



Town of Amherst, NH

Conservation Commission

Draft Minutes

Barbara Landry Meeting Room

Wednesday, November 14, 2018

1 *Conservation Commission members in attendance were: Rob Clemens, John Harvey, Lee*
2 *Gilman, Jared Hardner, Vick Bennison, Bill Widmer, Rich Hart, Bill Stoughton,*
3 *and Peter Lyon.*

4 *Also in attendance: Kristan Patenaude*
5

6 **I. Call to Order**

7 Rob Clemens called the meeting to order at 6:57 PM.
8

9 **II. Chair Comments**

10 Chairman Clemens thanked Ms. Patenaude and the rest of the Commission for their work in
11 getting an article into the Citizen regarding the work in the Great Meadow. There was also a
12 nice article in the Cabinet for the Bill Long memorial and dedication.
13

14 Mr. Hardner stated that he and Mr. Harvey gave a presentation on the Commission's
15 Conservation Plan at the NHACC meeting. They received many questions from other towns
16 that attended the meeting and most were excited about their planning process for it. The
17 Commission thanked the Board of Selectmen, the Recreation Department, and the
18 Department of Public Works for their help in the planning process and their overall support.
19

20 **III. Review of Meeting Minutes**

21 *A MOTION was made by Mr. Harvey and SECONDED by Mr. Hardner to approve the*
22 *meeting minutes from October 10, 2018, as written.*

23 *Voting: all aye; motion carried unanimously.*
24

25 **IV. Treasurer's Report**

26 Mr. Harvey presented the Treasurer's Report.
27

28 *A MOTION was made by Mr. Bennison and SECONDED by Mr. Hart to accept the*
29 *Treasurer's Report as submitted.*

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

32 **V. Planning & Permits**

33 Mr. Hart explained that, at the Planning Board meeting last week, a new development off of
34 Route 122, where the old car show/flea market used to be was discussed. There will be a site
35 walk there tomorrow morning.

36
37 Mr. Hart explained that he has been thinking about how to deal with the impact of climate
38 change, within working on the Master Plan. He suggested the Commission consider building
39 artificial vernal pools on their land. This change to wetland areas could allow more water to
40 be held for longer periods of time. He also suggested the town look at adding electric
41 vehicles and solar panels in order to become a net zero energy town.

42
43 Mr. Clemens stated that he and Mr. Hardner pitched the Conservation Plan as a template for
44 the Master Plan and received back past Master Plans to review.

45
46 **a) Shoreland/Conditional Use Permit (Map 6, Lot 8) – Tom Carr, Meridian Svcs**

47
48 Tom Carr explained that the owner of Map 6, Lot 8 transferred the land to Brett Vaughn and
49 put a conservation easement on some of it. There are (2) two acre lots that have been
50 preserved outside of the easement. There will be 41 acres in a conservation easement,
51 managed by the Amherst Land Trust. There is a trail agreement from the next property over,
52 that will go through the Vaughn's property and end up on Baboosic Lake Road.

53
54 The proposed conditional use permit will include a new house, the existing shed being
55 removed, and eventually the removal of 2 barns on the property. There will also be a new
56 drilled well and a new septic system, which will be a huge improvement to the property.
57 There will be a net increase of 1,792ft² for impervious surface, which will be about a 0.9%
58 increase. With the conditional use permit they are really trying to improve the property –
59 there will be new drains and drip edges around the house in order to better filter the storm
60 water there.

61
62 In response to a question from Mr. Harvey, Mr. Carr explained that there will only be a slight
63 impact to the shoreline within the 50' zone, due to the retaining walls.

64
65 In response to a question from Mr. Clemens, Mr. Carr stated that there will not be any
66 upgrades made to the existing dock.

67
68 Mr. Carr explained that the wetlands permit is being expedited due to minimal impact. The
69 12" culvert that runs under the driveway has no history of flooding or backing up, but the lan
70 is to expand it to be 18". The boulder headwall will be reused.

71
72 *A MOTION was made by Mr. Hardner and SECONDED by Mr. Harvey to sign the expedited*
73 *wetlands permit for Map 6, Lot 8 as presented.*
74 *Voting: all aye; motion carried unanimously.*

75
76 Mr. Carr stated that he will bring the conditional use permit back to the Planning Board with
77 the understanding that the ACC is in approval of it.

78 **VI. LIDAR Applications for Mapping Cultural Features – Will Ludt**
79

80 Mr. Will Ludt, Chairman of the Heritage Commission, explained that he has been working
81 with other towns and DHR to use LIDAR imagery to identify and catalogue stone walls
82 throughout the town. The group received a \$14,500 grant to work on this project, which is
83 currently at the end of its development and almost ready to go live. Mr. Ludt is hoping to find
84 volunteers from the community to be trained in identifying, documenting, and validating
85 stone walls in town using the LIDAR technology. A training session with NRPC will happen
86 in January, thanks to a \$300 CLG grant. The goal in town will be to identify stone walls on
87 public land and private land, but the later will only be done with landowner permission.
88

89 The Commission discussed that some of their trail stewards would probably like to volunteer.
90 Mr. Ludt agreed to send the link for the LIDAR software to Mr. Clemens for the ACC to
91 review.
92

93 **VII. Trapping Report and Permit Request – Brandon Dubois**
94

95 Mr. Brandon Dubois shared this 2017/18 fur trapping report with the Commission. He
96 submits a full report to Fish & Game every year. He does not release any of the animals he
97 traps. He stated that there appears to be a large abundance of beavers in the Souhegan River.
98 There also are a number of coyotes in the fields by the Souhegan River where he traps.
99

100 In response to a question from Mr. Clemens, Mr. Dubois stated that he traps locally in
101 Amherst, Mont Vernon and northern Vermont. He explained that trapping is important for
102 keeping populations in check and for disease control.
103

104 In response to a question from Mr. Harvey, Mr. Dubois stated that he used to trap at Joppa
105 Hill Farm and had great success trapping beaver there, but people started messing with his
106 traps, and so he pulled out from that area.
107

108 Mr. Dubois stated that he is happy to work with landowners to trap animals in order to
109 remove them from their property. Mr. Dubois agreed to drop off copies of the permits he
110 holds in Amherst to Mr. Clemens for review.
111

112 Mr. Clemens explained that trappers are required to stay 15' off of recognized trails. The
113 Commission discussed getting better population data on the species in town.
114

115 **VIII. Trail Use and Development**

116 **Joppa Hill Beaver Problems and Trail Re-Routes**
117

118 Mr. Bennison stated that the action plan for Joppa Hill states that there are to be no trails
119 across the fields there. Thus, Mr. Bennison rerouted one trail along the edge of the field and
120 put out signs explaining why people should not cross the field.
121

Mr. Bennison explained that there is a wetland area on the Pulpit Brook Trail that appears to have quite a bit of beaver action as the water level is getting quite high there and beaver activity has been seen. The beaver deceiver in the area was built about 5-7 years ago and was working well at keeping the pond level down, but now the water is going over the trail in 2 or 3 places. It's possible that the beavers heard this water running and made a dam there.

In response to a question from Mr. Clemens, Mr. Harvey stated that the level of the beaver pond there is up to almost 2'.

Mr. Dubois explained to the Commission that the beavers will now continue to dam at this site unless they are removed. He suggested taking out the deceiver, putting in a new culvert with raised drains, blowing out the dam, and trapping the beavers there annually.

The Commission discussed that the issue on this trail is unusual and there haven't been problems in the past. These new water issues could be due to the increased rainfall this year. The group agreed to give time for the waters to reestablish in order to identify the true problem on this trail.

The Commission discussed the trapping permits in regards to certain private properties adjacent to town properties that don't wish for trapping to occur on their land. The group agreed to review the permits on a case-by-case basis to determine which should be approved.

A MOTION was made by Mr. Widmer and SECONDED by Mr. Bennison to authorize the approval of Mr. Brandon Dubois' trapping permits, excluding for the canoe port on Route 122 and any other properties with restrictions.

Voting: all aye; motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Harvey stated that there is an opportunity to create a new trail on the Sherburne property behind the Souhegan High School. This would be a 1.3 mile almost completely flat trail. It has a variety of habitats and views on it, and would be ideal for use by novice bikers or disadvantaged persons. He will review this further with the Commission once costs and grant money are assessed.

Mr. Harvey explained that there is also an old sawmill site near the Pond Parish conservation property, off of Lynch Farm Road, which he hopes to add a trail to. This could be a heritage feature trail, and there are other heritage/historic items in town which could be placed on/near the trail. Mr. Clemens suggested that the Commission work with Mr. Ludt and the Heritage Commission on this project, to make sure that there is no destruction done to a culturally significant area.

IX. Conservation Easement Monitoring

Mr. Stoughton presented the Commission with his proposal for an easement monitoring program. He hopes this program will help with identifying potential encroachments on ACC properties, as well as allowing the Commission to comply with any deed/easement restrictions. This program will also allow for a general assessment of all properties, in order to compare them to the list of ACC priorities for conservation.

The group discussed that “minimal human intrusion” might mean for an easement property.

Mr. Hardner stated that walking to boundaries on larger properties can be difficult. The group should work to come up with methods to make this work.

The Commission discussed taking on 5 pilot properties for this monitoring program in the spring in order to see how the program works.

X. Round Table

Mr. Clemens stated that there is a conservation easement proposed on property 6-8-8. Attorney Drescher reviewed the proposal and had no major concerns regarding the easement, but recommended a couple of language changes. Mr. Clemens hopes that there will be a public hearing with the Board of Selectmen to accept this easement soon.

In response to a concern from Mr. Stoughton, the Commission discussed some of the wording included in this potential easement. Mr. Clemens explained that the main motivation for this easement is to protect Baboosic Lake by preventing human activity that might degrade the drainage/ecosystem around it.

Mr. Hardner explained that this will also be a big discussion when looking at the proposed Taylor/Bower easement. Any proposed trails that come from these easements must be looked at as secondary to the conservation of the habitats at a sufficient scale to sustain the ecological function and wildlife of the land.

A MOTION was made by Mr. Hardner and SECONDED by Mr. Bennison to share Attorney Drescher’s review of the proposed conservation easement with Attorney Quinn for further review.

Voting: all aye; motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Gilman stated that the mowing of Great Meadow was going to be happening soon.

Mr. Hardner explained that Sue Long was ecstatic with the bench in her father’s honor.

Mr. Harvey circled back to some items from his Treasurer’s Report.

A MOTION was made by Mr. Harvey and SECONDED by Mr. Gilman to reimburse members for the NHACC conference in the amount of \$270 to come from the town budget.

Voting: all aye; motion carried unanimously.

A MOTION was made by Mr. Harvey and SECONDED by Mr. Hardner to pay \$700 from the town budget for NHACC dues for 2019.

Voting: all aye; motion carried unanimously.

A MOTION was made by Mr. Harvey and SECONDED by Mr. Hardner to pay \$4,517.50 from the Conservation Fund to Charlie Koch for about 70 hours of work in the field updating an inventory for the new Forest Management Plan.

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

215
216 *A MOTION was made by Mr. Harvey and SECONDED by Mr. Gilman to pay \$1,500 from*
217 *the Conservation Fund to Vegetative Control Services for their work on Phase II in Beaver*
218 *Brook Park.*

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

220
221 Mr. Harvey discussed an idea to consolidate certain properties in town, to merge those with
222 deed restrictions with those without any, in order to keep the proposed use of those properties
223 protected from any future changes. The Commission agreed to review this further and discuss
224 it again at the next meeting.

225
226 Mr. Clemens suggested that the Commission meet at their alternate meeting on November
227 28.

228
229 Mr. Bennison stated that all new maps have been put up.

230
231 Mr. Widmer stated that the chestnut restoration sign and kiosk are up.

232
233 *A MOTION was made by Mr. Hardner and SECONDED by Mr. Widmer to adjourn the*
234 *meeting at 10:30 p.m.*

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

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244 *Respectfully submitted,*
245 *Kristan Patenaude*

**Finance and Asset Manager Report
As Of October 31, 2018**

Treasury

- **Conservation Fund: \$615,635.61**
 - Deposit (Interest): \$209.08
- **Town Budget FY19: \$20,211.16**
 - Paid Ricitelli (Meadow mowing): \$1,072.50
 - Paid SpeedPro Graphics (Trail maps): \$582.38
 - **Encumbrances: \$1,019.56**
 - Paid Materials – Highland Brook bridge: \$1,206 (\$0 remaining)
 - Paid Materials – Caesar’s Brook bridge: \$932.18 (\$37.82 remaining)
 - Paid Materials – Signs: \$88.08 (\$0 remaining)
 - Paid Trail Signs: \$250 (\$0 remaining)
 - Available Materials – New Kiosks: \$981.74
- **Gift: \$7,940.59**
 - Deposit (Interest): \$6.96
 - FYI: To be reimbursed from Cons Fund: \$7,332.78

Contracts, Leases and Purchases

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Assets

- No transactions

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Conservation Fund Obligations

VCS Invasives – Great Meadow Phase I	\$ 4,992
VCS Invasives – Bragdon Farm	\$ 11,576
Rec Dept – Trail Grant Match	\$ 15,000
Koch/VCS – Forest Management Plan/Other invasives	\$ 28,500
Taylor/Bower – Freestyle Farm Easement	\$275,000
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	\$335,068
Balance Forward	\$615,635
Remaining	\$280,567