



# CONSERVATION COMMISSION

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## MINUTES OF THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

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Wednesday, October 14, 2015 – 7:00 p.m. – Town Hall Conference Room

*Members Present:* Chair Chip Hussey, Bill Bilodeau, Joe Fredericks, Kevin Lucey

*Members Absent:* Laura Byergo

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Chair Hussey opened the Conservation Commission meeting at 7:00 p.m. A roll call was taken by the Chair; he announced a quorum was present and the meeting was being recorded.

### 1. Thompson Brook Fish Passage Update: Mitch Kalter

Mitch Kalter addressed the Commission, telling members that he had appeared before them four or five years ago regarding the Thompson Brook project. Work has been done, but there are still challenges ahead. The project started when work was done on the Winnicut River watershed in 2009 as the dam removal took place. A culvert study was done by TNC, and identified it as a top priority culvert for blockage of fish passage in the watershed. The culvert is located on Winnicut Road; Thompson Brook is the lowest tributary of the Winnicut River before it flows into Great Bay.

M. Kalter further explained that the road cover has thinned out over time. In addition, guard rails were once in place but are no longer supported. The culvert has also had recurrent erosion holes on the shoulder which have been filled in. M. Kalter also noted that Winnicut Road is a State road and it would be crossing a DOT right-of-way.

In 2009, Fish and Game did electrofishing in Thompson Brook and found that a large number of brook trout were bred in the stream. In comparison to areas around the State, this was an unexpected find for NH Fish and Game. The idea was to maximize the survival options of the very rare Southeastern New Hampshire wild brook trout. The fish need to be able to move throughout the watershed at various times of the year. They have no problem going down the culvert; however, there is a perch in the culvert, preventing them from getting back up. This is one of the main issues facing wild brook populations. The culvert on Winnicut Road is one of approximately 5,000 in the State that inhibits trout passage.

M. Kalter continued that they would like to enhance the Thompson Brook habitat, making it more friendly for the fish and other creatures. They are also proposing to improve the fish passage so the fish could freely pass up and down the tributary, utilizing the watershed. He added that with the dam no longer there, there is a possibility that brook trout exhibit a certain behavior before they become soltered, utilizing tidal waters to feed and then return to spawn.

To improve stream hydraulics, the stream would have the normal full bank width (approximately 12' to 15') narrowed down to a 6' wide pipe. Below the culvert there is a deep excoriated pool; the water velocity is fast moving. They will also try to restore the normal river hydraulics.

M. Kalter told members that the last time he attended a meeting, they were in the initial design, engineering and monitoring phase. That portion of the project was completed in 2012. The Wetlands Permit was received, and the initial design plan and monitoring were done. Stream restoration was started in 2012-2013. An inactive beaver dam, causing an impoundment, was removed. In addition, instream wood restoration was done to improve habitats. The current phase calls for replacing the culvert with a structure they designed (pre-cast concrete bridge, approximately 20' wide). That would completely restore the normal bank of the river and riparians on either side according to NH Stream and Crossings guidelines.

They have been trying to raise funds since 2012 to get the culvert replacement completed. M. Kalter reviewed the work that had been done to date. Volunteers were the predominant factor in completing the work. Three grants were completed successfully, enabling them to do the stream restoration. In order to move forward with the final phase of the project, test borings were done to make sure the soil would support the structure. DOT provided some engineering support and worked with the original design plan (cost: approximately \$240,000). The end result was a plan that would cost \$402,000. With revisions, it's now just under \$300,000 (\$292,245). To date, they have raised approximately \$240,000 in grant money. NH DOT is not providing funding for the project. They are approximately \$95,000 short; M. Kalter reviewed funding options, which includes speaking with the Greenland Board of Selectmen. They will begin to lose grant funding if deadlines are not met.

B. Bilodeau asked if the culvert could be scaled back. M. Kalter responded that the Crossing guidelines had to be met, and stated that structurally it had to be a bridge. The pre-cast bridge is the most cost efficient and meets DOT standards. Guardrails, currently not there, will also have to be installed.

If grant funding is lost, they may not be able to recover. M. Kalter added that if it's not built next summer, there won't be any resources available to continue. He has been in contact with members of the State legislature, who have assisted where they can. They are looking at a minimum of \$50,000 to be able to repair the culvert; anything beyond that would be cost over-run protection.

Members agreed it was a worthwhile project. M. Kalter stated that according to engineers, the culvert is in fair condition and not in immediate need of restoration; there are other higher priority projects that need to be done.

## 2. November Meeting Date

Wednesday, November 11, 2015 is the Veteran's Day holiday. The Conservation Commission scheduled for that evening has been moved to Thursday, November 12, 2015.

## 3. Approval of Minutes: Wednesday, September 09, 2015

**MOTION:** *J. Fredericks moved to approve the minutes of Wednesday, September 09, 2015. Second – B. Bilodeau; all in favor. MOTION CARRIED*

4. Other Business

The Weeks property walk will be held on Saturday, October 17, 2015, at 9:00 a.m. Plan to meet in the parking area at Tide Mill Road. Nancy Zuba has offered to write the report.

The purchase of property by the Conservation Commission, and approved at Town Meeting in March, has been completed. There has been no movement on the other two pieces of property.

5. Adjournment

**MOTION:** Chair Hussey moved to adjourn at 7:43 p.m. Second – K. Lucey; all in favor. **MOTION CARRIED**

NEXT MEETING
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Thursday, November 12, 2015 – 7:00 p.m., Town Hall Conference Room

Respectfully Submitted – Charlotte Hussey, Secretary to the Boards

Approved: Thursday, November 12, 2015