

# Conservation Commission Minutes March 8, 2012

TOWN OF NEWMARKET, NH

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

March 8, 2012

6:00PM Auditorium

Members Present: Drew Kiefaber (Chairman), Bruce Fecteau (Vice Chair), George Hilton, Jeff Goldknopf, Jessica Veysey (Alternate), Donald Tucker (Alternate), Stephanie Coster (Alternate), Valerie Shelton (Planning Board Rep)

Members Absent: Fred Pearson and James Bergeron (Town Council Rep), excused

Called to Order: 6:07PM

Agenda Items:

1. Pledge of Allegiance

2. Roll Call

Drew Kiefaber nominated Stephanie Coster and Jessica Veysey as voting members in the absence of Fred Pearson and James Bergeron. Drew Kiefaber announced that James Bergeron's term on the Town Council will expire this year. He thanked him for his participation on the Town Council and his support of the Conservation Commission.

3. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

4. Approval of Minutes

Feb. 9, 2012: There was a review of recommended changes to the draft minutes.

Action

Motion: Valerie Shelton made a motion to approve the minutes as revised.

Second: Stephanie Coster

Vote: All in favor.

## 5. Treasurer's Report

Interim Finance Director, Matt Angell, reviewed the new finance reports with the Commission members. He stated that recent audits have uncovered some misallocation of Land Use Change tax revenue and the corrections will be reflected in next month's financial report. He anticipates next month's ending fund balance for the Land Use Change tax account to be approximately \$223,827. Discussion ensued around ways to ensure that these discrepancies cease to be an issue and oversight of the allocation of expenses to the correct GL accounts.

Valerie Shelton expressed concern about the use of revenue collected from the Land Use Change tax being used to pay for operating or administrative costs, not for the promotion of conservation initiatives. Drew Kiefaber and Jeff Goldknopf will bring this topic up with the Town Administrator for clarification for the 2014 budget.

Discussion ensued around the town's timely assessment of the Land Use Change tax. The Commission would like some way to track when there has been a land use change that will notify the Town Assessor's office to issue the tax bill. The Assessor's office currently receives copies of building permits, which can act as a flag that the tax needs to be assessed. Drew Kiefaber agreed to contact the Town Assessor's Office to discuss this concern and find a possible solution.

Bruce Fecteau also asked Matt Angell to look into variances in expenses for minute taking.

## 6. Committee Reports

Planning Board – Nothing to report.

Town Council – Nothing to report.

Dam Removal Study Committee – Stephanie Coster reported they are reviewing the RFP and will provide updates on the ongoing RFP proceedings. They hope to start the study as soon as this summer. The town has some projections on the short-term costs for dam maintenance but no other cost projections at this point. She asked that the Commission members recommend potential issues or conflicts that may warrant further research for the purposes of the study.

## 7. Chairman's Report

Wiggin Farm Encroachment on Feb. 12 - Jeff Goldknopf and Drew Kiefaber inspected the area suspected of an encroachment. They located a dog house and dog run and confirmed that it was partially on Conservation land. The landowner met them during their visit and discussed the reason for their visit. The landowner was very supportive and has since removed the dog house and dog run.

Drew Kiefaber reviewed several conservation related events and workshops coming up in the near future. Please notify Drew Kiefaber if you are interested in attending.

## 8. Old/New Business

Oyster Reef Restoration – The Commission has received all necessary permit applications for each restoration area.  
Action

Motion: Valerie Shelton made motion to authorize the Chair to sign the Wetlands Permit application for the state of NH submitted by The Nature Conservancy for property located at Tax Map R3, Squamscott River Channel Bottom

Second: Jeff Goldknopf

Vote: All in favor.

#### Action

Amended Motion: Valerie Shelton made a motion to authorize the chair to sign the Expedited Review Minimum Impact application submitted by Kristen Ward for property owned by the state of NH Tax Maps R2 and R3

Second: Bruce Fecteau

Vote: All in favor.

A representative of The Nature Conservancy was present to answer questions about the success of the Oyster Reef Restoration project. He thanked the Commission for its ongoing support. He advised them of funding shortages for the current year and requested permission to send a letter requesting a donation of \$5000 toward the costs of the project. Drew Kiefaber invited him to send the letter for consideration by the Conservation Commission.

#### Proposed NH Legislative changes to Land Use Change Tax

Valerie Shelton reported that all of the pending bills were killed in committee.

#### Stewardship monitoring – Silverman-Schneer - Feb. 12

Donald Tucker, Drew Kiefaber, Jeff Goldknopf and James Bergeron conducted the stewardship monitoring on Feb. 12. No encroachments or problems were noted and they were able to replace a few boundary signs. There was one area where some trees had been blown down but, in general, things were good with signs of bio-life. Drew Kiefaber is putting the final touches on the monitoring report.

#### Wiggin Farm

Bruce Fecteau is finalizing the monitoring report.

#### Dog waste signs for properties

Drew Kiefaber sent out suggested verbiage for the signs and there were no edits or changes. He will proceed with ordering the signs.

#### Ongoing Conservation Commission Activities

The Commission reviewed the list of the current Commission duties and new potential initiatives. Stephanie Coster will summarize the assessment and develop a preliminary action plan and distribute it to the members for their review in advance of next month's meeting.

The Commission has been contacted by a hopeful Eagle Scout in need of a project. He has offered assistance for any Conservation Commission projects needing work. Drew Kiefaber asked the Commission to think about any potential projects for this potential Eagle Scout.

Jessica Veysey identified some cuttings that she suspected might be on conservation land on the Smith sisters property. Drew Kiefaber will follow up on this report to see if any action needs to be taken.

#### Action Item List

- Thank You letter to Doucet Survey – completed. Jessica Veysey distributed the letter for Commission members to sign.
- Cease and desist letters Smith Sisters property abutters – Both abutters responded within a few days of the letters being mailed. They expressed their apologies for the unintentional encroachment and thanked the Commission for their efforts in monitoring the neighboring conservation land.
- List of stewardship monitoring properties – No further action taken.
- Removal of old snowmobile bridge from Wiggin Farm – No further action taken.
- Encroachment at Wiggin Farm – Complete with some minor follow up needed.
- Draft letter to Doucet Survey – Complete.
- Draft letter to school principals – No further action taken.
- Scholarship materials – In process.
- Lights at Schanda Park – In process. Bruce Fecteau may have found an LED light for the flag pole and he will bring more information on it to the next meeting. Jeff Goldknopf will continue to research lighting options that will not negatively impact on the turtle populations.
- Burn at Wiggin Farm – Drew Kiefaber will ask James Bergeron to get the burn for us and try for a burn on Saturday evening.
- Easement signage on Nostrum – No further action taken.

#### 9. Adjournment Action

Motion: Bruce Fecteau made a motion to adjourn.

Second: Drew Kiefaber

Vote: All in favor.  
Meeting adjourned at 8:41PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Becky LaPense