



# Town of Amherst, NH

## Conservation Commission

### Final Minutes

Barbara Landry Meeting Room

Wednesday, July 11, 2018

1           *Conservation Commission members in attendance were: Rob Clemens, Michael Cohen,*  
2                           *Frank Montesanto, Jared Hardner, Rich Hart, and Wes Robertson.*  
3                           *Also in attendance: Kristan Patenaude*  
4

#### 5     **I. Call to Order**

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

#### 8     **II. Chair Comments**

9           Chairman Clemens thanked everyone for their help on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. There was good traffic  
10           past the ACC booth and a lot of good questions asked.  
11

#### 12    **III. Proposed Land Swap – Eric Bazil, 20 Simeon Wilson Rd.**

13  
14           Mr. Eric Bazil explained his proposed land swap to the ACC. His hope is to get a uniform  
15           property line in his backyard in order to do landscaping, build a deck, etc. His property  
16           contains just under 5.5 acres, most of which lies on the northern side of the Souhegan River.  
17           He is proposing to swap approximately 0.7 acres from the town, to him, while giving double  
18           that amount back to the town. Mr. Bazil stated that he has no interest in developing the land  
19           across the river and all he's hoping for is a level/straight lot line.  
20

21           Mr. Hardner suggested that Mr. Bazil consider keeping ownership of the land, and taking an  
22           easement on it instead. Mr. Bazil stated that he is open to the idea.  
23

24           Mr. Clemens stated that he would look further into this proposal with Community  
25           Development.  
26

#### 27    **IV. Planning & Permits**

##### 28           **Reforestation Plan – 6-25-2 – Tom Carr, Meridian Services**

29           Tom Carr, of Meridian Services, proposed a reforestation plan for a plot of land that is  
30           currently experiencing encroachment on conservation land, the Pond Parish town forest. The  
31           plan involves recreating forest in the surrounding areas, utilizing trees such as sugar maple,  
32           Eastern Hemlock, and Highbush blueberry.  
33

34 Mr. Hardner stated that the Commission is actually currently trying to create the type of  
35 habitat that was accidentally formed on this property. He believes the land can be left to grow  
36 back naturally, or trees can be added if the landowner finds it to be more aesthetically  
37 pleasing.

38  
39 The group discussed that they would like for any vehicle traffic occurring on conservation  
40 land in this area to stop, and that plantings in there could be helpful in making that happen.  
41 The group also discussed using spruce trees instead of hemlock trees.

#### 42 **Conditional Use Permit – Clark Road – Tom Carr, Meridian Services**

43 Mr. Carr also presented a conditional use permit plan for a property on Clark Road that is  
44 proposed to be torn down and rebuilt. The current amount of impervious area will be reduced  
45 from 31.9% to 28.3%. There is also a plan to tear down the concrete retaining wall that  
46 currently stands and replace it with a natural round stone wall.

47  
48  
49 The Commission expressed some concern regarding the growing number of properties on the  
50 lake that are requesting retaining walls. Mr. Carr explained that he doesn't believe  
51 bioengineering solutions work in most of these situations due to boat traffic. Due to the fact  
52 that a concrete wall already exists at this property, DES will approve is as a replacement in  
53 kind.

54  
55 Mr. Clemens stated that some members of the ACC will make a site visit to the property and  
56 return their comments to Mr. Gordon Leedy, Director of Community Development, before  
57 the Planning Board meeting next week.

#### 58 **V. Minutes (6/13)**

59 Mr. Clemens asked that the group review the minutes from the June 13<sup>th</sup> meeting and return  
60 with amendments, or comments at the next meeting.

#### 61 **VI. Treasurer's Report**

62 The Commission reviewed the Treasurer's Report from June 30, 2018.

#### 63 **VII. Sky Meadow Conservation Restrictions Approval**

64 Mr. Clemens explained that, while discussing the Sky Meadow property with town attorney  
65 Drescher and John Arnold, Attorney Drescher expressed some concern that the conservation  
66 restrictions for this property were never formally approved by the ACC. The Board of  
67 Selectmen will need to acknowledge the restrictions when endorsing the purchase.

68  
69  
70  
71  
72 *A MOTION was made by Mr. Hardner and SECONDED by Mr. Montesanto to approve the*  
73 *conservation restrictions associated with the acquisition of the Arnold property.*

74 *Voting: all aye; motion carried unanimously.*

#### 75 **VIII. Other Parcel Updates**

76 **Taylor-Bower Easement Update**

77  
78

79 Mr. Hardner explained that this deal is a complex one, involving two property owners and  
80 about 4-5 different lots of land. This will be a hybrid between a conservation agreement and  
81 an agricultural conservation easement. He believes this is the best deal that can be made,  
82 from a conservation standpoint. There will be the option to create a public trail to connect Joe  
83 English to Mack Hill. There is also room for a small kiosk and/or a small parking lot on the  
84 property. The land will also be available to the town in order to organize events on the  
85 property, but there will not be free public access through a majority of the property.  
86

87 *A MOTION was made by Mr. Hardner and SECONDED by Mr. Robertson to advance this*  
88 *proposed easement to Attorney Drescher for legal review, via the Town Administrator.*  
89 *Voting: all aye; motion carried unanimously.*  
90

### 91 **ALT Grater Rd. Parcel Transfers**

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93 Mr. Clemens stated that Ms. Sally Wilkins, head of the ALT, has approved moving forward  
94 with the transfer of these parcels to the ACC. He will sit down with the Town Administrator  
95 to determine the process for this.  
96

## 97 **IX. Trail Development and Use**

### 98 **Highland Bridge Project**

99

100 Mr. Montesanto explained that the bridge itself is complete. The ramps on each end now  
101 need to be built.

102 Mr. Hardner recognized all the volunteers who have helped with the project so far.

103 Mr. Clemens thanked Mr. Montesanto for his amazing engineering and organizational skills.  
104

105 Mr. Montesanto explained that there will be one more big push on the 22<sup>nd</sup> in order to finish.  
106

### 107 **Proposed Trail Swap**

108  
109 Mr. Hardner proposed doing a trail swap on a small loop of the Joe English trails that is  
110 currently designated for mountain biking use. His plan would be to give half of the trail on  
111 the south side of Brook Road to hikers-only and to allow one route access on the north side to  
112 mountain bikers. This plan should connect well with the town's bike/ped connectivity plan. It  
113 will allow mountain bikers to get all the way across Joe English out to Chestnut Hill Road.  
114 These trails will also be amenable to grooming, allowing for open access multi-use  
115 connectivity all the way across town.  
116

117 Mr. Robertson stated that this plan could eventually be extended to allow access all the way  
118 to the Pulpit Brook area, and thus into Bedford, Goffstown, etc.  
119

120 Mr. Hardner explained that he proposed the plan to Mr. John Harvey, who said he would be  
121 supportive of the plan if the public will be educated that not all of the surrounding trails will  
122 also be multi-use.  
123

124 The Commission discussed the educational effort that will need to be involved to complete  
125 this plan; notices will need to be placed at all trail heads. Mr. Hardner expressed interest  
126 surveying the public at the end of the season to see their reactions to the change.

127  
128 *A MOTION was made by Mr. Hardner and SECONDED by Mr. Robertson that: in an effort*  
129 *to improve trail connectivity across Amherst that will serve a range of users, we propose to*  
130 *expand multi-use access (including mountain bikes) to a set of trails in Joe English*  
131 *Reservation (namely Highland, Plumb, and P-H). Within one year we will review public*  
132 *perceptions of this modification to ensure it generates a net benefit for the community.*  
133 *Voting: all aye; motion carried unanimously.*

134  
135 The Commission discussed the proposed trail for Opportunity Networks / Sue Long and her  
136 father. The group decided to move forward on examining a section of the new Sky Meadow  
137 trail, which could include a memorial bench overlooking the meadow, for this purpose.

## 138 139 **X. Round Table**

140  
141 Mr. Hart explained that he's been looking into wetland town-wide management documents,  
142 which would pair with ACC policies on how to manage these well throughout town.

143  
144 *A MOTION was made by Mr. Robertson and SECONDED by Mr. Cohen to approve Mr.*  
145 *Harvey's request to spend \$1,000 from the town budget for initial mowing of Sky Meadow*  
146 *and Ackley, annual mowing of landings at Caesar's Brook and Woolsey, and to girdle a few*  
147 *large trees in Beacon-Wells. Mowing to be done by Mike Riccitelli under ACC contract. Tree*  
148 *girdling to be done by reputable landscape company.*  
149 *Voting: all aye; motion carried unanimously.*

150  
151 *A MOTION was made by Mr. Robertson and SECONDED by Mr. Montesanto to approve*  
152 *Mr. Harvey's request to spend \$500 from the town budget for a new standardized kiosk and*  
153 *U-R Here map sign PDF files, being prepared by NRPC.*  
154 *Voting: all aye; motion carried unanimously.*

155  
156 Mr. Clemens stated that there is currently one position open on the Souhegan Local Advisory  
157 Committee. He and Mr. Hart are currently also on the committee. The group meets the third  
158 Thursday of each month.

159  
160 Mr. Robertson stated that he has been in contact with the Bedford Land Trust, the Flume  
161 Home Owner's Association, and the Bedford Conservation Committee regarding  
162 participating in a site walk on the 14<sup>th</sup> at 10am. This will start at Joppa Hill Farm and  
163 continue down the Pulpit Run trail, discussing many improvements to be made along the  
164 trail.

165  
166 Mr. Montesanto stated that he has flagged a small reroute on the Lindabury Trail and will  
167 start working on it, if Ok'd by the Commission.

168  
169 Mr. Clemens stated that there will be no ACC meeting in August.

170 *The meeting was adjourned at 10:03 p.m.*

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174

175

176 *Respectfully submitted,*

177 *Kristan Patenaude*