



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

Barbara Landry Conference Room

Wednesday, 9 August 2017, 7:00 PM

Conservation Commission members in attendance were: Victor Bennison, John Harvey, Rich Hart, Wes Robertson, Lee Gilman, Frank Montesanto, and Bruce Beckley. Also in attendance: Simon Corson – Planner, Will Ludt, Kristan Patenaude

I. Call to Order

Vice Chair Victor Bennison called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM. Mr. Bennison explained to the Commission that, due to the agenda not being previously posted for this meeting, the group would not be able to vote on items tonight.

II. Welcome Kristan Patenaude

A nice welcome was made to the ACC's new minute taker, Kristan Patenaude.

III. Treasurer's Report – John Harvey

Mr. Harvey explained his Treasurer's Report. A copy of this report can be found attached to the minutes.

IV. Letter re: Vernal Pool

The Commission reviewed a letter from a citizen concerned with the new homeowner's knowledge of a vernal pool area on their property at 20 Boston Post Road. The group discussed the ACC's position on increasing awareness about these types of areas on private property without trespassing.

V. Eagle Scout Project – Sam Newman & Frank Montesanto

Sam Newman presented the ACC with a PowerPoint regarding his intentions for his Eagle Scout project, Arnold Trail Revival. He hopes to replace the current staircase with a wooden one, which he will build and install. He would also like to do some trailblazing and clear out the area. Finally, he intends to build a small kiosk for the trail.

In response to a question from Mr. Bennison, Mr. Newman explained that the stairs would be made of pressure-treated wood.

46 Mr. Newman explained that he has been collecting donations and holding fundraisers in
47 order to raise the necessary funds for this project.

48
49 In response to a question from Mr. Gilman, Mr. Newman stated that he would hold the
50 wooden stairs together using long, metal rebar stakes drilled into the wood.

51
52 In response to a question from Mr. Hart, Mr. Newman explained that the group of people
53 helping him would consist of younger scouts, helping to blaze the trail, and older friends,
54 helping to make the stairs and install them. He will have refreshments for the group. He
55 expects the project to take approximately 3 weekends.

56
57 Mr. Robertson explained that Mr. Newman might have the opportunity to do some
58 benching along the trail, if possible.

59
60 The Commission discussed the possibility of using stone steps instead of wooden ones in
61 order to use more sustainable materials. The Commission also cautioned Mr. Newman to
62 try digging into the area first, in order to see how rocky the land is. The Commission
63 agreed that a kiosk at the bottom of the trail stairs would be appropriate.

64
65 Mr. Robertson agreed to set up a time to go out to the trail with Mr. Newman to see what
66 work can be done. Mr. Newman stated that the project goes before the Eagle Scout Board
67 for approval on September 20th. He then has until April to complete it.

68
69 **VI. 24 Brook Road Site Walk**

70 Mr. Beckley submitted a letter regarding the site inspection that is attached to these
71 minutes.

72
73 The group discussed the vulnerability of the site and the possibility of development if sold.

74
75 Mr. Beckley stated that he would like for members of the Commission to meet with John
76 Walsh, property owner, in order to see what his thoughts are on the future of the property.
77 Mr. Robertson and Mr. Beckley agreed to set up a meeting with Mr. Walsh.

78
79 **VII. Invasives Control – Caesar’s Brook**

80 Mr. Gilman stated that most of the invasives were able to be chased out, with the exception
81 of the swallow-wort, which had spread through the area, beyond the trails, and was found
82 within goldenrod. The reports from the crew for the rest of the species were good.

83
84 **VIII. Joppa Hill Trail Maintenance**

85 Mr. Bennison described the trail maintenance done on Joppa Hill due to overgrowth. There
86 can be more work done in the future.

87
88 In response to a question from Mr. Robertson, Mr. Bennison stated that a Trail Day there in
89 the future could be helpful.

90

91 **IX. Highland Bridge Plans**
92 Mr. Montesanto stated that he spoke with Charlie Desmarais regarding footings for the
93 bridge. Mr. Desmarais suggested using subterranean timber, which Mr. Montesanto will
94 look into.

95
96 **X. Conservation Plan/Forest and Grasslands Update**
97 Mr. Harvey presented his Grasslands Management Plan. He explained that it's the first plan
98 written with the master Conservation Plan in mind. He hopes that, if approved, it will serve
99 as a template for future plans.

100
101 Mr. Simon Corson stated that this plan works well and serves as a good policy document.
102 He suggested that the Commission use inventory mapping, if possible. He believes it's
103 critical to have data that is easily accessible to the whole group. Grasslands offer a good
104 opportunity to start this because there are 18 parcels available for mapping.

105
106 **XI. Austin Road Parking Area Clean-up**
107 Mr. Robertson described his plans for the clean-up of this area using a Trail Day.

108
109 **XII. Round Table**
110 Mr. Bennison described his recent work putting up new maps at many of the trail kiosks
111 around town.

112
113 Mr. Gilman stated that there has been some poison ivy control done at the orchard and it
114 looks much better.

115
116 Mr. Hart explained that he's still trying to find a good time to meet with Matt Tarr at the
117 orchard to gather suggestions for managing the orchards boundaries with the forest.

118
119 Mr. Montesanto stated that an arborist passing through the orchard was concerned with the
120 amount of apple scab he noticed. Mr. Gilman explained that the scab is superficial and that
121 cider can still be made from the effected apples.

122 Mr. Montesanto asked if there was a way for the public to donate to specific properties in
123 town when dropping off a donation check at the Town Hall. The group discussed that this
124 could be tracked in-house.

125 Mr. Montesanto also asked about creating a non-profit letter with some type of ACC
126 letterhead to hand out to local businesses in case they're interested in donating in-kind to
127 the cider festival.

128
129 **XIII. Adjournment**
130 *A MOTION was made by Mr. Beckley and SECONDED by Mr. Harvey to adjourn the*
131 *meeting at 8:36pm.*

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

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134
135 *Respectfully submitted,*
136 *Kristan Patenaude*