



Town of Amherst, NH

Conservation Commission

Final Minutes

Barbara Landry Meeting Room

Wednesday, October 10, 2018

*Conservation Commission members in attendance were: Rob Clemens, Peter Lyon, John Harvey, Lee Gilman, Jared Hardner, Rich Hart, and Bill Stoughton.
Also in attendance: Kristan Patenaude*

I. Call to Order

Rob Clemens called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM.

II. Chair Comments

Chairman Clemens thanked the members of Friends of the Orchard and the many volunteers for their work on the Ciderfest event.

Mr. Clemens introduced Paul Ferwerda. Mr. Ferwerda explained to the Commission that he is interested in placing an EarthCache on one of their properties. EarthCaching is similar to GeoCaching, but with additional requirements. The purpose is to teach people something about geology. The caches need approval from the Geological Society of America. Mr. Ferwerda currently has 2 GeoCaches in New Hampshire, one at Pulpit Rock and one at the Ponemah Bog. In order to complete the cache, participants must answers questions about the area the cache is located and send them to Mr. Ferwerda.

Mr. Ferwerda would like to create an EarthCache in the Dacquino Forest near an esker.

In response to a question from Mr. Clemens, Mr. Ferwerda explained that many people like to be the first to find a cache, so there is an initial spike in numbers when a cache is created, but this tails off after time.

Mr. Hardner stated that there's a second esker further down this trail, and so there may be a possibility to have 2 caches in the same area.

A MOTION was made by Mr. Harvey and SECONDED by Mr. Hardner to allow Mr. Ferwerda to place 1 or 2 GeoCaches in the area of the Dacquino Forest.

Voting: all aye; motion carried unanimously.

(Mr. Stoughton voted in place of Mr. Wes Robertson)

III. Review of Meeting Minutes

A MOTION was made by Mr. Gilman and SECONDED by Mr. Harvey to approve the meeting minutes from September 12, 2018, as amended.

Voting: all aye; motion carried unanimously.

IV. Treasurer's Report

Mr. Harvey presented the Treasurer's Report.

A MOTION was made by Mr. Hardner and SECONDED by Mr. Hart to accept the Treasurer's Report as submitted.

Voting: all aye; motion carried unanimously.

V. Planning & Permits

Mr. Hart explained that, at the Planning Board meeting last week, a new development near Wilkins School was discussed. This is located at the New Boston Road/Boston Post Road border and is approximately 90 acres. The Planning Board asked the developer to look into the possibility of connecting a public trail on the property to the proposed trail on the Day property nearby. The developer will be back in the future for further discussions. This development is slated to be about 40-50 units.

The Commission discussed making sure the developer is aware of the proximity to Beaver Brook and the Great Meadow. They also discussed checking the area under the Wildlife Action Plan to see if there is anything of additional importance there.

Mr. Hardner suggested, in the future, downplaying the open space/trail concept for new developments, and really focusing on the issues of reducing fragmentation and increasing conservation. The Commission should arm itself with the knowledge of what it wants to conserve.

The Commission discussed the upcoming revision of the Master Plan. They agreed to send the information from their management plans to the Planning Board in order to begin the process.

VI. Grasslands Management

Mr. Harvey stated that Sky Meadow was mowed yesterday. The last time it was mowed was about 5 years ago. There were some white pines toward the back of the meadow that were removed and he will girdle a couple of trees this winter to make stands for bird species.

Mr. Hardner explained that Opportunity Networks had their trail day and were able to cut a small, nice trail leading into the main trail. He described it as an inspiring moment for all involved. Mr. Hardner explained that the ACC will need to build the bench that will be stationed on this trail.

Mr. Harvey stated that he visited the town's LCIP with Amanda Hollenbeck, a Stewardship Specialist from the Office of Strategic Initiatives. She will be helping to monitor these

properties and visit them as needed. They didn't observe any encroachments at these locations, other than a small lean-to of saplings near PMEC.

Mr. Clemens explained that this visiting and monitoring procedure is obligatory for LCIP properties, but is a process that the ACC should do for all of their properties. He believes it would allow everyone to get more familiar with the properties and the process. Mr. Stoughton volunteered to begin the process of setting up this monitoring program and getting participants for it.

VII. Trail Use and Development

Mr. Clemens stated that the Community Service Coordinator at Souhegan High School is looking to set up another volunteer day on October 26th. Mr. Hardner has some work on bog bridges that he could use help on.

Mr. Hardner explained that he has been encouraged by the trail use on the new Betty Arnold trails.

VIII. Invasives Control Projects

Mr. Gilman explained that Beaver Brook park was taken care of first, and Bragdon was done after that. There were huge improvements seen in those areas and follow up will be done in the future.

There will be mowing done next month at Great Meadow. The group discussed creating an article to describe the project and notify people of how the LUCT money from the warrant article is being spent. Mr. Gilman explained that this mowing is Phase I, and next year there will be spraying on the 1 year old stubble.

Mr. Gilman stated that Perry Day and the DPW Department have been doing invasives treatments along the state right of ways in town. They have aligned the products they're using with the ones recommended on the permit.

IX. 2020 Strategic Planning & Budget

Mr. Clemens stated that he presented the Commission's Strategic Plan last night at the Board of Selectman meeting. The ACC's FY20 budget is due next week, so that the initial draft of the town's budget can be prepared.

The Commission discussed reducing some of their town budget costs, by moving these costs to be paid out of the Conservation Fund.

Mr. Hardner explained that the Commission needs to really engage private landowners and create an incentive for them to be involved in invasives control on their properties. The Commission discussed getting a grant to help with this education/outreach.

122 **X. Round Table**

123 Mr. Clemens stated that Lower Bragdon has been hayed and the Bedford-side has also been
124 hayed. The Commission discussed the progress of the Metal Detection Policy/Ordinance with
125 Mr. Will Ludt.

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127 Mr. Ludt explained that he has been working with DES and DHR to modify software for
128 LiDAR detection of stonewalls. The state is hoping to rollout the software on November 15th,
129 National GIS Day. There will be some training from NRPC for this software in
130 November/December. Anyone from the Commission is welcome to help.

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132 The Commission discussed which QR code(s) should be displayed on the new plastic maps
133 that will be in kiosks. They decided to have a separate section that can display QR codes that
134 can be switched out as needed.

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136 Mr. Hardner stated that he owes Mr. Ludt some trail work on the new Corn Crib trail, which
137 will get done soon.

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139 The Commission reviewed an update on the Taylor/Bower easement. Mr. Clemens will
140 follow up with Attorney Drescher.

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142 The group discussed how to handle the request for a yoga class to be held at the Orchard.
143 They decided to speak with Mr. Craig Fraley and the Recreation Department on this issue.

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145 Mr. Clemens stated that Brandon Dubois, a local trapper, is again looking to trap on some of
146 the ACC's properties. The group agreed this activity could be approved, but asked that Mr.
147 Dubois report back to them on what he caught from the last season, which they had
148 previously requested of him.

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150 *A MOTION was made by Mr. Hardner and SECONDED by Mr. Harvey to adjourn the*
151 *meeting at 9:38 p.m.*

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

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161 *Respectfully submitted,*
162 *Kristan Patenaude*
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**Finance and Asset Manager Report
As Of September 30, 2018**

Treasury

- **Conservation Fund: \$615,426.53**
 - Withdrawal previous month (Sky Meadow purchase): \$67,992.68
 - Withdrawal (Charlie Koch): \$3,705.00
 - (Re)deposited from bank error: \$68,027.68 (\$35 wire xfer waived)
 - Deposit (Interest): \$203.03
- **Town Budget FY19: \$21,866.04**
 - **Encumbrances: \$3,495.82**
 - Paid Grassland bird survey protocol: \$612 (\$0 remaining)
 - Paid Trail signs, maps, banner: \$544.01 (\$88.08 remaining)
 - Materials – Highland Brook bridge: \$1,206 remaining
 - Materials – Caesar’s Brook bridge: \$970 remaining
 - Materials – New kiosks: \$981.74 remaining
 - Signs: \$250 remaining
- **Gift: \$7,933.63**
 - Withdrawal (Vick): 54.22
 - Deposit (Two months’ interest): \$12.17
 - FYI: To be reimbursed from Cons Fund: \$7,332.78

Contracts, Leases and Purchases

- Mike Riccitelli, mowing and brush hog services

Assets

- No transactions

FY19 Town Budget Accounts (nothing spent yet)

Education & Training/Prof Dev:	\$1000
Land Management:	\$3450
Meadow Maintenance:	\$5000
Water Crossing Maintenance:	\$3000
Invasives Mitigation:	\$4000
Signage:	\$2195
Kiosk:	\$1000
Dues & Subscriptions:	\$ 700
Educational Outreach:	\$ 500
PT Wages, SS, Medicare:	\$1,021.04