



**Town of Amherst, NH
Conservation Commission
FINAL MINUTES**

Barbara Landry Conference Room

Wednesday, 11 October 2017, 7:00 PM

*Conservation Commission members in attendance were: Rob Clemens, John Harvey,
Jared Hardner, Rich Hart, Peter Lyon, Lee Gilman, William Widmer – Alternate.
Also in attendance: Simon Corson – Planner, Will Ludt, Kristan Patenaude*

I. Call to Order

Chairman Rob Clemens called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM.

II. Chair Comments

Mr. Clemens underscored with the group the importance of trying to attend monthly meetings and informing the Commission if unable to attend.

Mr. Clemens also reminded the Commission about the annual NHACC meeting on November 4th in Pembroke. He encourages anyone who can to attend.

III. Approval of Minutes from 9/13

A MOTION was made by Mr. Harvey and SECONDED by Mr. Hardner to accept the meeting minutes from September 13, 2017 as amended.

Voting: all aye. Motion carried unanimously.

IV. Treasurer's Report (August report can be found on last pg of minutes)

Mr. Harvey reviewed the Treasurer's Report. He explained that the obligation line item to Forest/Grasslands Management in Bragdon has actually been paid and is thus fulfilled.

The Commission discussed a number of fields that need to be mowed either this year or next. The fields to be mowed in 2017 include: Joppa Hill (2), Grater Woods, Currier, Wosley Landing, Cesar's Brook Landing, and Forestview Cemetery. The fields to be mowed in 2018 include: Bertha Rogers, Upper Bragdon, and the foot of Christian Hill.

Mr. Harvey explained that the Forestview Cemetery trustees would like an updated bird count for grasshopper sparrows to prove it is a significant habitat land for them, in order for the Commission to take over mowing duties there.

46 *A MOTION was made by Mr. Harvey and SECONDED by Mr. Hardner to move up to*
47 *\$2,500 to fund meadow mowing with Richetelli from the town budget.*
48 *Voting: all aye. Motion carried unanimously.*
49

50 Mr. Harvey explained that mid-November will be the time to present the plan/justification
51 for next year's budget. Mr. Clemens asked that the Commission review the budget plan and
52 provide Mr. Harvey with feedback.
53

54 The group discussed a number of initiatives that they would like to review, including
55 invasive reclamation, which will be competing for money in the Commission's budget.
56

57 Mr. Harvey discussed a \$1,000 line item to be used for professional education, such as
58 trail-building seminars.

59 Mr. Hardner explained that he would like to use some of the budget to walk certain
60 properties with Charlie Koch in order to gain his history and management knowledge of the
61 land.
62

63 Mr. Gilman stated that he would like to set up a formal bidding process for managing the
64 invasives in Bragdon. He hopes that this process can be set up next spring. The money for
65 it will not come from the budget, but from a discrete allotment from the Conservation
66 Fund.
67

68 **V. Planning Board Update**

69 Mr. Hart explained that at last week's meeting the Board heard a design presentation for a 2
70 floor building to be located on 101A, where the former Amherst Kayak and Canoe building
71 was. The proposed building will take up much of the lot space and there isn't much of a
72 conservation issue there to discuss.
73

74 Mr. Hart also discussed a collection of changes to the zoning ordinances to make them
75 more compatible with state regulations and other zoning laws. Some of the changes deal
76 with the way conservation land is looked at when a subdivision is created. Currently, the
77 land not used in a subdivision could be considered conservation by default, or given to the
78 town. Instead, it would be desirable for decisions to start in the design phase of a
79 subdivision, to determine the environmental value and habitat information for the land. The
80 conservation value could then be considered and used to develop the land with a reduced
81 value, while conserving that with a high value. This would not be an absolute requirement,
82 but something to discuss with the Planning Board. There should be a public meeting within
83 a month or so, in line with a Planning Board meeting.
84

85 **VI. Conservation Plan Update**

86 Mr. Hardner explained that the subcommittee and Community Development office have
87 met regarding this update, and feedback has been provided to the group. The UNH
88 Extension has been asked to review and provide feedback that will be reviewed before
89 finalizing the framework.
90

91 **VII. Trail Development and Usage**

92 Mr. Clemens stated that the group is trying to be up-to-date on the awareness and safety of
93 hunters and hikers on their properties. There is a new placard, which has been reworded
94 and brightened, that will be distributed to all kiosks.

95
96 Mr. Corson stated that there is some responsibility on the part of the Commission to
97 publish information for those who might be unaware that hunting is allowed on public
98 property in New Hampshire. In the same way that there is signage for biking and horses
99 allowed on certain properties; it might change the way people hike on these trails.

100
101 Mr. Will Ludt asked the Commission to consider using their jurisdiction to make certain
102 trails in the town for hikers/bikers-only or for hunting-only. He believes this would help to
103 alleviate any possible future accidents.

104 Mr. Clemens explained that the Conservation Commission has never chosen to disallow
105 hunting in the past and it would require disallowing certain land plots for certain types of
106 activities. The Conservation Commission has always been interested in allowing lands to
107 be multi-use.

108 Mr. Hardner stated that maybe the Commission needs to look into educating the public
109 with more than just signs at the kiosks.

110
111 Mr. Hardner discussed the possibility of the Commission managing some of the property
112 around The Flume. Mr. Clemens stated that the Commission has no trails planned in that
113 area, but asked Mr. Hardner to try to find out more information from the residents.

114
115 **VIII. Mapping and Student Conservation Association Activity**

116 Mr. Corson explained that there is a program through UNH Extension that uses SCA to do
117 local trail mapping. The UNH Extension also posts trail maps to the Trail Finder website
118 with municipality permission. He believes this would be a good way for the Commission to
119 share trail information with the public. The NRPC app is not always useable in the field,
120 and this would be another way for the public to access that information. In order to do this,
121 he would need updated and relevant trail information for each ACC trail property.

122
123 In response to a question from Mr. Clemens, Mr. Corson explained that this initiative for
124 additional mapping of trails comes from an interest to enhance the public knowledge of
125 these areas and thus to build support in the community for the ACC.

126
127 Mr. Hardner stated that he believes these actions to be duplicative in effort. The GPS trail
128 information already exists and can be found on the town's website.

129
130 The Commission discussed that they would like to continue to put their efforts into using
131 the NRPC database, and that NRPC can then share that information with any other site/app
132 that wants it.

133
134 Mr. Clemens stated that he, Mr. Corson, and Mr. Bennison will meet to discuss any data
135 that needs to be updated or trails that need to be mapped.

136 **IX. Property Updates – Arnold/Sky Meadow**
137 Mr. Clemens stated that there will be a public hearing with the Board of Selectmen for final
138 approval of the funds to purchase the Sky Meadow property on October 23, 2017.
139

140 **X. Infrastructure Update**
141 The infrastructure update will be addressed at the next meeting that Mr. Montesanto is
142 present for.
143

144 **XI. Metal Prospecting Policy**
145 In response to a question from Mr. Clemens, Mr. Ludt explained that he plans to work with
146 the Community Development Office in order for them to be a check-in point for managing
147 the approval of any type of metal detecting in town.
148 Mr. Ludt explained that he received no substantial comments on the policy from the
149 Historic District Commission and that he's waiting to hear back from the State
150 Archaeologist for any additional comments.
151

152 In response to a question from Mr. Lyon, Mr. Corson stated that the state allows metal
153 detecting, but that that Division of Historical Resources recommends more restrictive
154 considerations and thus could write a letter supporting this policy.
155

156 **XII. Round Table**
157 Mr. Hart stated that Ciderfest went well and actually ran out of apples. It brought in good
158 income and will give the ability to do a number of necessary items around the orchard.
159 Mr. Clemens explained that there was a Lindabury Orchard working group that met about a
160 year ago. It would be good for the group to meet again and discuss details of the orchard.
161

162 Mr. Widmer explained that he met with a regional member of the American Chestnut
163 Foundation to discuss planting chestnut trees on Bragdon field. They looked at a location
164 close to the plot for educational purposes and because water will need to be brought to the
165 site any week when there is less than an inch of rain. The hope is to plant the trees in early
166 June 2018. It is hoped that there will be community involvement in the planting process.
167

168 Mr. Harvey stated that during a subcommittee meeting the need for public education on
169 what ACC does and the conservation values they uphold was discussed. He would like to
170 post an ad to look for a PR person as a new addition to the Commission.
171

172 Mr. Clemens explained that the Commission received a letter from the Amherst Land Trust
173 asking the group to discuss repayment on their loan to purchase the Grater Woods property.
174

175 **XIII. Adjournment**
176 *A MOTION was made by Mr. Harvey and SECONDED by Mr. Widmer to adjourn the*
177 *meeting at 9:45 pm.*
178 *Voting: all aye. Motion carried unanimously*
179

180
181 Respectfully submitted, Kristan Patenaude

182 **Finance and Asset Manager Report**

183 **As Of September 30, 2017**

184

185 **Treasury**

- 186 • **Conservation Fund: \$561,585.789**
- 187 ◦ Obligation of \$2,600 for Bragdon evaluation fulfilled
- 188 ◦ Deposit: Interest: \$184.59
- 189 ◦ Obligation: Haseltine drainage repair \$600
- 190 • **Town Budget FY17: \$21,945.00 approved, balance \$18,978.27**
- 191 ◦ Paid Expenditure: Building materials/Frank \$2,205.42
- 192 ◦ Paid Expenditure: Building materials/Frank \$715.52
- 193 ◦ Approved Expenditure: Ph I invasives Beaver Bk \$1,920
- 194 ◦ Approved Expenditure: Ph I invasives Caesar's Bk \$2,384
- 195 ◦ Approved Expenditure: Plantings Betty Arnold park lot \$500 (DROP?)
- 196 • **Gift: Easiest check payments, to be reimbursed from Town budget and Conservation Fund**
- 197 **accordingly**
- 198 ◦ **May balance: \$15,266.41**
- 199 ◦ Expenditures:
 - 200 ▪ \$406.12 Classic Signs for trail names
 - 201 ▪ \$200.00 Lee Gilman to remove high risk pine
 - 202 ▪ \$1,200.00 MH Beecy Appraisals for Grater Road lot appraisal
 - 203 ▪ \$3,750.00 SE Tiedemann to remove apple trees and concrete in Lindabury
 - 204 ▪ \$942.50 Charlie Koch to evaluate upper Bragdon woodlot
- 205 ◦ Deposits: Interest: \$403.49
- 206 ◦ **September balance: \$9,462.67**
- 207

208 **Contracts, Leases and Purchases**

- 209 • Riccitelli mowing contract for 2018 signed
- 210

211 **Assets**

- 212 • No transactions
- 213

214