

Conservation Commission Minutes February 9, 2012

TOWN OF NEWMARKET, NH

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

February 9, 2012

7:00PM Council Chambers

Members Present: Drew Kiefaber (Chairman), Bruce Fecteau (Vice Chair), Jeff Goldknopf, Fred Pearson, Jessica Veysey, Donald Tucker (Alternate), Stephanie Coster (Alternate), James Bergeron (Town Council Rep), Valerie Shelton (Planning Board Rep)

Members Absent: George Hilton, excused

Called to Order: 7:02PM

Agenda Items:

1. Pledge of Allegiance

2. Roll Call

Drew Kiefaber nominated Donald Tucker as a voting member in the absence of George Hilton.

3. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

4. Approval of Minutes

Jan. 12, 2012: There was a review of recommended changes to the draft minutes.
Action

Motion: Fred Pearson made a motion to approve the minutes as revised.

Second: Bruce Fecteau

Vote: All in favor.

5. Treasurer's Report

Jeff Goldknopf met with the Finance Department to review new financial reports and to reconcile some outstanding expenses. Discussion ensued around the potential need for training on the report's new format to ensure all commission members can monitor the financials. The Aubuchon expenditure was tracked to the purchase of a bag of cement used at Wiggin Farm for the installation of a sign or post. The current use tax from Hickory Pond is now posted on the January financial report. The Finance Department will conduct a thorough review the historical financial data to ensure all funds have been appropriated correctly and, as a result, some additional debits and deposits may be forthcoming on future reports. Drew Kiefaber asked Jeff Goldknopf to inquire with the Finance Department about the possibility of establishing a separate maintenance fund. The group concluded to make an effort to expend the remaining balance in the Schanda fund this year. Jeff Goldknopf will provide future monthly reports in PDF format and email to the Commission prior to the monthly meeting.

6. Committee Reports

There were no Committee Reports.

7. Chairman's Report

The Nature Conservancy – CC grant match letter

Previous Commissions agreed to donate \$5000 in matching funds to TNC and they have submitted a written request for the donation to be used for the acquisition of the Hayden property abutting the Hilton Conservation easement.
Action

Motion: Valerie Shelton made a motion to authorize the Chair to sign The Nature Conservancy letter of intent towards the FWS grant agreement and to authorize the payment of the \$5000.

Second: Jeff Goldknopf

Vote: All in favor.

Wiggin Farm Encroachment

The town received a letter from Stephen Walker of the NH Conservation Land Stewardship Program regarding the presence of a dog house and dog run belonging to an abutter at 270 Grant Road. There are reportedly some rocks missing from a stone wall on the property as well. Mr. Walker requested that the Conservation Commission draft a letter to the abutter to correct the encroachment. Drew Kiefaber has drafted a letter which has been reviewed by Mr. Walker. Jessica Veysey commented that the easement monitoring conducted by her and Bruce Fecteau in January did not identify any issues and they did not recall seeing a doghouse or dog run on the property. Drew Kiefaber agreed to inspect the site before sending the response to the abutter.

Proposed NH Legislative changes to Land Use Change Tax

Drew Kiefaber distributed a state bulletin to the Commission regarding pending legislation to change the appropriation of the Land Use Change tax. The proposal would require that all revenue collected from this tax be allocated to the town's general fund, eliminating the 50% that would normally go to the Conservation Commissions. Current legislation permits the town to make the decision independently and Drew Kiefaber encouraged Commissioners to contact their local representatives to voice their opinion. Valerie Shelton agreed to draft an opinion on behalf of the Newmarket Conservation Commission stating the collective opinion.

8. Old/New Business

The Nature Conservancy – Oyster Reef Restoration

Ray Grizzle and Krystin Ward of The Nature Conservancy presented a proposal to use 2.5 acres of oyster reef restoration in two Newmarket locations (the mouth of the Squamscott River and the mouth of the Lamprey River) for oyster reef restoration. The proposal follows the same process that was approved and successfully implemented in 2011. The restoration process involves three steps scheduled to begin in July: Step 1 - bed construction; Step 2 - production of spat-on-shell (live oysters); Step 3 - spreading on shell bed. Stephanie Coster asked about the potential change in fitness due to the hybridization of the two separate species in the estuary. Ray explained that they are actually hoping for some hybridization to strengthen the resistance and life span of the oysters. Fred Pearson asked about manpower and costs associated with the project, which Ray estimated to be just under \$50k/acre, with some additional expenses to maintain the reef. Discussion ensued around the restrictions on harvesting and the positive impact on the water quality in these areas. James Bergeron asked about any potential impact to the oyster reefs and sediment if the Dam Removal project was undertaken. Ray theorized that the engineers would manage for the slow release of sediment but was not certain of that. The Commission has received one wetlands permit application for the project and a second application will follow shortly.

Stewardship monitoring – Silverman-Schneer - Feb. 12

Scheduled for 9AM on Feb. 12 with Drew Kiefaber and Donald Tucker; Drew Kiefaber will make a second attempt to notify Jean Silverman of the site visit.

Wiggin Farm

The site walk went well, no issues were noted and signs of bio-life were good. There was some confusion around the location of the boundaries and the need for markers. They identified an abandoned snowmobile bridge and tractor tire on the property. James Bergeron mentioned a discussion with a member of the Great Bay Sno Rollers, who offered to assist with the removal of the bridge. Bruce Fecteau recommended that abutters be notified of site walks in advance. Discussion ensued around the need and cost for surveying and marking the boundaries on the property.

Action

Motion: James Bergeron made a motion to request boundary monumentation along the line abutting 240 Grant Road, not to exceed \$500.

Second: Valerie Shelton

Vote: All in favor.

Piscassic River/Loiselle – Done

The monitoring report is complete and has been sent to appropriate parties.

Smith – Audubon – Done

The monitoring report is complete and has been sent to appropriate parties.

Nostrum Farm

The monitoring report on Nostrum Farm was delivered to NRCS in Dover and accepted. The carsonite marker has been set on the property as requested; Doucet Survey donated the time and labor to the Commission, providing a savings of \$255.75. Jessica Veysey will draft a thank you note on behalf of the Commission to Doucet Survey.

Conservation Commission Scholarship

Bruce Fecteau would like to get started on this year's scholarship and stated that, for the past four years, the Commission has awarded one \$1000 scholarship to all high school senior students in the town of Newmarket.
Action

Motion: Bruce Fecteau made a motion to provide one \$1000 scholarship to all high school senior students in the town of Newmarket for 2012.

Second: Fred Pearson

Vote: All in favor.

Bruce Fecteau will draft and distribute the scholarship notice and application; the sub-committee responsible for the review of applications will be Bruce Fecteau, Fred Pearson and Donald Tucker.

New Scholarship

Valerie Shelton suggested making additional scholarship funds available for education-related programs related to conservation to the Newmarket schools.
Action

Motion: Valerie Shelton made a motion to allocate \$1000 annually for the purpose of providing aid to the Newmarket schools for environmental educational purposes.

Second: Bruce Fecteau

Vote: All in favor.

Jeff Goldknopf will draft and send letter to local school principals notifying them that funds are available.

Heron Point

Fred Pearson noted that the plexiglass at Heron Point has been vandalized again and suggested upgrading the material to something less prone to vandalism. He also noted several missing balusters.
Action

Motion: Drew Kiefaber made a motion to approve the expenditure not to exceed \$120 for Lexan and additional balusters for Heron Point.

Second: Bruce Fecteau

Vote: All in favor.

Great Bay Sno Rollers

The Sno Rollers expressed interest in working with the Conservation Commission but are unclear about what they should and shouldn't be doing to maintain trails on Conservation land. James Bergeron suggested that they be invited to an upcoming Conservation Commission meeting to discuss their role. James Bergeron will coordinate the date and Drew Kiefaber will add it to a future agenda.

James Bergeron commented on the general mission and direction of the Conservation Commission. Drew Kiefaber will add this topic to next month's agenda to propose and discuss the mission and future initiatives for the Conservation Commission.

Action Item List

Abutter letters to Smith – No further action

Dog waste signage – No further action

Letters to dog owners – Complete; letters are being distributed by the Town

Schanda Park stone pillar/wall repairs – On hold until spring

Flag light fixtures – No further action

Easement signage at Nostrum - Complete

Burn at Wiggin Farm – No further action; burn permits are not being issued at the moment due to a lack of snow cover on the ground.

9. Adjournment Action

Motion: James Bergeron made a motion to adjourn.

Second: Bruce Fecteau

Vote: All in favor.
Meeting adjourned at 9:36PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Becky LaPense