



# Town of Amherst, NH

## Conservation Commission

### Final Minutes

Barbara Landry Meeting Room

Wednesday, February 13, 2019

*Conservation Commission members in attendance were: Chairman Rob Clemens, Frank Montesanto (Alternate member voting for Jared Hardner), Bill Widmer (Alternate member voting for Wes Robertson), 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. Chair Comments – none.**

#### **III. Minutes (from 1/9 and 1/23)**

*A MOTION was made by Mr. Widmer and SECONDED by Mr. Harvey to accept the meeting minutes from January 9 and January 23, 2019 as written.*

*Voting: all aye; motion carried unanimously.*

#### **IV. Treasurer's Report**

Mr. Harvey stated that he will be putting the gift fund into the Conservation Fund account, but that he will continue to keep a separate spreadsheet for it.

Chairman Clemens stated that, even before the ACC's Letter to the Editor came out in the Citizen thanking their volunteers and donors, the Commission received another donation from Joan O'Brien for the Plumb Trail with a note of appreciation.

Mr. Harvey explained that he would like the Commissioners to show how the money in the town budget portion of the ACC's budget will be spent by the next meeting. Items need to start being encumbered.

*Lee Gilman entered the meeting.*

The group discussed that there is some money left from the work done based on last year's Warrant Article 25, but that there are some residual needs at Bragdon that it can be used for.

Mr. Harvey explained that part of the Warrant Article 25 money was to be used for the Recreation Department trail grant match. That grant was not granted to the town, and thus those funds will need to be discussed with the Recreation Department.

## **V. Planning and Permits**

### **1. 106 Baboosic Lake Drive, PIN #: 006-008-000 – Request for approval for a Subdivision Application to subdivide two lots from Tax Map 006-008-000 and to leave the remaining area in Conservation. Zoned Residential/Rural.**

Chairman Clemens explained that when the property was sold, there was hope that most of it would be conserved. The Amherst Land Trust holds an easement on the bulk of the property between the lakeside development and the two lots proposed to be subdivided. There has been discussion of putting a trail from the road out to Baboosic Lake Road.

Mr. Will Ludt, Chairman of the Heritage Commission, explained that the Heritage Commission will be commenting on the demolition of the building by the lakeside. They have permission to do a walk-through and document the building before it is demolished.

### **2. 2 Howe Drive, PIN #: 002-034-007 – Request for approval for a Non-Residential Site Plan Application for a proposed 254,915 s.f. warehouse building with associated parking and site improvements as well as the subdivision of Tax Map 2-34-7. Zoned Industrial.**

Jeff Kevan, of TFM, explained that there is currently a gravel pit in the area of this proposed warehouse. It is near Witches Brook and a wetlands finger comes through and cross the area. The plan is to subdivide the track into two pieces. One of those pieces will be where a proposed furniture warehouse is built. The warehouse will have a footprint of about 239,000ft<sup>2</sup>, with a small parking lot and loading docks. The water that flows through will create a filtration basin and there will be very little infiltration on the site itself. Two storm tech systems will be installed and they will also utilize the existing basins left over from the gravel pit institution.

Mr. Kevan explained that the soils in this area have tight, restrictive layers, which will cause infiltration to slow a bit. The two storm tech systems will pick up the flow of water off of the roof and the parking lot. There will also be a small septic tank there. The site will have municipal water and gas. The plan will be to revegetate any areas that are impacted with plantings so that there is no loss of a vegetative buffer.

Mr. Harvey explained that the little creek there feeds into one of the most highly transmissible aquifers in town, Witches Brook. He hopes there will be a lot of work to actively keep the buffer.

Chairman Clemens stated that this aquifer needs to stay as protected as it can because of the things near it. The warehouse is of no particular concern regarding hazardous materials, but a spill of materials from any of the trucks there would be a large problem.

Mr. Kevan stated that the storm tech systems have chambers of plastic materials wrapped in stone. There is an initial pretreatment chamber and they can add in a separate oil/gas catch basin into them.

Chairman Clemens stated that there is a huge amount of impervious area being created between the building and the parking lot. Mr. Kevan stated that the proposed plan calculations make sure there nothing will be overflowing.

Mr. Hart stated that Witches Brook is one of the few remaining native New Hampshire trout streams. It's important for it to remain clean and cold. This can be aided by adding in shade trees along the stream. Mr. Kevan stated that they will not be taking down any of the trees near the forested area.

Will Ludt (3 School Street) stated that he is concerned regarding the amount of truck traffic that this warehouse will create. There will be more trucks on the local rural roads and he's not sure how that will be handled.

Mr. Kevan stated that these furniture stores are also in Salem and Manchester. The Planning Board will have a traffic study to review in their process.

Mr. Ludt asked everyone to remember what happened in Carlisle, PA – where they allowed warehouses to come into the small town and many roads needed to be redone to support them. It had a major impact on the rural character of the town.

#### **VI. Easement Monitoring Program – Bill S.**

Mr. Stoughton presented the ACC's Easement Monitoring Program. It includes relevant links to all of the Commission's properties and easements, a notice to landowners of monitoring visits, and the possibility of a field GPS tool.

The GPS tool currently being examined for use is Gaia GPS. The ACC currently owns a single-seat license to this tool that members can use once they sign up.

Chairman Clemens stated that it will be important for Commissioners to be comfortable using their tool while out monitoring easements. It will be useful in looking for signs of encroachment.

Mr. Harvey stated that citizens want a smartphone app with a "blue dot" feature to help them locate trails in town. He is looking into a hiking/biking trail app. The map data, especially locations, should be reasonably accurate (within +/- 30 feet). The map data must cover all of Amherst and connecting trails into adjacent towns, and the data must be up to date. He believes Gaia might be a good app for this type of project as well.

Mr. Harvey explained that, in order to make Gaia work for the ACC, they will need editors working in Open Street Maps to make sure the information is correct and up to date.

Mr. Clemens stated that he has concerns regarding using a separate app/system to keep information up to date, when the ACC already tries to make the most and use NRPC.

#### **VII. Trail Development and Use**

Mr. Montesanto asked for help deciding how to prioritize his list of to-do's on the trails.

Chairman Clemens stated that he would like to use volunteer efforts as much as possible, and match up different types of labor to the need. He would like to move forward with the work at Caesar's Brook, the kiosks at Great Meadow and Lindabury. Also, Joe English should be a priority just due to the traffic there.

Will Ludt explained that in June the Heritage Commission is going to try to do a field walk to the Patch Hill quarries. He invited any members of the ACC who wish to attend to do so.

**VIII. Non-Public Session (pursuant to NH RSA 91-A:3 II (1))**

*A MOTION was made by Mr. Harvey and SECONDED by Mr. Montesanto 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 Widmer: Aye*

*Commissioner Harvey: Aye*

*Commissioner Gilman: Aye*

*Commissioner Montesanto: Aye*

*Commissioner Hart: Aye*

*Motion carried.*

Whereupon, at 8:59 pm, the Commission entered Non-public Session.

At 9:20 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. Widmer 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 Widmer: Aye*

*Commissioner Harvey: Aye*

*Commissioner Gilman: Aye*

*Commissioner Montesanto: Aye*

*Commissioner Hart: Aye*

*Motion carried.*

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

**IX. Round Table**

Mr. Widmer and Ms. Patenaude stated that they are continuing to secure a date for the town's Clean-up Day.

Mr. Widmer stated that he manned a booth for the American Chestnut Foundation at the Farm and Forest Expo. It was a good event.

Mr. Harvey stated that he still needed formal approval on a few invoices.

*A MOTION was made by Mr. Gilman and SECONDED by Mr. Montesanto to approve an invoice from VCS for \$4,992 for their work in the Great Meadow as part of last year's Warrant Article 25, to be paid from the Conservation Fund.*

*Voting: all aye; motion carried unanimously.*

*A MOTION was made by Mr. Montesanto and SECONDED by Mr. Clemens to approve an invoice from Mr. Jared Hardner for \$375.00 for reimbursement on payment for the appraisal on the Grader property.*

*Voting: all aye; motion carried unanimously.*

Mr. Harvey showed the Commission a set of maps for Amherst that include insets for important habitats, soils, aquifers, watersheds, etc. These maps, created by NRPC, don't get pixelated, and he suggests blowing them up to a huge size, which will allow them to still remain crisp and clean. Small sections of the map could be used for the "You are Here" maps the group has been working on.

Chairman Clemens stated that registration for the Saving Special Places conference on April 6, 2019 is now open.

He also showed the group an anthology put together by Bruce Beckley of all of his Citizen articles.

Mr. Gilman stated that the ACC used VCS last year through their state contract. VCS declined to bid on the contract this year, so there is a new winner for that contract. The new company has higher prices than VCS had. He can contact them and see if they will match VCS's prices.

In a response to a question from Mr. Lyon, Mr. Gilman stated that the old rate was \$60/hour; the new rate is \$95/hour. Mr. Lyon stated that if the Commission decides not to use the state contracted company they will need to go through a bidding process.

*Chairman Clemens adjourned the meeting at 9:42 p.m.*

*Respectfully submitted,  
Kristan Patenaude*