



Town of Amherst, NH

Conservation Commission

Final Minutes

Barbara Landry Meeting Room

Wednesday, May 9, 2018

1 *Conservation Commission members in attendance were: Rob Clemens, John Harvey,*
2 *Frank Montesanto, Jared Hardner, Rich Hart, and William Widmer - Alternate.*
3 *Also in attendance: Kristan Patenaude*
4

5 **I. Call to Order**

6 Rob Clemens called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.
7

8 **II. Day PRD**

9 Tom Carr, of Meridian Land Services, presented the plan for the Day property, with a
10 residential development of 10 lots, and with 82% open space. Originally the plan was to have
11 the trails on the property private for the residents, but the public questioned this. Between the
12 public comments and the density factor, the plan now involves opening a trail to the public.
13 There will be a design review by the Planning Board in June. Ms. Sally Wilkins stated that
14 she'd like to see ACC oversight for the open space in this plan. This property has no
15 easement, and is not town owned. There is a restriction in the covenants from further
16 development on this open space.
17

18 The Commission discussed being involved with this property in an advisory capacity instead
19 of in an enforcement capacity. They would like to see the nature of the public trail preserved.
20 Mr. Carr agreed that the ACC could be involved by talking to the homeowner's association
21 about the land, and recommending changes/improvements to make.
22

23 In response to a question from Mr. Clemens, Mr. Carr stated that the road into the association
24 will be private, and it will need to be made clear that the public can access the road in order
25 to get to the trail head.
26

27 **III. Ducal PRD**

28 Ken Clinton, of Meridian Land Services, presented the plan for the Ducal property, which
29 will be a PRD subdivision and elderly housing. This will be located on Route 122, across
30 from Patricia Lane. The property has 3 parcels, with about 30 acres. The plan is for 20 starter
31 homes and eight (8) 55+ homes. There will be a public trail on the property, along with 4
32 parking spaces dedicated for the public. In order to access the property, there is a wetland
33 crossing. There is a small isolated wet pond that can be used as an innovative
34 stormwater/drainwater location.

35 The Commission discussed the details of this wet pond.

37 **IV. LaBelle Winery – site plans**

38 Ken Clinton discussed the LaBelle winery plans with the Commission. Land has been
39 acquired from Camp Young Judaea for a new facility to be built behind the existing one.
40 There will be stormwater basins on each side, part of which will be within a wetland area.
41 Basin #1, which is the area of impact, will be 0.152 acres. The plan will include a conditional
42 use permit for the buffer impacts to the wetland. There will be a discussion hearing on June
43 6th, and a final hearing on July 18th.

44
45 In response to a question from Mr. Clemens, Mr. Clinton stated that the new lot areas will be
46 paved.

47
48 In response to a question from Mr. Harvey, Mr. Clinton stated that part of a stone wall on the
49 property will be removed, as it is not a barrier wall. The fieldstones could be repurposed on
50 the property, if so decided.

51
52 Mr. Hardner explained that this property sits in a highest priority habitat area for
53 conservation. He suggested adjusting the buffer locations in order to produce less impact. Mr.
54 Clinton stated that there is no other scenario they've been able to explore that doesn't at least
55 have some buffer impact. Mr. Clemens agreed that he would like to see a possible adjustment
56 to the area in order to cut down on the size and encroachment of basin #1.

58 **V. Chair Comments**

59 Mr. Clemens thanked Mr. Widmer and Ms. Patenaude for their work on the Amherst Town-
60 Wide Cleanup Day. It seemed to be a great community effort. He also welcomed back Mr.
61 Rich Hart. Finally, he stated that Mr. Bruce Beckley has decided to formally retire from the
62 Commission. Michael Cohen has stepped up to become a new alternate member of the
63 Commission and the group is happy to have him join.

65 **VI. Minutes from April 11, 2018**

66 *A MOTION was made by Mr. Harvey and SECONDED by Mr. Widmer to accept the meeting*
67 *minutes of April 11, 2018 as amended.*

68 *Voting: 4 ayes, 2 abstentions; motion carried.*

70 **VII. Treasurer's Report**

71 Mr. Harvey presented the Treasurer's Report. The group discussed its current town budget
72 surplus and making sure to complete any outstanding projects before the end of the fiscal
73 year.

74
75 *A MOTION was made by Mr. Hardner and SECONDED by Mr. Montesanto to accept the*
76 *Treasurer's Report as submitted.*

77 *Voting: all aye; motion carried unanimously.*
78

79 **VIII. Grasslands Management**

80 Mr. Harvey explained that he's trying to get a professional to come and do a grasslands
81 workshop in town during the 2nd or 3rd week of July. The intent is to educate the public on the
82 conservation of local grasslands and measuring bird populations in particular grasslands.

83
84 The Commission discussed the possibility of purchasing a brush-eating attachment (brush
85 hog) that can be connected to the small tractor, which is already owned by the Recreation
86 Department. Mr. Clemens explained that he and Mr. Montesanto met with DPW and Craig
87 Fraley regarding mowing Lindabury Orchard. The group discussed whether this piece of
88 equipment would have other uses around town, or if they should continue to borrow a piece
89 of equipment from the Amherst Country Club in order to mow the Orchard.

90
91 *A MOTION was made by Mr. Montesanto and SECONDED by Mr. Widmer to approve up to*
92 *\$3,500 from the gift account to buy a brush hog, provided that there is confirmation from the*
93 *Recreation Department that they're willing to have 1 day/month as an ACC maintenance*
94 *day.*

95 *Voting: all aye; motion carried unanimously.*
96

97 **IX. Forest Management**

98 Mr. Hardner discussed three steps for forest management.
99

- 100 1) Update status of forest resources – each forest area in town should be reevaluated to get
101 the key information needed to determine the appropriate management prescription for the
102 future. This will probably take the better part of the summer, and involve Mr. Simon
103 Corson's GIS mapping skills, and Mr. Charlie Koch using an iPad in the field.
104 2) Review ecology with respect to past silvicultural treatments – information from past
105 harvests should be reviewed, with past risks being identified and successional patterns
106 hoping to be seen.
107 3) Prepare the forest management plan for the next 10 years – confirm the objectives of the
108 plan, determine how to meet these objectives, schedule any harvests/treatments, monitor
109 the outcomes, and create a more systematic platform to store information.

110
111 *A MOTION was made by Mr. Hardner and SECONDED by Mr. Montesanto to engage Mr.*
112 *Charlie Koch to begin the first step [updating forest resources], for the Betty Arnold Forest,*
113 *Haseltine Community Preserve, and Caesar's Brook Reservation, not to exceed \$3,450 from*
114 *the town budget, prior to July 1' 2018.*

115 *Voting: all aye; motion carried unanimously.*
116

117 **X. Trail Development & Use – Infrastructure Plans and Priorities**

118 Mr. Montesanto relayed to the Commission some of the work that he's been doing. He would
119 like to begin to rethink the boat launch design at the canoe port, but the damage there has
120 been fixed for now.

121
122 The group discussed the amount of logging debris left behind on the Hemlock Trail and how
123 to make sure this isn't an issue in the future.
124

Mr. Montesanto stated that there are a few requests for new kiosks and signage at certain trails. He will contact Mr. Eric Hahn regarding the services DPW provides to the ACC in this area.

Mr. Montesanto explained that there will be a Friends of the Orchard meeting on May 12, 2018 at 1:00 p.m. All interested parties are invited to attend.

The Commission discussed the replacement of the Highland Trail bridge and the rerouting of that trail. There is a possibility to slightly reroute the trail down toward the sluice and install a new bridge there, giving a better vantage point of this historic marker.

A MOTION was made by Mr. Montesanto and SECONDED by Mr. Hardner to reroute the Highland Trail to turn off of Old Brook Road and head to the site of the new bridge, below the old sluiceway, and then reconnect with the current trail.

Voting: all aye; motion carried unanimously.

A MOTION was made by Mr. Montesanto and SECONDED by Mr. Hardner to spend up to \$1,200 from the town budget, to buy the necessary hardware and lumber for the upper part of the new Highland Trail bridge.

Voting: all aye; motion carried unanimously.

XI. ACC Officer Elections

A MOTION was made by Mr. Hardner and SEONCED by Mr. Harvey to nominate Mr. Rob Clemens at Chair of the Amherst Conservation Commission.

Voting: all aye; motion carried unanimously.

A MOTION was made by Mr. Clemens and SECONDED by Mr. Montesanto to nominate Mr. Jared Hardner as Vice-Chair of the Amherst Conservation Commission.

Voting: all aye; motion carried unanimously.

A MOTION was made by Mr. Hardner and SECONDED by Mr. Montesanto to nominate Mr. John Harvey as Treasurer of the Amherst Conservation Commission.

Voting: all aye; motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Lee Gilman and Mr. Vick Bennison's terms on the Commission are up, but they would both like to stay on.

XII. Round Table

The group discussed the Taylor-Bower easement. The terms and conditions for this have been accepted. The next step will be review of the document by lawyers, an updated appraisal of the property, and a site walk – to be held next weekend.

The group discussed volunteer opportunities for a group of Fidelity employees. They discussed having a "trail day" on June 5th for the group.

170 Mr. Bennison has plans for a slight change on the Caesar's Brook trail that the Commission
171 will review.

172
173 Mr. Widmer explained that a small group of boy scouts and their parents helped to dig the
174 holes for the chestnut trees on April 28th. On May 19th, a small group of girl scouts and their
175 parents will help to plant the trees.

176 Amherst's Town-wide Cleanup Day was a success. He estimates that anywhere from 360-
177 400 blue trash bags were handed out to the public and there appears to have been good
178 participation throughout town.

179
180 The group discussed naming a trail, bridge or observation point after Mr. Bruce Beckley and
181 his years of service to the Commission and town.

182
183 Mr. Clemens stated that a space on the Green has been reserved for the Commission during
184 the 4th of July celebration.

185
186
187
188 *The meeting was adjourned at 10:47 p.m.*
189

190
191
192
193
194
195 *Respectfully submitted,*
196 *Kristan Patenaude*
197