



# 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 1,792ft<sup>2</sup> 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

122 Mr. Bennison explained that there is a wetland area on the Pulpit Brook Trail that appears to  
123 have quite a bit of beaver action as the water level is getting quite high there and beaver  
124 activity has been seen. The beaver deceiver in the area was built about 5-7 years ago and was  
125 working well at keeping the pond level down, but now the water is going over the trail in 2 or  
126 3 places. It's possible that the beavers heard this water running and made a dam there.

127  
128 In response to a question from Mr. Clemens, Mr. Harvey stated that the level of the beaver  
129 pond there is up to almost 2'.

130  
131 Mr. Dubois explained to the Commission that the beavers will now continue to dam at this  
132 site unless they are removed. He suggested taking out the deceiver, putting in a new culvert  
133 with raised drains, blowing out the dam, and trapping the beavers there annually.

134  
135 The Commission discussed that the issue on this trail is unusual and there haven't been  
136 problems in the past. These new water issues could be due to the increased rainfall this year.  
137 The group agreed to give time for the waters to reestablish in order to identify the true  
138 problem on this trail.

139  
140 The Commission discussed the trapping permits in regards to certain private properties  
141 adjacent to town properties that don't wish for trapping to occur on their land. The group  
142 agreed to review the permits on a case-by-case basis to determine which should be approved.

143  
144 *A MOTION was made by Mr. Widmer and SECONDED by Mr. Bennison to authorize the*  
145 *approval of Mr. Brandon Dubois' trapping permits, excluding for the canoe port on Route*  
146 *122 and any other properties with restrictions.*

147 *Voting: all aye; motion carried unanimously.*  
148

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

154  
155 Mr. Harvey explained that there is also an old sawmill site near the Pond Parish conservation  
156 property, off of Lynch Farm Road, which he hopes to add a trail to. This could be a heritage  
157 feature trail, and there are other heritage/historic items in town which could be placed  
158 on/near the trail. Mr. Clemens suggested that the Commission work with Mr. Ludt and the  
159 Heritage Commission on this project, to make sure that there is no destruction done to a  
160 culturally significant area.

## 161 162 **IX. Conservation Easement Monitoring**

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

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

169  
170 Mr. Hardner stated that walking to boundaries on larger properties can be difficult. The group  
171 should work to come up with methods to make this work.

172  
173 The Commission discussed taking on 5 pilot properties for this monitoring program in the  
174 spring in order to see how the program works.

175  
176 **X. Round Table**

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

181  
182 In response to a concern from Mr. Stoughton, the Commission discussed some of the  
183 wording included in this potential easement. Mr. Clemens explained that the main motivation  
184 for this easement is to protect Baboosic Lake by preventing human activity that might  
185 degrade the drainage/ecosystem around it.

186  
187 Mr. Hardner explained that this will also be a big discussion when looking at the proposed  
188 Taylor/Bower easement. Any proposed trails that come from these easements must be looked  
189 at as secondary to the conservation of the habitats at a sufficient scale to sustain the  
190 ecological function and wildlife of the land.

191  
192 *A MOTION was made by Mr. Hardner and SECONDED by Mr. Bennison to share Attorney*  
193 *Drescher’s review of the proposed conservation easement with Attorney Quinn for further*  
194 *review.*  
195 *Voting: all aye; motion carried unanimously.*

196  
197 Mr. Gilman stated that the mowing of Great Meadow was going to be happening soon.

198  
199 Mr. Hardner explained that Sue Long was ecstatic with the bench in her father’s honor.

200  
201 Mr. Harvey circled back to some items from his Treasurer’s Report.

202  
203 *A MOTION was made by Mr. Harvey and SECONDED by Mr. Gilman to reimburse*  
204 *members for the NHACC conference in the amount of \$270 to come from the town budget.*  
205 *Voting: all aye; motion carried unanimously.*

206  
207 *A MOTION was made by Mr. Harvey and SECONDED by Mr. Hardner to pay \$700 from the*  
208 *town budget for NHACC dues for 2019.*  
209 *Voting: all aye; motion carried unanimously.*

210  
211 *A MOTION was made by Mr. Harvey and SECONDED by Mr. Hardner to pay \$4,517.50*  
212 *from the Conservation Fund to Charlie Koch for about 70 hours of work in the field updating*  
213 *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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237

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243

244 *Respectfully submitted,*

245 *Kristan Patenaude*

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

262  
 263 **Treasury**

- 264 • **Conservation Fund: \$615,635.61**
  - 265 ◦ Deposit (Interest): \$209.08
- 266 • **Town Budget FY19: \$20,211.16**
  - 267 ◦ Paid Ricitelli (Meadow mowing): \$1,072.50
  - 268 ◦ Paid SpeedPro Graphics (Trail maps): \$582.38
  - 269 ◦ **Encumbrances: \$1,019.56**
    - 270 ▪ Paid Materials – Highland Brook bridge: \$1,206 (\$0 remaining)
    - 271 ▪ Paid Materials – Caesar’s Brook bridge: \$932.18 (\$37.82 remaining)
    - 272 ▪ Paid Materials – Signs: \$88.08 (\$0 remaining)
    - 273 ▪ Paid Trail Signs: \$250 (\$0 remaining)
    - 274 ▪ Available Materials – New Kiosks: \$981.74
- 275 • **Gift: \$7,940.59**
  - 276 ◦ Deposit (Interest): \$6.96
  - 277 ◦ FYI: To be reimbursed from Cons Fund: \$7,332.78

278  
 279 **Contracts, Leases and Purchases**

- 280 •

281  
 282 **Assets**

- 283 • No transactions

284  
 285 =====

286  
 287 **Conservation Fund Obligations**

288		
289	VCS Invasives – Great Meadow Phase I	\$ 4,992
290	VCS Invasives – Bragdon Farm	\$ 11,576
291	Rec Dept – Trail Grant Match	\$ 15,000
292	Koch/VCS – Forest Management Plan/Other invasives	\$ 28,500
293	Taylor/Bower – Freestyle Farm Easement	\$275,000
294		<hr/>
295		\$335,068
296		
297	Balance Forward	\$615,635
298		
299	Remaining	\$280,567

300  
 301