



# Town of Amherst, NH

## Conservation Commission

### Final Minutes

Barbara Landry Meeting Room

Wednesday, January 23, 2019

*Conservation Commission members in attendance were: Chairman Rob Clemens, Jared Hardner, Vick Bennison, Michael Cohen (Alternate member voting for Wes Robertson), Bill Widmer (Alternate member voting for John Harvey) Rich Hart, Bill Stoughton, and Peter Lyon.*

#### **I. Call to Order**

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

#### **II. Bats & Other Natural Resources at NBAS – Steve Najjar, New Boston Air Station**

Chairman Clemens welcomed Steve Najjar, a Natural Resources Planner for the New Boston Air Force Station and member of the Weare Conservation Commission.

Mr. Najjar presented to the Commission information regarding ongoing bat surveys and environmental stewardship projects at NBAS. A mist netting survey in 2002 located each of the six species of bats found in the state of New Hampshire, all within NBAS. A project in 2006/2007 used telemetry to locate a maternity roost for the small footed bat within the Joe English hill on the property. In 2011, using bat transect points, six bat species were again picked up around NBAS. Also a long-term winter monitoring project (2010-2014) showed that the bat species in the area might be using Joe English Hill instead of going to a large hibernacula. Regular winter use by the Big Brown and Eastern Small-footed bat was noted. A 2017 acoustic monitoring project confirmed seven species of bat, with acoustic data showing eight species. All species present in 2017 were also documented in 2002.

***Lee Gilman entered the meeting and will be voting for himself for the rest of the meeting.***

In response to a question from Mr. Cohen, Mr. Najjar explained that none of these projects ever looked at exact population numbers.

Mr. Najjar explained that NBAS also has a long-term project looking at turtles. He also stated that they have been carefully following the hemlock adelgid, as 25% of their tree population are hemlock.

In response to a question from Mr. Hardner, Mr. Najjar explained that NBAS has an Integrated Natural Resource Management Plan that is broadly driven to meet their Natural Resource goals.

### **III. Forest Management Plan Update**

Mr. Hardner presented the Commission with an update of the Forest Management Plan. There are about 1,800 acres of forest land to manage in Amherst. He gave thanks to Simon Corson, Planner, and Charlie Koch for their work on this update. There are three items to be addressed: 1) to update the status of the town's forest resources, 2) to review the ecological response to past silvicultural treatments, and 3) to prepare a forest management plan for the next 10 years.

Mr. Hardner explained that the last management plan, from 1996, contained hard copies of written maps. This current plan will be totally digital, as mapping will be done through GIS. In reviewing some of this forestry data, it was determined that all of the forests in Amherst are between 50-100 years old. There are only 2 stands, in Joe English off the Bicentennial Trail, that are considered antique (100+ years old).

There is a push in New Hampshire to get more young forests, as many animal species are supported by it.

The group discussed that Amherst's forests are surrounded by other town's forests, and that this might change the way the town's stands are thought of.

### **IV. Round Table**

Ms. Patenaude stated that she would like to undertake a public outreach project introducing/"welcoming" specific areas/trails in town via Facebook. The group agreed to draft the project and move forward.

Mr. Stoughton explained that he has circulated a current draft of the easement monitoring program spreadsheet. He is working with Mr. Hardner to create the ability to record tracks while walking boundaries for monitoring with a phone. The backup information is ready for all easements; the only items missing are the tool to know where the boundaries are and the notification of property owners.

Mr. Cohen discussed the Public Education and Outreach Plan. The Commission decided to look at prioritizing the items and deciding what the capacity for the group is at a future meeting. The Commission agreed to put together a display for the Library in the near future.

Mr. Bennison stated that he will be attending the stone wall LiDAR training on Saturday.

Mr. Widmer explained that he met with the DPW to discuss this year's Clean-up Day. Ms. Patenaude will give support and the group will continue to work to decide on a date for the event.

Mr. Hardner explained that Mr. Montesanto has completed 4 new bridges in Joe English.

85 He also stated that he has not had any luck getting a response on the Taylor/Bower easement  
86 from either Bower or his attorney. The group agreed to further discussions with the town's  
87 attorney with Town Administrator Shankle.  
88

89 ***Mr. Cohen left the meeting.***  
90

91 Mr. Gilman explained that VCS will start mowing Great Meadow next week for Phase I of  
92 the project. He also discussed the treatment of a large ash tree at PMEC for emerald ash  
93 borer.  
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95 *A MOTION was made by Mr. Hardner and SECONDED by Mr. Bennison to approve the*  
96 *budget request for \$285 for Bartlett Tree Experts to treat an ash tree at PMEC for emerald*  
97 *ash borer.*

98 *Voting: all aye; motion carried unanimously.*  
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100 Chairman Clemens explained that he and Mr. Harvey met with Ethan Belair, Hillsboro  
101 County Forester, to discuss a program via the UNH Extension Services. It involved taking a  
102 soils map for the state and translating the soil types to the tree types likely expected to be  
103 found in them, and then to translate that into the species expected to be found. This could be  
104 used in town to look at the generated percentage of various habitats on the Wildlife Action  
105 Plan.  
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## 107 **V. Adjournment**

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109 *The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m.*

110 *Voting: all aye; motion carried unanimously.*  
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119 *Respectfully submitted,*  
120 *Kristan Patenaude*