



Town of Amherst, NH

Conservation Commission

Draft Minutes

Barbara Landry Meeting Room

Wednesday, September 12, 2018

1 *Conservation Commission members in attendance were: Rob Clemens, Peter Lyon, Vick*
2 *Bennison, John Harvey, Lee Gilman, William Widmer, Michael Cohen, Jared*
3 *Hardner, Rich Hart, and Wes Robertson.*
4 *Also in attendance: Kristan Patenaude*
5

6 **I. Call to Order**

7 Rob Clemens called the meeting to order at 6:59 PM.
8

9 **II. Chair Comments**

10 Chairman Clemens welcomed members of the Bedford Conservation Commission, the
11 Bedford Land Trust, and the Hollis Conservation Commission to the meeting.
12

13 *Jeanene Procopis – Bedford Land Trust*

14 *Beth Evarts – Bedford Conservation Commission & Bedford Land Trust*

15 *Bill Coder – Bedford Land Trust*

16 *Joe Connelly – Hollis Conservation Commission*

17 *Aaron Rudolf – ACC trail steward*

18 *Bill Stoughton – possible new alternate for the ACC*
19

20 Mr. Clemens explained that the Town Administrator, Jim O'Mara, is leaving his position in
21 town, effective September 28th. There will be an open house for him on September 27th from
22 4-6pm. The group discussed the interim process until a replacement Town Administrator is
23 hired.

24 Mr. Clemens stated that Mr. Eric Hahn was formally named the Director of Public Works at
25 the last Board of Selectmen meeting.

26 There will be an NHACC meeting on November 3rd.
27

28 **III. Review of Meeting Minutes**

29 *A MOTION was made by Mr. Harvey and SECONDED by Mr. Robertson to accept the*
30 *meeting minutes from June 13, 2018 as amended.*

31 *Voting: all aye; motion carried unanimously.*
32

33 *A MOTION was made by Mr. Hardner and SECONDED by Mr. Gilman to accept the*
34 *meeting minutes from July 11, 2018 as written.*

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

36
37 *The Commission agreed to table the minutes from the August public hearing and non-public*
38 *session until the next meeting.*

39 40 **IV. Treasurer's Report**

41 Mr. Harvey presented his Treasurer's Report (attached to the end of these minutes). He
42 explained that the Conservation Fund amount is up due to the LUCT deposits made. At the
43 end of August, the Conservation Fund was reduced due to the purchase of the Sky Meadow
44 property.

45
46 *A MOTION was made by Mr. Harvey and SECONDED by Mr. Hardner to pay the Currier*
47 *invoices, totaling \$2,138.18, from the FY18 encumbered "water crossing" line.*

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

49
50 *A MOTION was made by Mr. Harvey and SECONDED by Mr. Robertson to pay for the trail*
51 *signs/trail warnings, totaling \$457.65, from the FY18 encumbered "signage" line.*

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

53
54 Mr. Harvey presented to the group full color, UV-resistant NRPC map boards that could be
55 placed on each kiosk. These cost roughly \$40 each and will not discolor or fail.

56
57 *A MOTION was made by Mr. Harvey and SECONDED by Mr. Bennison to pay \$500 to*
58 *NRPC for Sara Siskavich to help create these maps, from the FY19 "signage" line.*

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

60
61 *A MOTION was made by Mr. Harvey and SECONDED by Mr. Robertson to allot up to \$450*
62 *for 10 new maps signs to be printed for kiosks in town, from the FY19 "signage" line.*

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

64 65 **V. Planning & Permits**

66 Mr. Hart stated that the Planning Board had two public hearings last week. One was
67 regarding extending power lines to reach a new 4 home subdivision on County Road. The
68 Board is still discussing the best way for this plan to progress.

69 The second hearing was regarding the town's Capital Improvement Plan.

70
71 Mr. Clemens stated that Planning Board Chairman, Mr. Dell Orfano, has an interest in the
72 ACC presenting the Conservation Plan to the Planning Board. He also would like for the
73 Commission to be involved and contribute to the discussion of the Master Plan. Mr. Clemens
74 has offered the Commission's services to the process.

75 76 **VI. Grasslands Management** 77 **Mowing Priorities and Schedule**

78
79 Mr. Harvey reviewed the mowing schedule with the Commission.

81 In response to a question from Mr. Clemens, Mr. Harvey explained that the fields next to the
82 Souhegan high school were allowed to go fallow this year.

84 **VII. Trail Development and Use**

85 **Sky Meadow Trails**

86
87 Mr. Hardner explained that the Bill Long Trail, for Opportunity Networks, is going to be put
88 in place tomorrow afternoon at Sky Meadow. The other trails are complete thanks to the
89 Teen Adventure Camp at PMEC.

91 **Pond Parish Bog Bridges**

92
93 Mr. Clemens explained that there are 2 bog bridges that were worked on as part of an Eagle
94 Scout project. The bridges look good and cross two wet areas there.

96 **Trail Steward Status**

97
98 Mr. Bennison stated that there are currently about 40 trail stewards, who all seem to be quite
99 active in the town. More trail stewards are always welcome!

101 **VIII. Amherst/Bedford Joint Interests**

102
103 Joe Connelly, of the Hollis Conservation Commission, explained that each of their members
104 attend meetings of the bordering towns' Conservation Commissions in order to exchange
105 ideas.

106
107 Mr. Harvey explained that between Amherst and Bedford, there is an area totaling 841 acres
108 –in the Joppa Hill, Huckabee, Pulpit Rock, and Flume areas. Hopefully the two groups can
109 look at trail development, signage, and etc.

110
111 In response to a question from Mr. Clemens, Ms. Beth Evarts (Chair BCC and member of the
112 Bedford Land Trust) stated that the BCC was awarded a grant 3 years ago, from which they
113 have just completed the trail work in the Pulpit Rock/Brook area. Ms. Evarts explained that
114 the BCC has started to seriously go after grants in the last 5 years in order to get professional
115 work done on their trails.

116
117 The two groups discussed a map in the kiosk at the Pulpit Road parking lot that needs to be
118 updated – probably by the Bedford Conservation Commission.

119 The groups also discussed the importance of walking the land together, in order to see the
120 transitions between the towns. Ms. Evarts noted that an overall aerial map of the area would
121 be useful in connecting all of the dots.

122
123 The Commissions talked about the fact that their trailways could connect all the way through
124 Amherst and Bedford, and even up into Goffstown.

In response to a question from Mr. Harvey, Ms. Evarts stated that the Bedford Conservation Commission doesn't currently have a trail standards document. They would like to review Amherst's in order to exchange ideas.

The groups discussed the fact that Bedford does not allow wheeled or motor vehicles on their trails; this is part of the conservation easement deed and runs in perpetuity. In order to work together on connecting their trailways, Amherst would need to make it clear that cyclists cannot use Bedford's trails.

In response to a question from Mr. Clemens, Ms. Evarts stated that Bedford has general language regarding mowing practices – for example, that fields will be kept open and not allow to regenerate into fields. This was recorded at the same time as their Land Management Plan, in 2005.

Mr. Harvey explained that the ACC has consulted a biologist from UNH regarding managing the town's grasslands in order to help the bird and rabbit populations increase. These talks specifically revolved around when and how often to mow.

The two groups discussed the issue of the hemlock tree infestation. Mr. Bill Coder explained that over 50% of the trees in the Pulpit Rock area are hemlock trees, making the possibility of forest cutting in this area limited and impractical. The group plans to meet with the County Forester to discuss their options in October. Mr. Gilman explained that most of the hemlock that was cut down in Amherst was milled locally. Mr. Harvey stated that there were about 15-20 acres of hemlock clear cut in town, which has thus released the area for laurel to grow and cottontail rabbits to re-inhabit.

Mr. Frank Montesanto entered the meeting.

The groups reviewed what to discuss at future meetings – such as signage, walking perimeters/junctions, invasives, etc.

IX. Round Table

Mr. Hart stated that there are signs up around town for the Ciderfest. It will be held on September 29th at Lindabury Orchard.

Mr. Montesanto explained that mowing will take place at the Orchard tomorrow morning, by the Recreation Department. Vegetation Control will spray there the 1st week of October.

Mr. Gilman stated that Bragdon will be sprayed the last week in September, the Beaver Brook will be done the 1st weekend in October. In mid-November the mechanical Phase I will be completed at Great Meadow.

Mr. Clemens explained that Lot 688, a 5 acre parcel which was owned by Jack Gleason, is in the process of being made into a conservation easement. There will need to be a public hearing with the Board of Selectmen to accept this.

Mr. Hardner stated that there will be about 10 Souhegan sophomore students doing their community service hours on Friday by helping to move the Storybook trail. In regards to updating the Forest Management Plan, Charlie Koch has been out in the field getting data and uploading it. This will become a very interesting tool and one which the ACC might use to engage other towns with.

Mr. Bennison explained that he received a concerned letter regarding the Joppa reroute. He went in and blazed as much as he could, and put wood across the old trail, as a temporary solution.

Mr. Robertson stated that he has a trail day with some of the town campers this summer, and they were able to finish the Sky Meadow trail.

Ms. Patenaude stated that she received a message from a woman interested in knowing when the next Town-wide Cleanup Day will be. She's interested in getting Cub Scout Pack #613 involved. The ACC discussed having another cleanup day next spring, close to Earth Day.

A MOTION was made by Mr. Robertson and SECONDED by Mr. Bennison to adjourn the meeting at 9:19p.m.

Voting: all aye; motion carried unanimously.

*Respectfully submitted,
Kristan Patenaude*

215 **Finance and Asset Manager Report**

216 **As Of August 31, 2018**

217

218 **Treasury**

- 219 • **Conservation Fund: \$550,900.82**
- 220 ◦ Withdrawal (Sky Meadow purchase): \$135,985.36
- 221 ◦ Deposit (Interest): \$225.83
- 222 • **Town Budget FY19: \$21,957.21**
- 223 ◦ **PLUS Encumbrances: \$4,651.83**
- 224 ▪ Water Crossing: \$2,176.00
- 225 ▪ Signage: \$882.09
- 226 ▪ Kiosk: \$981.74
- 227 • **Gift:** Statement not received but previous balance: \$7,969.94
- 228

229 **Contracts, Leases and Purchases**

- 230 • Mike Riccitelli, mowing and brush hog services
- 231

232 **Assets**

- 233 • No transactions
- 234

235 **FY19 Town Budget Accounts**

| | | |
|-----|--------------------------------|--------|
| 236 | Education & Training/Prof Dev: | \$1000 |
| 237 | Land Management: | \$3450 |
| 238 | Meadow Maintenance: | \$5000 |
| 239 | Water Crossing Maintenance: | \$3000 |
| 240 | Invasives Mitigation: | \$4000 |
| 241 | Signage: | \$2195 |
| 242 | Kiosk: | \$1000 |
| 243 | Dues & Subscriptions: | \$ 700 |
| 244 | Educational Outreach: | \$ 500 |
| 245 | PT Wages, SS, Medicare: | \$1213 |

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