

**Town of Amherst
Conservation Commission Meeting
Wednesday, May 24th, 2017
7:00pm**

Attendance: R. Clemens-Chair, L. Gilman, D. D'Angelo, J. Harvey, V. Benson, F. Montesanto, P. Lyon Selectman Representative

Staff: Planner S. Corson

Chairman Rob Clemens calls the meeting to order at 7:04pm.

Rob asks Frank to take Rich's place for the night as a voting member of the Commission.

Rob made chair comments. He said that we went to Lindabury Orchard last Saturday for the "Trail of the Month."

The Commission reviewed minutes from last meeting, May 10th. Rob and Daryl noted a few minor errors. Clemens asked for a motion to accept the minutes as edited. John moved. Daryl seconded. All in favor, vote passes unanimously.

Earlier this month, Lee requested the opportunity to present to the Commission. Lee and Rob had a discussion and agreed that a presentation would be a good idea.

Lee began a presentation on invasive plants using the projector to show the Commission several slides. Lee talked about integrated techniques for control and the importance of seasonal timing for the treatment of invasive plants. He gave the Commission a historical perspective about how these plants can cause harm to the economic, environmental, and human health of a community.

Lee proposed two approaches. The first approach would be to create a scope of work and hire an applicator. The second approach would be a "mega-permit" which would consist of the Town Administrator signing a permit to allow all Town land to be treated.

Rob clarifies the two approaches with Lee. Daryl adds this may be bigger than the ACC, and would likely be of interest to the Board of Selectmen. Rob agreed and asked who from the Town might be tasked with the administrative duties if it was decided to proceed with the later approach.

Peter asked Lee if the treatment of invasives usually takes one year, or several years. Lee responded that it depended on the density of the invasive. Lee related the treatment of invasive plants to the peeling of an onion. It is necessary to plan for follow up treatments if the goal is eradication. Sometimes follow up treatments at multiple year intervals. Sometimes entrenched plants like old Japanese knotweed patches can show regrowth from roots even after the above ground has been clear for three years. Seed banks in the soil can also send out a new cycle of juvenile invasives after several years of germination.

Simon inquired about the obligation of the applicators and the Town, if it was decided to go with the mega-permit. Lee clarified that the applicator would have an obligation to the State's Division of Pesticide Control. The Town would be responsible for providing a report of the results. This report helps the State decide if they will issue a permit in the future.

Lee noted that Perry from the Department of Public Works has a Private Category B pesticide applicator license so he can treat invasive plants around Town facilities. In addition to a Category B license, Lee also has G1 and G2 licenses. The G license qualifies him as a "designated horticulture professional" specified under the Shoreland Protection Regulations. Lee is allowed to treat up to the water's edge inside some Shoreland Protection buffers without a Special Permit from the state.

Lee continues his presentation to discuss relevant laws and regulations. Lee mentioned that New Hampshire has prohibited invasive species. The relevant statutes are NH RSA 430:55 and Chapter Agr 3802.01.

Lee discussed the steps of management progression. The steps in order are assessment, prevention, containment, suppression, and eradication. Lee covered the different categories of integrated management techniques. The techniques are monitoring, physical, chemical, cultural, and biological.

Lee provided comment on physical techniques in more detail. He said this might be the appropriate approach around the village where there are a few areas Lee has interest in seeing treated. Physical techniques include hand cutting, weed wrenching, and the use of heavy equipment.

John asked Lee if he plans to make a presentation to BOS. Lee said he would if that was determined to be the appropriate course of action.

Peter suggested that the ACC should pick a location or a few locations that demonstrates the value of this program. By doing this successfully, the treatment of invasive plants will gain support with the public. Quite possibly, public support will lead to increased funding. Peter noted that the ACC budget for invasive plant management is 4 thousand dollars. Rob agreed with Peter's remarks.

Rob complimented Lee's extensive knowledge of invasive plants and asked Lee what parcels the Commission should prioritize for treatment. Lee provided several options depending on the interests of the Commission. John encouraged putting together a researched and evidence-driven proposal for several parcels. Rob suggested choosing three properties. There was discussion about which properties the ACC wanted to pursue. The Great Meadow, Caesar's Brook Reservation, and Beaver Brook Park were identified. Rob asked Lee to prepare a report on the three properties for the Commission to review and provide comment during their June 10th meeting.

Rob moved on to discuss property use, policy, and enforcement. Rob asked if there are existing policies regarding use and enforcement of ACC land. John said there is a Town procurement

policy that he summarized and tweaked to become ACC policy. Peter commented that policies can be useful, but ordinances are the enforcement tool.

Lee asked if the ACC ever grants exclusive use to ACC land. John said that throughout his time on the Commission there have been occasions where the Commission did grant exclusive use. Frank said that he is in favor of developing guidelines as a succinct way of helping people understand the rules.

Simon inquired if the Board of Selectmen (BOS) policy regarding Town Parks applies to the ACC land. Peter responded that ACC land and Town Parks are different. Peter continued that in the case of Town Parks, people are required to come before the BOS prior to hosting an event.

Rob asks for a motion to go into non-public session. Lee made a motion. Daryl seconded. Frank I, Victor I, John I, Daryl I, Rob I, Lee I. The Commission discussed purchasing the parcel (008-009).

Victor moved to go into public session. John seconded. Frank I, Victor I, John I, Daryl I, Rob I, Lee I. Rob moved to seal the non-public session minutes for three months. John seconded. All in favor. Vote passes unanimously.

Daryl moved that the ACC commit no more than 70,000 dollars from Conservation Fund for the purposes of acquiring the parcel number (008-009) and all remaining survey costs. John seconded. All in favor. Vote passes unanimously.

Rob asked if there was any rush to get this deal finalized. Daryl said she did not think so because of the timeframe attached with the surveying process.

Rob changed topics to discuss any project updates beginning with the kiosk trail maps. John mentioned speaking to Vic about how he handles maps currently. Vic said he currently uses Photoshop to create trail maps. He also has a laminator, and can laminate 8 by 11 maps for the Commission free of cost. John said he has talked with all GIS folks he knows. John began a presentation about the cost associated with various options for trail maps. There was discussion about size of the maps and how to protect them from the weather.

Simon offered his help creating trail maps using the GIS software. Simon also suggested that the Commission take photos of signage as they travel and compile a slideshow to share at a meeting. By developing an understanding of the different styles, sizes, and approaches other groups take, the Commission may be inspired to come up with creative solutions that fits their needs.

Rob asked John, Victor, and Simon to collaborate on this project.

Rob informed the Commission that Rich was asked to provide an example of a *Carry In Carry Out* sign. Rob showed the group Rich's design for the sign. Rich was not present.

Rob discussed the Trail of Month program, and confirmed that Wes is running the program through the Trail Subcommittee. He shared that the June Trail of the Month will be Pond Parish

Rob talked about the preparations needed for the July 4th celebration in Town. The Commission usually has volunteers at a table for residents and visitors to interact with ACC members. Rob said he would talk to Rich about organizing the volunteers and materials for the event. Lee offered to walk to the ACC table following the parade.

Vic told the Commission that the new steward Brian Hoyer is doing a terrific job. Vic said the Currier Land agreement has been signed by all parties. Daryl and Rob agree that Vic should inquire to Jim about how that document gets submitted to the Registry of Deeds in Nashua.

Lee said that high school students met with Charlie Koch and himself. The group found a 180 year-old hemlock tree.

At 9:33pm, Rob asked for a motion to adjourn. Vic made a motion and Frank seconded. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted,
Simon Corson