² backyard pond at 36 Buckridge
77 Drive. This will go through a standard review by DES.

78
79 In response to a question from Mr. Gilman, Mr. Clemens stated that this will require a
80 dredging of the vernal pool that is currently located there. Whether the wet area is actually
81 a vernal pool or a wetland was then discussed by the group.

82
83 Mr. Clemens stated that the ACC can sign off saying they have reviewed the application
84 and acknowledge it having a minimal impact. They then waive their right to intervene and
85 state that they have no objection to the proposal. The group agreed to this.

86
87 Mr. Clemens explained that Mr. Richard Hart will probably be out until May recovering.
88 The Planning Board has asked if the ACC has plans to replace him during the interim for
89 his place as an ACC liaison to their group.

90

91 *A MOTION was made by Mr. Clemens and SECONDED by Mr. Harvey to name Mr. Vick*
92 *Bennison the ACC's interim liaison to the Planning Board.*
93 *Voting: all aye; motion carried unanimously.*
94

95 **VI. Girl Scout Bronze Award Proposal**

96 Mr. Clemens reviewed with the group the Girl Scout troop project for the Silver Award.
97 The troop visited the locations with Mr. Montesanto and Mr. Ethan Belair and decided on a
98 good spot for the photo post. The group will start the project in the spring.
99

100 There is another Girl Scout troop looking to get their Bronze Award. They are hoping to
101 promote composting in Amherst as part of an outreach program. They've asked the ACC if
102 they can use the trail kiosks as a place to educate the public on composting. Mr. Clemens
103 has suggested that they might talk to the Garden Club or DPW instead. Mr. Hardner
104 explained that the DPW held a great meeting regarding recycling in town and what's going
105 into the transfer station. He suggested connecting the troop with a contact at DPW.
106

107 Mr. Clemens stated that he reached out to Bruce Berry regarding the possible town-wide
108 clean-up day, and he has bags and trailers that can be used. Mr. Bill Widmer explained that
109 he would reach out to a local contact, Dave Brown, to get the ball rolling for this event.
110

111 The group discussed, with regret, the retirement of Bruce Berry.
112

113 **VII. 2018 Warrant Article Outcome and Next Steps**

114 Mr. Clemens gave his thanks to Ms. Patenaude for her help with the outreach for the
115 warrant articles. He explained that, starting April 1, the ACC will start seeing the other half
116 of the LUCT funds roll in.
117

118 The group discussed the process of starting work on the Forest Management Plan. They
119 discussed the possibility of putting the project out to bid. Mr. Hardner explained that, as
120 one of the criteria to bid, he would like to see a finished product. Mr. Hardner will discuss
121 the bid process with Town Administrator O'Mara and find out when the other LUCT funds
122 will be available.
123

124 Mr. Clemens explained that, in regards to the invasives control projects at Bragdon and
125 Great Meadow, once the state decides that the VCS rates are ok, the town can also use
126 those terms. Mr. Gilman concurred that the ACC can sole source with them if the town
127 does ok the rates. Mr. Clemens asked that the scope of work at Great Meadow be reviewed
128 so that the project can start moving forward. Mr. Gilman stated that he will schedule an
129 inspection at Bragdon as the scope for that project is not yet known.
130

131 Mr. Clemens stated that he wanted there to be an outreach loop ahead of and during these
132 projects, so that the public is aware of how the funds they voted on are being used.
133

134 Mr. Clemens explained that he will follow up with Mr. Craig Fraley in regards to the
135 portion of funds for the Recreation Department.
136

Mr. Clemens stated that he's hoping for there to be an Invasives Plan, similar to the Forest Management Plan. This will give a more holistic look at the invasives problem in Amherst and will identify how the ACC will address the problem going forward.

Mr. Frank Montesanto entered the meeting.

Mr. Harvey and Mr. Hardner agreed to help Mr. Gilman begin to create an Invasives Plan.

The Commission discussed researching and requesting grant funds. Mr. Hardner explained that he believes the focus should be on spending the funds available to them and executing on their projects.

VIII. Trail Development & Use

Mr. Clemens explained that there will be a Souhegan Sustainability Fair in Wilton on April 14, from 10am-4pm. The ACC would like to bring their trail brochure to distribute there.

The group reviewed the draft brochure created by Ms. Patenaude. The Commission requested that 500 brochures be printed by the next ACC meeting, on April 11.

Mr. Hardner explained that, as part of the new trail standards, there should be a general discussion on new trails, then the area can be flagged, and then a second Commissioner can walk to route to confirm it.

Mr. Harvey and Mr. Clemens stated that the new trail standards document should be displayed clearly on the website.

1. Mr. Hardner proposed a new trail in the Betty Arnold forest that will support a longer-term plan to upgrade the existing trail portfolio to be in compliance with the new ACC Trails Standard. The Commission approved a preliminary routing concept for the new trail, starting at the junction of the Lorden Trail and the Bicentennial Trail, with a return loop on the ACC property called "Lorden 2."
2. Mr. Hardner brought before the Commission an idea from Will Ludt, who would like to put in a trail off of the Josiah Parker trail, near the corn crib. The group discussed this plan and agreed to allow Mr. Ludt to flag the trail and then review it.

Mr. Clemens explained that there is a trail in the woods behind some properties in The Fells. He would like to back out that trail a bit so that there is more of a barrier between it and the houses. He will flag the slight reroute.

3. Mr. Hardner explained that a new trail has been built on the transfer station property, with permission from DPW. It connects the Bicentennial Trail to the Arnold property, which is currently in the process of being acquired by ACC. Once the Arnold property has been acquired, the trail will continue through it, eventually reaching Austin Rd. across from the Betty Arnold Forest parking area.

Mr. Hardner explained to the Commission that all of the donation money for the trail groomer has been deposited and a check has been cut by the town to purchase it. He also explained that there is enthusiasm from people in town regarding items like this. People may be willing to donate more money depending on the execution of projects like the trail groomer.

IX. Forest Management

Mr. Widmer explained that when the chestnut trees are planted in May, he is hoping to have a small group of teenagers/older children to help dig the holes. He will try to get the boy and girls scouts involved.

The Commission discussed providing outreach materials on emerald ash borer to the public. They agreed to try to put an article in the Citizen around April.

X. Non-Public Session pursuant to NH RSA 91-A:3 II (1)

A MOTION was made by Mr. Gilman and SECONDED by Mr. Hardner to enter into non-public session. By roll call vote Widmer: yes, Lyon: yes, Gilman: yes, Clemens: yes, Bennison: yes, Harvey: yes, Hardner: yes, Montesanto: yes.

A MOTION was made by Mr. Harvey and SECONDED by Mr. Hardner to exit non-public session.

Voting: all aye; motion carried unanimously.

A MOTION was made by Mr. Clemens and SECONDED by Mr. Bennison to seal the non-public minutes of the March 14, 2018 meeting for 180 days.

Voting: all aye; motion carried unanimously.

XI. Round Table

Mr. Gilman stated that next Tuesday, March 20th, is the NH Arborists Association spring conference in Concord. The NH Landscape Association's spring conference is on March 21, in Manchester.

Mr. Clemens stated that the Saving Special Places conference is on April 7th. The Souhegan Sustainability Fair is on April 14th at the Wilton high school.

Mr. Harvey asked the group for suggestions on what to do with 5-10 cords of wood that are being cut from the edges of meadows around town, as part of the grasslands plan.

Mr. Montesanto stated that the Girl Scout troop sent him pictures of the bench they're hoping to design for their photo post spot.

A MOTION was made by Mr. Clemens and SECONDED by Mr. Harvey to adjourn the meeting at 10:08p.m.

Voting: all aye; motion carried unanimously.

229 *Respectfully submitted,*
230 *Kristan Patenaude*
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