



CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Town of Greenland • Greenland, NH 03840
11 Town Square • PO Box 100
Phone: 603.380.7372 • Fax: 603.430.3761
Website: greenland-nh.com

MINUTES OF THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Wednesday, March 09, 2022 – 6:30 p.m. – Town Hall Conference Room

Members Present: Bill Bilodeau, Laura Byergo, Joe Fedora, Brad Lajoie, Lloyd Ziel

Also Present: Larry Day; Scott Bogle – Senior Transportation Planner, Rockingham Planning Commission

1. East Coast Greenway

Scott Bogle, Senior Transportation Planner with the Rockingham Planning Commission (RPC), addressed members. RPC has been working with various corridor communities and NH Department of Transportation to develop the State's portion of the East Coast Greenway for approximately 12 years. RPC has received a technical assistance grant from the National Park Service Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance Program to work on several projects related to the Greenway.

One project is to look at community connections. They are getting feedback from the corridor communities about places in their town that they would like to connect to the Greenway. It may start with signs but could eventually be shoulder bike routes, walks, etc. The trail in Greenland touches the edge of the community. There are a number of neighborhoods that are close to the corridor.

The East Coast Greenway is a 3,000 mile long unmotorized multi-use path, extending from the Canadian border in Calais, Maine to Key West, Florida. Members were shown the current status of the trail; approximately 30% of the trail is completed off-road. Another 30% to 35% has been programmed; funding is available and in various stages of engineering.

Work in New Hampshire will happen in three phases. The first phase is in engineering design and extends from the northern terminus of the Hampton branch corridor from Portsmouth to the center of Hampton. It is anticipated that advertising for construction will happen in the fall; construction would begin in 2023 and 2024.

They have identified nine trailheads with parking and another seven with no nearby public land but there could be walking and biking access. There were also crossings that did not have access due to grades. Greenland's key access point would be Breakfast Hill Road.

There are three separate work groups from the National Park Service working with RPC. One is the Community Connections Project which involves developing conceptual designs for the trailheads that will have parking. Another group is working on developing a signage plan for the corridor, including interpretative signs. RPC has asked for input for the interpretative signs within the next month or two. The goal is to gather ideas, photos, and text for a graphic designer. The third project is Organizational Development for the new non-profit trail organization (NH Seacoast Greenway Alliance) to train volunteers to maintain trails.

DRAFT: SUBJECT TO CHANGE

The Greenland trail is approximately .75 mile. Greenland will be responsible for signage and maintenance of its portion of the trail. S. Bogle explained that the Town has an agreement with DOT to provide routine maintenance. The Town will work with volunteers to do most of the maintenance. DOT will assist if there was a major problem with the trail (example: storm washout). Volunteers do the majority of maintenance on the trail. L. Byergo noted that all communication to date has gone through the Board of Selectmen; the Conservation Commission has not been notified by the Board of Selectmen regarding volunteers or participating in the maintenance. S. Bogle stated that the regional non-profit may be involved with recruiting and training. The non-profit is in the initial stages but will be in contact with each of the communities. RPC will be in closer contact with the Board of Selectmen and Conservation Commission.

The Park Service partners have lined up a group of landscape architects who will run a pair of charettes (design oriented public meetings). The landscape architects will be available to meet with residents for their input on the trails. The design process will be interactive and intended to happen over a few hours. The charettes will be done in two sections: northern and southern. The northern portion of the corridor will include Portsmouth, Rye, Greenland, and North Hampton; the southern portion will include Hampton, Hampton Falls and Seabrook. Residents from all communities can participate in either charrette.

Responding to a question from L. Byergo, S. Bogle stated The Nature Conservancy would be another entity RPC would need to contact. RPC, the owner of Gus' Bike Shop, and The Southeast Land Trust have done mapping to identify the conservation land in the corridor communities. S. Bogle described where the trail would be located in neighboring towns. Members discussed options for showcasing Greenland with the trail. B. Lajoie suggested contacting Bethany Church about parking.

L. Ziel questioned if there would be trail access for all ability levels. S. Bogle stated that the design will be ADA accessible—they are using federal funds. In addition, the State also wanted access for equestrian riders. The surface will be stone dust rather than asphalt but it should be accessible to most mobility devices. The trail will be non-motorized with exceptions for non-motorized devices (example: electric wheelchairs, etc.).

J. Fedora clarified that funding for building the trail is there but funding for parking areas would be through the individual communities. S. Bogle stated it would be done with municipal funds, private funding, or federal funding. They are looking at the potential of going after some federal economic development administration funding for tourism development. Under that program, trailhead parking would be an eligible expense. They need to be further along in the conceptual design of the trailhead in order to apply.

2. Reorganization

MOTION: L. Byergo moved to nominate L. Ziel as Chairman of the Conservation Commission. Second – B. Bilodeau; four in favor, one abstained (L. Ziel). MOTION CARRIED

Discussion: L. Byergo nominated L. Ziel because he had the skills, background, and inclination for the position. The Conservation Commission can grow and change as people apply their own vision. The new chairman needs to have a vision and direction, with the support of members.

MOTION: L. Byergo moved to nominate J. Fedora as Vice Chairman of the Conservation Commission. Second – B. Lajoie; four in favor, one abstained (J. Fedora). MOTION CARRIED

3. Other Business

L. Byergo encouraged Kathleen Babin-Johnson to submit an application for appointment to the Conservation Commission. K. Babin-Johnson will be submitting an application to the Board of Selectmen for appointment. L. Byergo will introduce K. Babin-Johnson to Melissa Paley, the Piscataqua Waterkeeper. M. Paley takes municipal Board members out on Great Bay to introduce them to the Bay.

Conservation Commission membership is limited to seven members and three alternates.

Berg Conservation Easement: L. Byergo reported that Southeast Land Trust has signed and recorded the deed for the Berg conservation easement. Southeast Land Trust will be monitoring the land and protect it into the future. That wildlife corridor will be protected, including the culvert under I-95. L. Byergo suggested the Conservation Commission do an appreciation ceremony for the Berg's to present them with a plaque.

Tower Place will be reviewed by the Planning Board on March 17th. The Planning Board has removed Mercedes-Benz (309 Portsmouth Avenue) from their agenda rather than continuing the project; they must start the process again. DES is looking at the wetlands impact.

L. Byergo distributed information about sea level rise. L. Byergo submitted a survey to NH Coastal Watershed on behalf of the Conservation Commission. L. Byergo also contacted Peter Steckler, The Nature Conservancy, asking if he would be interested in doing a presentation about wildlife corridors, with Dwayne Hyde, Southeast Land Trust, talking about conservation easements. These discussions would be a community presentation and could be done at the Library. The Nature Conservancy, as part of the roll out of the NH Coastal Watershed plan, will be holding a workshop for municipal officials. They may meet with the Conservation Commission, Planning Board and Town Administrator to discuss the implications of their plan. There may also be a community outreach program to discuss their plan.

L. Byergo stepped down as Chairman. L. Ziel, new Chairman, thanked L. Byergo for her vision and leadership.

4. Plans, Goals, Ideas for 2022

Intern Search: L. Byergo has contacted a possible intern who was recommended by Matt Tarr, UNH. L. Byergo was given contact information for the new woman taking over M. Tarr's class and suggested she be contacted in order to get good intern recommendations. L. Byergo stated that easement monitoring is not done until June and can continue through September or October. Easement monitoring is the responsibility of the Conservation Commission. There is a formal obligation with the Weeks Property; a report must be made to the Office of Strategic Initiatives. The intern pay is normally \$15 per hour, not exceeding \$1,000. Special projects can be added if monitoring is completed and funds are available.

Trail Cleanup: B. Lajoie suggested doing trail cleanup earlier before vegetation is thicker and more difficult to clear. He recommended mid-April or early May. B. Bilodeau suggested asking the Boy Scouts for assistance. B. Lajoie suggested the weekend of April 16th and 17th, May 07th and 08th, or May 14th and 15th. J. Fedora suggested the Town truck may be able to pick up the debris. L. Byergo stated they should talk to the Town Administration and pictures would be helpful. B. Bilodeau offered his backhoe to help with the heavy lifting. Larry Day and Don Delisle also have equipment that may be available. Members continued discussing the best way to remove debris from the site. L. Ziel stated that B. Lajoie can accept the leadership role for trail cleanup. B. Lajoie and L. Ziel will work together on the

DRAFT: SUBJECT TO CHANGE

organizational portion. Saturday, May 07th is the target date. L. Byergo reviewed the Right-to-Know law with members, stating that at this time a quorum would be three members. Two members could meet without it being a meeting. When a quorum is present, it is considered a meeting and must be posted.

L. Ziel's proposed project calendar was discussed. Discussing the Natural Resources Inventory, L. Byergo recommended they receive quotes this year. Funding is available in the warrant article that was passed. L. Byergo provided several names to contact for quotes: Julie LaBranche (formerly of RPC), RPC, and Amanda Stone.

The first three projects include Thompson Brook Trail, spring outreach, and the Natural Resources Inventory. Removing the tank from the field was discussed. B. Bilodeau stated the Conservation Commission should not be responsible for taking care of environmental situations. A simple solution would be to test what was in the tank. If it was hazardous waste, DES should be contacted. L. Byergo stated the tank needed to be removed and the Town has not done it yet. L. Byergo stated that she will show B. Bilodeau where the tank is located and B. Bilodeau will follow through with a Selectman. L. Byergo informed members that DES will bill the Town to clean up any hazardous waste.

There was a discussion about having P. Steckler and D. Hyde as a guest speakers for a community outreach program rather than the seedlings. L. Byergo will help organize that project for May.

Easement monitoring is part of the intern assignment. That is part of the June calendar. L. Byergo stated that interviewing of the potential intern should be done in April and May so they are ready to start in June.

5. Social Media Outreach

B. Lajoie met with the Administrative Assistant earlier in the morning. The Town page 'liked' the Conservation Commission page on Facebook. A link to the Conservation Commission's Facebook page can also be found on the Town website Conservation Commission page. Projects can be posted on the Town website.

6. Other Business

J. Fedora has spoken with Chris Peter, Great Bay Discovery Center/Fish and Game, regarding the tide maker. There was a great deal of technical discussion about the tide monitoring stations in the area. J. Fedora explained that it was community awareness of rising sea levels. Because the current tide marker is not visible enough, C. Peter felt it may be possible to put something at the Discovery Center. They also discussed having a tide marker at the Emery Farm area when Fish and Game does their restoration. When C. Peter meets with other Fish and Game members, he will discuss the idea of the Conservation Commission having their own tide marker in that area, which would be more visible. The Great Bay Discovery Center was a challenge due to ice. J. Fedora is scheduled to meet with C. Peter the week of March 14th.

It was noted that there are blinds on Thompson Brook, the salt marsh, Packer Bog, and Valhalla Drive. There was also a tent near the boardwalk. B. Lajoie will check into the blinds. B. Lajoie mentioned that trail cameras are inexpensive right now because the season is over. There is no budget for trail cameras. L. Byergo stated the Conservation Commission needed to identify how they wanted to use the cameras. L. Byergo noted that P. Steckler received permission from the Berg's to put up a trail camera. L. Byergo stated that the cameras should be placed where they can be safe but also capture the amount of wildlife

DRAFT: SUBJECT TO CHANGE

in the area. L. Ziel asked if there was any interest in putting a camera on the Thompson Brook Trail to capture the amount of foot traffic on the trail. L. Byergo questioned if it may be a privacy issue.

J. Fedora was concerned a trail sign may have been taken from the trail behind his house. L. Byergo stated that the 'No Trespassing' sign was going to be moved from the chain to the post and has not been done yet. J. Fedora will move the sign.

7. Approval of Minutes

MOTION: L. Byergo moved to approve the minutes of Wednesday, February 09, 2022. Second – J. Fedora; all in favor. MOTION CARRIED

8. Adjournment

MOTION: B. Bilodeau moved to adjourn at 8:42 p.m. Second – B. Lajoie; all in favor. MOTION CARRIED

NEXT MEETING

Wednesday, April 13, 2022 – 6:30 p.m., Town Hall Conference Room

Submitted By: Charlotte Hussey, Administrative Assistant