



Town of Amherst, NH

Conservation Commission

Final Minutes

Barbara Landry Meeting Room

Wednesday, January 9, 2019

Conservation Commission members in attendance were: Chairman Rob Clemens, John Harvey, Jared Hardner, Vick Bennison, Frank Montesanto (Alternate member voting for Lee Gilman), Rich Hart, Bill Stoughton, and Peter Lyon.

I. Call to Order

Chairman Clemens called the meeting to order at 6:59 PM.

II. Chair Comments

Chairman Clemens thanked each member of the Board for their work and support through 2018.

Bill Stoughton (alternate member) will be voting for Wes Robertson.

III. Review of Meeting Minutes

A MOTION was made by Mr. Bennison and SECONDED by Mr. Hart to approve the meeting minutes from December 12, 2018 as submitted.

Voting: 6-0-1; motion carried unanimously.

IV. Treasurer's Report

Mr. Harvey presented the Treasurer's Report, including the receipt of a generous gift of \$100 to the trail maintenance fund from a local citizen. The Board discussed how they would like to inform the public that they do accept donations. Ms. Patenaude agreed to draft a small blurb that could be circulated on social media and on trail kiosks.

Mr. Clemens stated that he attended a webinar explaining that there should not be a separate gift account, but it should, instead, be included in the Conservation Fund portion of the budget.

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

Voting: all aye; motion carried unanimously.

39 *Mr. Wes Robertson entered the meeting and will be voting for himself for the rest of the*
40 *evening.*

41 42 **V. Planning & Permits**

43 Mr. Hart reviewed the proposal for a new development off of Route 122, where the old car
44 show/flea market used to be. There are two streams that flow through the area, and the
45 proposal has been widened so that there will be no development directly along the streams.
46 There is some restoration being proposed in the buffer areas. Mr. Hart also suggested they
47 plant some trees along the streams, in order to keep the water cool as it flows into Witches
48 Brook. Mr. Hart is going to type up some wording for a sign regarding what the buffer is and
49 why it's important to protect it.

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51 In response to a question from Mr. Ludt, Mr. Hart stated that there will be 3 buildings on this
52 property that will be retained during development (1 house and 2 sheds).

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54 Mr. Hart stated that there is a property on Baboosic Lake that will be rebuilt. The Planning
55 Board gave their ok for it and DES is on board.

56 57 **VI. Public Education and Outreach Plan**

58 Chairman Clemens explained that the latest, condensed version of this plan has been
59 circulated. Mr. Harvey suggested that the activities listed be pared down to the bare
60 minimum and then assigned to individuals, in order to determine how viable each idea is.
61 Chairman Clemens suggested some of the items be extended to volunteers in the community
62 as well.

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64 Mr. Montesanto stated that he doesn't believe most people in the town know who the ACC is
65 and what it does.

66 Mr. Hardner discussed the idea of having 2019 be the year that the ACC engages the
67 community on that subject. This can be through displays, articles, and on social media. After
68 this is achieved, the other activities can be worked on in more depth.

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70 Mr. Hart suggested an ACC coffee table book, as well as a revised Walk Book. He also
71 suggested an article in the Citizen in the spring asking the public to try out the new trails in
72 town.

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74 Mr. Robertson suggested that the Public Education and Outreach Plan needs to have each
75 item broken out into bulleted or line items.

76 77 **VII. Trail Development & Use**

78 **1. Caesar's Brook**

79 Mr. Bennison stated that he, Mr. Montesanto, Mr. Hardner, and the main trail steward for the
80 Caesar's Brook area, Aaron Rudolf, walked the problems areas on the trail to discuss a
81 reroute. Mr. Robertson stated that part of the trail is covered with poison ivy and bittersweet.
82 Mr. Bennison explained that the group agreed to leave the trail for now and revisit the issue
83 when the land is drier.

Mr. Bennison also stated that there will be the need for two (2) 12-16' bridges in that area. There is a long wet area that will need bog bridges.

In response to a question from Chairman Clemens, Mr. Robertson stated that the exit being discussed onto the class 6 road would take users all the way up to the center of Mont Vernon. Mr. Harvey explained that this has some connection into the Wilkins land, and there is an agreement to put up some trails on that land.

Mr. Montesanto explained that this is a phase project. First the loop should get done and then they can examine what to do to make it multi-modal. It's a great area for biking and skiing. Mr. Hardner stated that, sticking to trail standards, there are about 3-4 places to go in and make the trail more accommodating. The bittersweet should be removed, as it's a terrible source population.

Chairman Clemens agreed to work on the loop in this area, and to remove the trail to the class 6 road for now.

A MOTION was made by Mr. Bennison and SECONDED by Mr. Harvey to move ahead with the plan as described, with the knowledge that a final TBD fix (Phase II) will be needed for the bittersweet connection trail.

The group discussed the next step being flagging and rerouting the trail to the new bridge location.

Voting: all aye; motion carried unanimously.

2. Joe English

Chairman Clemens explained that there was chatter on social media regarding bicyclers on trails in east Joe English possibly cutting through private property.

Mr. Hardner discussed the trail work that has been done near the new Highland Bridge, including reroutes, and new bridges. There will be a need for two more new bridges in the future. A section of Highland Trail goes out to Brook Road, and about 100' of it goes through private property. Multi-modal signs were put up along the trail.

Chairman Clemens stated that the inclusion of bikes surprised the owner and she was unhappy with their presence.

Mr. Hardner suggested creating a trail loop on the trail so that users can go from PMEC, back to PMEC. The creation of the trail could be a future Eagle Scout project.

Mr. Hardner explained that there is another issue with a small loop trail off of the Plumb trail. He examined the trail, and GPS'd the location of it twice. The trail is now properly blazed and lies completely within ACC lands.

Chairman Clemens stated that this loop, the Bobcat Loop, was originally blazed by an abutter and went through private property. He doesn't remember this loop ever being discussed at a meeting and would like for there to be transparency to the public.

Mr. Robertson stated that this trail has been there for a long time. It was never sanctioned by the ACC but it is not a new trail.

Chairman Clemens explained that he would like for it to be clear that trails are ACC sponsored and recognized so that they can be mapped and made available to Amherst citizens.

The group discussed the previously mentioned abutter leading out to Brook Road. Chairman Clemens agreed that someone should go talk with her, explained what happened in terms of the multi-modal change, and discuss the adjustments to be made.

Mr. Hardner stated that there is a large property next to Hazeltine, 36 acres and land-locked, which as abutter told him the owner might be looking to sell. The Commission agreed to get in touch with the owners regarding the future of the property.

Mr. Robertson stated that there is a property owner who might be willing to allow the ACC to put in a trail leading from the B&M Trail out to Baboosic Lake Road, which could then connect to Josiah Parker Trail. This could also lead to connection over to the corn crib.

Mr. Stoughton reviewed his Conservation Easement Monitoring plan with the Commission. He will distribute the updated document to the Commission.

VIII. Round Table

Mr. Robertson stated that he walked a proposed trail on the Arnold property with an Eagle Scout for a future project. He will come back with a map of the proposed area for the group.

The group discussed the number of current trail stewards (approximately 45) and having a get-together outing for them. Mr. Robertson suggested purchasing a folding trail saw for the stewards.

Mr. Harvey explained that there will be a project to clean up the junk on the Wheeler/Pond Parish property, in coordination with DPW. After it's cleaned up there are four things that could be done with the property: 1) a loop trail from the Beaver Dam Overlook, 2) a Sawmill Heritage Park, 3) manage as a young forest, 4) do nothing.

Mr. Harvey stated that there is a request from a local organic farmer to store a piece of farm equipment on Scott Field until the spring. He also heard that Jacobson Field has sold and may end up becoming a CSA.

Mr. Lyon stated that he intercepted the request from the ACC to consolidate the Pond Parish and Wheeler properties. As he looked at the two deeds he saw that Pond Parish belongs to the town with no conservation management mentioned, but there is a line in the Wheeler deed that states it is to be managed by the ACC. The group discussed what to do about this disparity in the deeds and decided to table the issue for now.

Mr. Montesanto explained that the new sign on the bocce ball courts names it as “Buchanan Park,” but he believes it should actually be called “Buchanan Field,” per the deed. Chairman Clemens stated that the deed would be reviewed to determine this.

Chairman Clemens stated that he had a meeting with DPW on Monday. The productive meeting led to agreements for materials and services as available.

Chairman Clemens asked Mr. Hardner to look into information and state guidelines regarding beaver dams at road crossings and their management.

Chairman Clemens stated that Mr. Gilman told him the Great Meadow mowing will take place next week.

IX. Non-Public Session

MOTION was made by Chairman Clemens and SECONDED by Mr. Hardner to enter a non-public session pursuant to NH RSA 91-A:3, II(1) for purposes of discussing potential property acquisitions.

Voting:

Chairman Clemens: Aye

Commissioner Robertson: Aye

Commissioner Bennison: Aye

Commissioner Harvey: Aye

Commissioner Hardner: Aye

Commissioner Hart: Aye

Commissioner Montesanto: Aye

Motion carried.

Whereupon, at 9:55 pm, the Commission entered Non-public Session.

At 10:52 pm, the Commission left the Nonpublic session and returned to Public Session.

Upon the suggestion that public release of the minutes of the Nonpublic Session just concluded would render the Commission’s actions in such session ineffective, MOTION was made by Mr. Harvey and SECONDED by Mr. Montesanto to seal the minutes of the Nonpublic Session for a period of 6 months, subject to further extension.

Voting:

Chairman Clemens: Aye

Commissioner Robertson: Aye

Commissioner Bennison: Aye

Commissioner Harvey: Aye

Commissioner Hardner: Aye

Commissioner Hart: Aye

Commissioner Montesanto: Aye

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There being affirmative votes in excess of the 2/3 required, Motion carried.

X. Adjournment

A MOTION was made by Mr. Harvey and SECONDED by Mr. Hardner to adjourn the meeting at 10:56 p.m.

Voting: all aye; motion carried unanimously.

*Respectfully submitted,
Kristan Patenaude*