



CONSERVATION COMMISSION
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MINUTES OF THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Wednesday, August 10, 2022 – 6:30 p.m. – Town Hall Conference Room

Members Present: Bill Bilodeau, Kathleen Babin-Johnson, Laura Byergo, Joe Fedora, Chip Hussey, Brad Lajoie, Lloyd Ziel

Also Present: Steve Smith, Board of Selectmen Chairman, Peter Tansey – Summer Intern

L. Ziel opened the Conservation Commission meeting at 6:30 p.m. Attendance was taken, and it was announced a quorum was present and the meeting was being recorded and live-streamed.

1. Trail Clean Up

B. Lajoie reported there was not a lot of development regarding the trail clean up: it is the middle of summer and it is thick and buggy. He anticipated mid-October as a target date. If not done this year, B. Lajoie suggested a spring clean up date. He located more sizeable debris that will need to be removed. J. Fedora suggested a clean-up in December if there was little to no snow. B. Lajoie noted that mid-December may be a better option: it will not be too cold, vegetation would be down and hunting season would be over.

C. Hussey stated that if debris was brought out over the berm, there could be damage; he was unsure how the HOA would react. He suggested cutting through the berm on the other side where the Autumn Olive was growing, staying out of the field. Equipment could be used for heavier debris. L. Byergo and K. Babin-Johnson stated the field could be accessed if done in December. B. Lajoie was not planning on using equipment; he had 12 people lined up to help.

J. Fedora noted there is a swale near his property that catches the water from the cul-de-sac. The swale empties into the retention pond at the base of the berm. C. Hussey stated that was the area and suggested using the remaining Van Etten Drive bond. C. Hussey stated that the Board of Selectmen have authorized using the bond to remove debris. He has received a quote from Knowles. L. Ziel encouraged B. Lajoie and C. Hussey to meet and come up with a plan. B. Lajoie showed the area on the screen and explained the site and clean up area.

2. Trail Mowing

L. Byergo received a quote for trail mowing to be done in August. L. Byergo is expecting a quote for bushwhacking from two individuals in September. She can include cutting down the Autumn Olive as part of the quote if she is given the location.

Quality Hardwood quoted \$600 for mowing half and it will be done at the end of August to stay away from the pollinators and field birds. They will mow the back end as well as do a perimeter cut. They will

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also recut the path from the parking lot up the hill. Quality Hardwood has done work for the Conservation Commission in the past. L. Byergo was comfortable with the work they do and the price.

C. Hussey stated he had received complaints about the trails being overgrown, adding mowing may need to be done more than once a year. L. Byergo stated that Larry Day did some clearing but has not been available as much this year. L. Byergo and L. Day will be doing some work in Rolston Park on Saturday. B. Lajoie stated the trails were walkable with long pants due to ticks. B. Lajoie noted the location of a downed tree.

MOTION: C. Hussey moved to expend \$600 from Warrant Article 17 for mowing of the upper meadow of the Coastal Way open space management field. Second – B. Lajoie, all in favor. MOTION CARRIED

3. Summer Intern

K. Babin-Johnson introduced Peter Tansey, summer intern, to the Board. Breakfast Hill Road, Falls Way, Valhalla Drive, and Van Etten Drive open space easements still need to be monitored. P. Tansey explained that he walks and monitors the Town's easements, making sure the boundaries are not being moved by homeowners. As he is walking around, he looks for invasives and makes note of the different transects. Reports are written on each of the pieces of land. He looks for littering and misuses of easements as well as people hunting in posted areas. P. Tansey uses the onX app for monitoring. There was a discussion about where hunting is allowed.

Responding to L. Ziel, P. Tansey stated things were going pretty well. He is scheduled through the end of month; he has worked approximately 25 to 30 hours. P. Tansey added he is going to try to have a second look at the properties after researching deeds for what is allowed recreation on the property.

P. Tansey noted that the Thompson Brook Trail easement area is not accurately represented on onX or Granite (UNH GSI platform). Packer Bog also is not listed as an easement property through Granite. L. Byergo recommended he look at NH Granite; it is listed as an easement property on that site. P. Tansey added that the area near Cushman Way is not listed. C. Hussey stated it is open space and may be the reason it is not listed. L. Byergo stated the area closer to Cushman Way should be verified as conservation area. It may be able to be listed as green even though it is not a conservation easement, as long as it is protected land. L. Byergo noted that a conservation easement can be defended easier in court and is a much stronger protection than open space.

4. Other Business

Trail Sign: C. Hussey recommended a sign, Thompson Brook Walking Trail, be put on top of the Liberty Hill Lane street sign. The cost will be approximately \$150.

MOTION: J. Fedora moved to purchase a Thompson Brook Walking Trail sign to be installed on the Liberty Hill Lane street sign, not to exceed \$150. Second – L. Byergo; all in favor. MOTION CARRIED

C. Hussey suggested the Conservation Commission look into the small grant (up to \$4,000) through Fish and Game. It can be used for mowing, planting, etc. L. Byergo looked into the grant several years ago and stated it would be worth researching. A proposal would need to be submitted.

C. Hussey discussed posting signs identifying trees along the trail. He distributed a picture of the signs from a community in Maine.

The fishway at the Winnicut River Bridge was briefly discussed.

Trail Cameras: B. Lajoie updated members that the trail cams are up and operational.

Survey Work: L. Byergo received a quote from Doucette Survey to do the survey work at the residence in Falls Way where numerous trees were cut down. The conservation easement line needs to be surveyed. Doucette Survey's cost was \$1,900. L. Byergo will be present when the surveying is done. Doucette Survey will provide a work sheet with the survey points listed, which can be compared to the maps on an individual's phone for tracking purposes. The cost of the survey work will be taken from the warrant article.

MOTION: I. Byergo moved to approve Doucette Survey's estimate in the amount of \$1,900, to be taken from the warrant article to resurvey the conservation easement line on the Falls Way parcel where trees have been removed. Second – B. Lajoie; six in favor, one against (C. Hussey). MOTION CARRIED

Discussion: The current owner cut the trees down. L. Byergo stated they needed to talk to the homeowner: was the homeowner aware there was a conservation easement? The homeowner will be notified the land will be surveyed and the date. If the homeowner has cut into the conservation easement, the next step would be to go to the Board of Selectmen and Code Enforcement Officer. B. Bilodeau questioned why the Conservation Commission had to pay for the surveying. L. Byergo explained that the property was surveyed years ago and the conservation easement line established. The property sold and the new owner cut down numerous trees. Did he know where the easement line was? The Conservation Commission needs to show they are not 'jumping to conclusions' that the homeowner transgressed the easement line. B. Lajoie asked if there was a record that would show the homeowner crossed the easement line. B. Bilodeau stated that someone needed to be accountable. L. Byergo has given all the information from the Falls Way plans to Doucette Survey. C. Hussey recommended the homeowners deed be researched to make sure the easement had not been removed. It was suggested that the homeowner pay for the survey. Discussion continued with L. Byergo stating it needed to be verified that the homeowner transgressed the easement line and, hopefully, the Conservation Commission would get their money back. Residents of Falls Way needed to know that the Conservation Commission would enforce easements.

L. Byergo explained when the easements in Falls Way were originally established, small markers were put up. Over the last few years, the perimeters have been monitored. Residents of Falls Way were told the easements existed and the Conservation Commission would be monitoring annually. While monitoring, it has been noticed that many of the old decals are missing and trees have fallen or been taken down. New decals have been put up in some locations. L. Byergo noted the easements are within resident's property.

4. Natural Resources Inventory

L. Byergo noted the last NRI was done in 2010. Some of the survey work included in the NRI was done in 2006. UNH has recommended the report be updated. L. Byergo has received three quotes: Rockingham Planning Commission, Julie LaBranche (formerly of RPC), and Peter Steckler. L. Byergo is putting together a work scope. She explained that when the report is updated, it is the maps (development, impervious surface, and wildlife) that are done. New wildlife corridors will be included. L. Byergo did not think the contractor updating the NRI would need to do much field work due to what has already been done. Doing a charrette, an active outreach to the community, would increase the cost. When the NRI was done in 2010, there was community involvement. The Conservation Commission would do the upfront work, and the contractor would do the mediation. L. Byergo suggested doing something smaller

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that would bring the Boards together. She felt it would be a good exercise to use the process to bring the Planning Board, Board of Selectmen and Conservation Commission together.

L. Ziel asked for clarification of the cost of a community charrette vs. a Board charrette. L. Byergo explained it would be more people attending an event if it involved the community. There may less work involved with a Board due to the level of information. L. Byergo will write the proposal for a community-based charrette and Board only. C. Hussey suggested contacting them Boards about their interest in participating. L. Byergo felt it would be easier for the Conservation Commission to lobby the Board members, inviting them to attend as part of the Town government process than to put up fliers in the community.

J. Fedora asked if it could be done in phases: the hard data portion first that does not involve the field work. After information is put together by the contractor, that could be the starting point for getting into the other aspects rather than trying to do the entire project at once. C. Hussey suggested pricing the project in phases: Phase I – NRI updated, Phase II – Boards to meet. L. Byergo explained that the contractor would meet with the Conservation Commission first and review the work scope. After doing the work, they would schedule a review. The information could be reviewed with the Conservation Commission or with the community. A joint meeting could be held with the Boards to review all the information. The Planning Board needs to be involved to see how the natural resources in Town meets development.

L. Byergo reviewed the draft proposal with members. She asked members if they preferred reviewing the report without other Boards, include other Boards or as community outreach. C. Hussey liked the idea of getting the Boards involved before the work was done: in 90 days, the Planning Board will be doing zoning updates. If they were involved early in the process, they may be willing to participate. L. Byergo responded that once she had input from Conservation Commission members, she would redo the model proposal so it worked for Greenland. She thought it may be spring before the NRI update was done. L. Ziel clarified it would be done in phases: research done first, a charrette with the Boards, then finish the report. L. Byergo agreed that made sense: before the report was finalized, the Planning Board could be consulted for their input. L. Ziel noted that the Boards are representatives of the community. K. Babin-Johnson stated the document would be a good community outreach project at any time. It could be used as a guide for education.

C. Hussey stated he did not want to spend a lot of money on the NRI if no one was going to read it. L. Byergo noted that according to the RSA, an up-to-date NRI must be kept. C. Hussey recommended having a copy of the RSA available when meeting with other Boards.

5. New Business

Seacoast Conservation Commission: J. Fedora noted that the Seacoast Conservation Commission has a meeting at 8:30 am on a Tuesday every two months. J. Fedora reviewed the meeting of July 29th with members, which was community outreach; he will distribute more detailed notes. Community outreach seems to be a challenge to all towns. The pieces that do not work are workshops/lectures. J. Fedora also reviewed the June meeting.

J. Fedora has spoken to Lynn Vaccaro, Coastal Training Coordinator – Great Bay Reserve, about a community outreach program (sea level rise or in conjunction with the Glenn Cove project). He had mentioned the poor turnout for the wildlife discussion, and she suggested a site walk for either the Conservation Commission or invite the Planning Board and Board of Selectmen to Glenn Cove during the project development. The Conservation Commission could discuss opening that to the community.

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The Executive Director of the Great Bay Stewards contacted J. Fedora for a letter of support for the Glenn Cove project. J. Fedora and L. Ziel submitted a letter from the Conservation Commission. Great Bay Stewards will be very involved in getting that project started. The Conservation Commission may be able to piggy-back off that with a tidal marker. L. Byergo noted that the proposed picnic pavilion may be a nice place for the Conservation Commission to host events. L. Ziel liked the idea of the Conservation Commission being involved in the Glenn Cove project.

Tower Place: J. Fedora updated the Board on Tower Place. The developer has offered to reduce the number of units. The dog park will be moved much further away from the leach fields and wetlands. They have also proposed one access point rather than two, eliminating the one close to the wetlands. If approved by the Planning Board, part of the Conservation Commission issue goes away. Fire and police have signed off on one entrance. At the last meeting, the Planning Board asked for a further reduction in the number of units. If a wetland permit is not needed, it will not have to be reviewed by the Conservation Commission.

6. Approval of Minutes

MOTION: C. Hussey moved to approve the minutes of Wednesday, June 08, 2022. Second – B. Lajoie; six in favor, one abstained (B. Bilodeau). MOTION CARRIED

7. Adjournment

MOTION: C. Hussey moved to adjourn at 8:26 p.m. Second – B. Lajoie; all in favor. MOTION CARRIED

NEXT MEETING

Wednesday, September 14, 2022 – 6:30 p.m., Town Hall Conference Room

Submitted By: Charlotte Hussey, Administrative Assistant