

Town of Amherst
Conservation Commission
FINAL Minutes
Wednesday June 13, 2018

Present: Rob Clemens, John Harvey, Jared Hardner, Peter Lyon, Rich Hart, Vick Bennison, Michael Cohen, Frank Montesanto, Lee Gilman, Wes Robertson
Guests: Members of the Amherst Heritage Commission (Chair: Will Lundt)
Chair: Rick Katzenburg, Amherst Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee

I. **Call to Order:** Rob Clemens called meeting to order at 7:00PM

II. **Minutes** for May 9 and May 23 were accepted

III. **Treasurer's Report:** (see attached) -Presentation of report by John Harvey

- a) \$43,500 approved warrant article funds from the Town were transferred to the Conservation Fund which now has \$646,966.60
- b) As of May 31, 2018, there was approximately \$12,000 in this current year's budget which is planned to be spent according to the proposed plan attached.

Vote to approve the proposed recommendations, which leaves approximately \$450. (It was approved that these funds will be used for materials for trail blazes)

IV. **Planning and Permit Request** - Matt Chisholm: wetland permit application for shoreline stabilization project, 17 Greenwood Rd. Merrimack, (Map/lot 24-72, Amherst)

- a. Mr. Chisholm presented a plan requesting expedited approval for stabilizing 50' shoreline in front of his property on Baboosic Lake. He was seeking signature from the Commission so he can proceed with the application for expedited approval from DES. Currently there is a wall which is failing and shoreline is eroding into wetland and lake.

Commissioners raised concerns:

- 1) If we sign off on an expedited permit, it reduces the time allowed by DES to review the permit, and they will work only off the paperwork submitted to them by this application. We waive our right to provide formal input and get resolution to specific concerns, if we have them, from the applicant. Shouldn't we preserve our right to comment?
- 2) Is precedent being set if approved for additional walls to be built by other property owners; wouldn't this have cumulative impact on the entire wetland? Isn't our obligation as a Commission to protect the wetland and assure that there are other alternatives less impactful presented, i.e. bio-engineered alternative?

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- 3) After considerable deliberation and with recognition that the change proposed was thought to be “negligible,” *the Commission voted 5-2 in favor of the expedited application.*

IV.V. Topics: 1) Trail Development and Use

- a. Trail Promotion Proposal - Rick Katzenburg, Chair Amherst Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee

With the intent to work closer with the ACC, Rick presented on the work of the Advisory Committee, whose interest is to catalogue and promote trails through videos. Their goal is to build a basis of support to construct trails in the Town of Amherst and for safe pedestrian trails for bicycles and walking. Information about the Committee and the work of its subcommittees are on the Town website. On June 28th @ 7:00 there is a report to the public on the work of the Advisory Committee. It will take place in the AMS cafeteria. The ACC was supportive of the Advisory Committee and saw that there are a number of complimentary goals, including the upcoming July 4th activities on the Green that can lead to greater collaboration. Some thoughts include: use and education about trails promoting health, recreation, protection, safety and stewardship.

Presentation by Will Lundt, Chair, Amherst Heritage Commission:

Will promoted the potential of building an alliance and working closer on a number of projects. He noted that there are a number of complementary activities including: Pond Parish, Peabody Mill signage and July 4th education initiatives. Potential kiosk for Lindabury Apple orchard and Great Meadow.

Jared will coordinate the 4th of July activities for the ACC and will coordinate with Rick and Will so that the visitors will see the comprehensive and complementary work of the respective organizations.

The Commission recognizes the work of the other Committees and will continue to find common agendas for collaboration.

- b. **Highland Bridge Project** - Beams are coming on 6/20. Rain day for work is 6/21. Frank needs volunteers to work on decking for bridge on 7/7 and 7/8. Contact Frank for details.

The Boy Scout project on Pond Parish is complete and has been presented to their Board. The Girl Scout project on the Hemlock Trail is also complete.

- 2) **Grassland Management** - John presented on his meeting with Matt Turner, UNH Professor, who walked the grasslands with him to begin to catalogue the land, bird habitat and determine a schedule for cutting. A plan was presented and accepted by the Commission. Generally, mowing will be done in smaller sections and rotation schedule established. Trails will also be mowed on the current schedule.

Grater Woods parcels transfer from the Amherst Land Trust is in the planning stage. *Vote to move forward on the transfer of the parcels, accept ownership and management, and develop a payment schedule was unanimous.* Rob Clemens and Mike Cohen will work with the Land Trust.

VI. Roundtable

Rob: Sky Meadow - deeds will be finalized by the end of June, conservation restrictions approved.

LaBelle plans were adjusted based on ACC input to better address wetland concerns; Moved and reduced size of basins.

Regional Open space meeting held in Milford. There was a good exchange of issues, many of which were common to all towns.

Vick: Funds approved to buy supplies for blazes

Question raised about a permanent name for "Currier Property"

John: Noted that in Lindabury - grassland is filled with poison ivy

Wes: Out walking land at the Flume-motorized activity near brook.

Recommends the Commission consider building trail to Flume

Outreach to adjacent homeowner's association to help residents

understand they cannot use motorized vehicles on conservation lands.

At next meeting we will continue discussion.

Jared: no follow-up on Taylor easement

Completed extension of Lorden Trail

Volunteer Day was successful - 22 volunteers from Fidelity attended

Need to make decision about Bruce Beckley commemorative sign plan which needs to be finalized.

Potential for a new diorama.

This should be an agenda item at the next meeting.

Rich: Needs pictures of people hiking for poster for the July 4th events

VII. Meeting adjourned: 10:10PM