



CONSERVATION COMMISSION

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MINUTES OF THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Tuesday, May 06, 2014 – 7:00 p.m. – Town Hall Conference Room

Members Present: Chair Chip Hussey, Bill Bilodeau, Laura Byergo, Kevin Lucey

Members Absent: Joe Fredericks

Chair Hussey opened the Conservation Commission meeting at 7:05 p.m. A roll call was taken by the Chair; he announced a quorum was present and the meeting was being recorded.

1. Trail Update

K. Lucey reviewed the notes taken during the trail walk at Cushman Way; notes are attached. Those in attendance included Andrew Norkin and Chris Keppler (Appalachian Mountain Club), Lennie Lord (Rockingham County Conservation District), and Conservation Commission members L. Byergo, B. Bilodeau, J. Fredericks, and K. Lucey.

Prior to the start of the trail walk, J. Fredericks explained property ownership and easements; L. Byergo briefed the group on the proposed trails. A. Norkin, Director of Trails, explained that the AMC is similar to a contractor for planning and construction of trails. They travel throughout the Northeast, and all work is done for a fee. Rockingham Planning Commission has also pledged their support for the regional planning of trails in the area. A. Norkin told the Commission that when planning trails, three important things needed to be considered:

- Connections to nearby parcels.
- Define the users.
- Maintenance responsibilities.

L. Byergo indicated that maintenance would be the responsibility of the Conservation Commission and their ability to recruit volunteers. A. Norkin emphasized that the design of the trail is dictated by user groups. The walk consisted of the gravel pits, wetlands at the end of Cushman Way (A. Norkin felt that would be a good location for a boardwalk) and back towards Coastal Way, which A. Norkin felt may be too steep. L. Byergo added that he was very intent on drainage and erosion issues. During the walk, A. Norkin indicated that if he was planning the trails, he wouldn't use any of the existing ones due to inadequate drainage and the soils. An undulating topography is needed so there are inconsistent grades, and recommended using a geo-textile and bring in gravel.

Walking through the marsh on Meaghan Way, they discussed invasive species control. L. Lord recommended grinding the autumn olive down to the stumps in the fall to allow revegetation during the winter, and then spray at the end of the summer. A. Norkin stated that the access from Meaghan Way may be really wet regardless of the trail location. K. Lucey suggested going more towards the valley wall

where there are drier areas; however, the Commission doesn't have a right-of-way. L. Lord added it would be good habitat area. As the walk concluded, funding was discussed. It was recommended that the Commission apply for any grants that may be available.

L. Byergo updated the Commission that A. Norkin and L. Lord were surprised at the intensity of the invasives. She looked at the DES program for invasive hotspots. There were maps indicating hotspots along the Winnicut River. She suggested asking someone to identify the invasives and possibly receive funding to remove them. K. Lucey, adding this was his bailiwick, explained the purpose of the maps. L. Byergo discussed the New Hampshire Rivers Council and their role in identifying and removing invasives.

L. Byergo further updated the Commission that she had spoken to Julie LaBranche about the Rockingham Planning Commission. They have done a proposal that will be submitted to their Transportation Planning Director because there are funds attached from DOT. It will then have to go to DOT for approval. J. LaBranche is confident it will be approved by DOT with funding for mapping and design. L. Byergo added that if approved, money will be available for mapping and design as well as any GPS work. The amount would not be known until granted, but should be between \$2,000 and \$5,000. L. Byergo has been in contact with Fields/Ponds. She told them that RPC funding may not contribute to planning for the initial small trail project; however, they will be providing mapping for the overall project and helping with planning for the larger project. The Fields/Pond Foundation funding will help with the planning for the initial small trail, including preparing for discussions with abutters.

There was further discussion about the drainage and location of the trails. L. Byergo discussed the Conservation right-of-way on Cushman Way. She suggested a sign be put up before the remaining houses were sold, making it abundantly clear that the Conservation right-of-way would be used for proposed trails. Chair Hussey reminded them it was not a right-of-way, but Town property with an easement. He continued that there should be granite posts marking the boundaries. If not, they need to be in place before the road bond is released. K. Lucey suggested referring to the deed.

K. Lucey felt that invasive species needed to be a priority. Trails could not be built without dealing with the invasives. He continued that it would take approximately three years and \$30,000 to get them under control. Discussing the details of the trail project, it was estimated the starting cost could be \$15,000 to \$18,000. The proposal from RPC is in process and can be used for mapping; the Fields/Ponds grant could be used for planning and designing the initial trail; Rockingham would be used for the larger portion of the project. Marking the location of trails was discussed at length. K. Lucey will ask L. Lord if AMC would be the co-applicant on an application to Integrated Pest Management and Department of Agriculture.

In order to do the trails properly, a map of existing conditions is needed. It would be more of a habitat, ecological species map of the site; L. Lord has the qualifications required. It may be possible to combine the planning funds with Integrated Pest Management funds to develop a base map of the site. That would allow invasive species techniques to be described, leading to trail planning. In addition, some of the Fields/Ponds can be earmarked for mapping existing conditions. L. Byergo suggested starting invasive species control in the fall, and cutting the swath for trails in the spring; all would be dependent on funding. K. Lucey reiterated that A. Norkin suggested the user group be defined before any work was started. A public hearing with abutters may need to be held.

L. Byergo suggested approaching the Board of Selectmen requesting that the access on Cushman Way be well identified. K. Lucey will discuss crossing the wetlands on Cushman Way to the Liberty Hill campground with L. Lord; a limited impact permit may be needed. Chair Hussey felt the trail head needed to be established.

Chair Hussey suggested approaching the Board of Selectmen about putting in trails on the easement the Town has on Cushman Way before it's lost; he will also ask about using some of the Town gravel. L. Byergo will do a summary on the status of the trail project to bring to the Board of Selectmen. The Commission wanted to ensure that the homeowners on Cushman Way did their landscaping around the easement.

2. Wetlands Ordinance Updates

Chair Hussey updated the Commission on the meeting he attended regarding DES applications being revised. A link will be sent out for comments and suggestions. They are also looking at vernal pools.

The Commission felt the Planning Board would not address vernal pools. This will be discussed at the next meeting.

3. Conservation Commission Vacancy

Chair Hussey explained the process for filling the Conservation Commission vacancy, explaining that the Board of Selectmen wanted to meet applicants. L. Byergo stated that there were two people interested in the position; she asked Chair Hussey to reach out to them. There will also be a notice in the Greenland Grapevine that is published in June.

4. Approval of Minutes: Tuesday, April 01, 2014

MOTION: L. Byergo moved to approve the minutes of Tuesday, April 01, 2014. Second – B. Bilodeau; all in favor. **MOTION CARRIED**

5. Other Business

L. Byergo asked about the formal communication process when reviewing an application before the Boards. She questioned the Town Administrator about the process, who responded that the Boards would read the minutes. L. Byergo suggested that a form be created to be used for reviewing applications outlining the Commission's concerns and comments. Chair Hussey reminded her that the minutes were the official record. He felt that when dealing with land use boards, they would prefer the minutes rather than a sheet of paper. He continued that in the past, he's had the Board Secretary include the Conservation Commission minutes in the packets for the land use boards.

L. Byergo suggested establishing goals for the year, including helping the Planning Board with a revision to density bonuses for Conservation Subdivisions that would be more conservation-oriented. Vernal pools, salt storage, and drainage at the Transfer Station were among the topics suggested. At the June meeting, Chair Hussey would like to put together a list of items to be addressed by the Conservation Commission, prioritizing the top three.

Chair Hussey addressed plan reviews and deadline dates for the Planning Board and ZBA, which are normally the Friday prior to the Conservation Commission meetings. He asked the Commission to consider moving their meeting date to allow enough time for review. This item was tabled to the next meeting. It was suggested the Board Secretary contact the Commission when plans were available for review rather than send them through email.

K. Lucey told the Board that there is a dedicated bike path planned for Pease.

6. Adjournment

MOTION: *B. Bilodeau moved to adjourn at 8:31 p.m. Second – K. Lucey; all in favor. MOTION CARRIED*

NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, June 03, 2014 – 7:00 p.m., Town Hall Conference Room

Respectfully Submitted: Charlotte Hussey, Secretary to the Boards

Accepted: July 09, 2014