

**City of Keene**  
**New Hampshire**

**CONSERVATION COMMISSION**  
**MEETING MINUTES**

**Monday April 20, 2015**

**4:00 PM**

**2<sup>ND</sup> Floor Conference Room,  
City Hall**

**Members Present:**

Thomas (Tad) Lacey, Vice Chair  
Janis Manwaring, Councilor  
Brian Reilly  
George Hansel  
William Fleeger

**Staff Present:**

Karen Purinton, Planner  
Rhett Lamb, Planning Director

**Members Not Present:**

Thomas P. Haynes, Chair  
Matthew Walton

**Others Present:**

Nik Coates, NH Association of  
Conservation Commissions  
Tom Dustin, NH Association of  
Conservation Commissions  
Jim Mayo, Eversource  
Sherrie Trefry, Eversource  
Anne McBride, Monadnock  
Conservancy

**1. Call to order**

Mr. Lacey called the meeting to order at 4:30 PM

**2. Minutes – March 16, 2015**

Mr. Hansel made a motion to approve the minutes from March 16, 2015. Councilor Manwaring seconded the motion which carried unanimously. Mr. Reilly stated that on pg. 9 it reads, “maintain invasive species.” This should instead read, “remove invasive species.” Mr. Reilly stated that on pg. 5 it reads “right way” and it should instead read, “right of way.”

**3. NHDES-Permits**

**a. Woodland Cemetery Restoration Project Expedited Permit**

Ms. Purinton stated that there is a map on pg. 20 of the packet. She continued, stating that the cemetery is off of Beaver Street and owned by the city and is over 100 acres. Ms. Purinton stated that over time the city has used one area as a dump site for brush. She continued, stating that the project focuses on removing the soil and trash that has accumulated over time and to create flood storage. Ms. Purinton stated that there is 3,600 tons of soil that will come out. She continued, stating that an agreement will be made with the Cheshire County Fish and Game to take the soil for testing and will be used at their gun range. She continued, stating that Japanese Knotwood would also be treated. Ms. Purinton stated that in Area B there is a stone channel that would be altered, but it is historic and minimal impact would need to occur. Ms. Purinton stated that one section of the culvert will be removed and a new stream channel will be excavated. She continued, stating that this new stream channel will be a wetland impact and approved by DES. Ms. Purinton stated that the area will be altered to a wetland type status and provide storage area if the brook rises to that level. She continued, stating that the expedited permit is before the

Conservation Committee. Ms. Purinton stated that the Committee would make a motion to intervene or not.

Mr. Hansel stated that the application is put together well. Ms. Purinton stated that this project was selected in 2012.

Mr. Fleeger made a motion not to intervene in the Woodland Cemetery Restoration Project. Councilor Manwaring seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

**b. KEAP-Conditional Use Permit Referral**

Mr. Hansel asked to recuse himself from this item because he made public statements. Mr. Lacey stated that he would like to see the site and stated that there is a large amount of clearing occurring on the hill side. He continued, stating that he is not necessarily opposed to the permit but would want to see the site. Councilor Manwaring stated that she is concerned with the trees coming down. Mr. Lacey stated that the building is very large for the hill side. Mr. Reilly stated that a fair amount of the hill will have to be excavated. Ms. Purinton stated that the retaining wall will come within 40 feet of the building. She continued, stating that pg. 34 provides the layout of the building. She continued, stating that this will include tree clearing, an installed retaining wall and a portion of the parking lot being within the 75 foot buffer zone. Ms. Purinton stated that the staff of the Planning Board will review it and provide a recommendation also. Ms. Purinton stated that the Conservation Committee's goal is to provide advice to the Planning Committee on this Conditional Use Permit.

Mr. Lacey asked how the additional runoff will be dealt with. Ms. Purinton stated that there will be three underground tanks along with a retention pond. She continued, stating that rain water will also be captured for watering plants. Ms. Purinton stated that it is very tough to get the van to the area and the Committee can table the item until the next meeting. She continued, stating that the stone wall on the map is the edge of the wetland. Ms. Purinton stated that there is a letter from the company's wetland scientist stating that the wetland will not be affected.

Ms. Purinton stated that this permit will still move forward on the site planning process this month and the Conservation Committee can not intervene. Mr. Lacey stated that it is nice to confirm what is happening with a site visit because it is going to the site plan anyway. Mr. Lacey asked if the Planning Board will act on the site plan. Ms. Purinton stated that she will report to the board about the Conservation Commission's plans to review the site and the Board will decide to move forward or not. Mr. Fleeger stated that he will support going to the site first.

Councilor Manwaring made a motion to table KEAP-Conditional Use Permit Referral until next month's meeting and request to visit the site. Mr. Lacey seconded the motion which carried unanimously. Mr. Hansel abstained.

**c. Request for Review- Eversource (PSNH) Corridor along Route 10/12 Interchange**

Mr. Mayo of Eversource stated that there is a new substation going in but there are no wetlands in the area. Mr. Lacey stated that the project came before the Committee in a previous meeting. He stated that there will be a fifth line added and will go over Route 12. Mr. Mayo stated that there will be three poles and two will be on the substation side. Ms. Trefry stated that this project is to meet load and reliability needs for the City. She continued, stating that this will be an electrical source for individuals on the West side of Keene. Ms. Trefry stated that it will be

reliable because of the automatic loop. She continued, stating that the wetland is very saturated and there will be tree clearing along Route 12 in the upland areas.

Ms. Trefry stated that a Traffic Control Plan has been put together and the road will be set up on the shoulder's edge. She continued, stating that timber matting will be used as access. Ms. Trefry stated that there will be two poles in the wetland area and one in the DOT right of way area. Ms. Trefry stated that this pole's location is being discussed with DOT at the moment. She continued, stating that there is currently 32 square feet of impact and 6,750 square feet of temporary impact for access. Ms. Trefry stated that there will be erosion control during construction as well as coverage afterwards to protect the wetlands.

Mr. Mayo stated that the project should take about two weeks all together. Mr. Reilly asked if the poles are in a cement slab. Mr. Mayo replied, no. He continued, stating that there was concern about wetlands and a culvert pipe would be used to place the pole instead. He continued, stating that some discussion has occurred about extending the feed to the hospital or to Court Street. Mr. Lacey asked about the matting during construction and if Eversource would be lying down logs. Mr. Mayo replied, yes there are many stipulations with this through DEP. He continued, stating that it is usually 8 by 8 timber. Mr. Lacey asked if the logs are sterilized. Mr. Mayo replied, yes. Ms. Purinton asked if a vote is needed from the Committee on the permit. Ms. Trefry stated that the purpose was to receive feedback and if there are no concerns, the application would be submitted. Mr. Hansel asked why the poles are being placed in the wetlands. Mr. Mayo stated that there are existing lines already in the area and it is important to stay close to the right of way. Mr. Mayo stated that by code there has to be a certain amount of clearance. Ms. Trefry stated that from an electromagnetic field perspective, the highest voltage is in the center and the lower voltage is closer to the right of way for safety.

Mr. Fleeger asked about the temporary access road. Mr. Mayo stated that it is a temporary access road for the substation and the state has permitted it. Mr. Fleeger asked about the impacts from the roadway and if the gravel will be removed after the project. Ms. Purinton replied, yes this is an agreement with the state.

Mr. Fleeger made a motion to not intervene with the request for review of the Eversource (PSNH) Corridor along Route 10/12 Interchange. Councilor Manwaring seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

#### **d. NHDES Alteration of Terrain Permit-Key Collision**

Ms. Purinton stated that this item is informational.

### **4. Discussions**

#### **a. Nik Coates-NH Association of Conservation Commissions**

Mr. Nik Coates stated that he has been the Executive Director of NHCC since January of 2014. He continued, stating that he became interested in conservation issues because of land use. Mr. Coates stated that there are two staff members and serve all 234 municipalities in the state. He continued, stating that the organization funding mainly comes from membership fees and a more diverse source of funding is necessary. Mr. Coates stated a new grant writer has been hired to acquire this diversity. Mr. Coates stated that the goal is to have and Conservation Committee in every town.

Mr. Coates stated that the Commission provides technological assistance, education, and legislative work. He continued, stating that technical assistance includes day to day questions

from conservation committees. Mr. Coates stated that within a two month period, these questions and answers are about 20 pages long. He continued, stating that the Commission is an information resource. Mr. Dustin stated that Mr. Coates has been using Board Members efficiently for knowledge as well. Mr. Coates stated that the board is diverse with knowledge in several areas. He continued, stating that the board includes a Water Ecologist, Park Ranger, Farmer, GIS Professor, IT Specialist and Lawyer.

Mr. Coates stated that education portion comes in two forms. He continued, stating that there is an annual meeting and last year's theme was to inspire young people. Mr. Coates stated that most committees consist of older members and the Keene Conservation Committee is one of the few committees with younger members. He continued, stating this is a problem because there will no legacy for the future Committees. Mr. Coates stated that this is a problem being addressed. Mr. Coates stated that another form of education is field training and last year consisted of six events. This year will consist of grant writing and a vernal pool event. Mr. Coates stated that work is also being done to get easements on forests. He continued, stating that this should be field work as well. Mr. Coates stated that all of these events have gone well and the goal is to give functional skills to Conservation Committees.

Mr. Coates stated that there are three bills to focus on. Mr. Coates stated that this year Senate Bill 83 proposed that conservation commissions would not be allowed on public land. He continued, stating that it takes just three of the five people in the committee to get it through to the next level. Mr. Coates stated that the Commission worked hard to keep this bill out of the House of Representatives. He continued, stating that Senate Bill 121 allows excavation on current use land. Mr. Coates stated that this went into the Committee and the Bill is currently tabled. Mr. Coates stated that Senate Bill 38 is one recommendation that came out of a Committee to review what kind of conservation is done in the state of New Hampshire. He continued stating that it is a lengthy document but appendices 11-12 of the recommendations, are the important factors. He continued stating that here were ten recommendations, and almost all became bills. Mr. Coates stated that Senate Bill 38 is to establish a state-wide Conservation Plan.

Mr. Coates stated that NHCC sits on several Committees and will help shape the Senate Bill 38 plan. Mr. Reilly asked if there is resistance to Senate Bill 38. Mr. Coates replied, none. Councilor Manwaring stated that she believes in local control of conservation as opposed to State Control. Mr. Coates stated that Senate Bill 38 realized that 2/3 of our drinking water could be developed. He continued, stating that it is important to understand the state's role in this. Mr. Coates stated that there need to be a balance between State and local conservation. Mr. Lacey stated that many people went to the Annual Meeting last year and it is worth attending.

#### **b. Monadnock Conservancy Project Update**

Ms. McBride stated that she wanted to update the Committee to the project. She continued, stating that in 2012, Monadnock Conservancy applied to L-Chip for funding but they had little money to give out and the application was denied. Ms. McBride stated that this is when she came in 2013 to the Conservation Committee. Ms. McBride stated with the L-Chip funding, public access is required including hunting. She continued, stating that the Monadnock Conservancy then applied for the Armed Grant through DES in 2014. Ms. McBride stated that she also applied for L-Chip as well and funding came from both groups. Ms. McBride stated that a decision had to be made as to which funding would be accepted. She continued stating that L-Chip Grant was 100,000 and the Armed Grant was 140,000. Ms. McBride stated that the Armed Grant was chosen and stated that there would still be public access including hunting game such as deer and turkey. She continued, stating that a sign could be put up on this in reference to prohibited

hunting of bear and predator species. Ms. McBride stated that this type of signage on 600 acres is a large task and is up to the land owners.

Ms. McBride stated that this is informational and if the Committee would like to recommend. Mr. Reilly asked if trapping is allowed. Ms. McBride stated that hunting and trapping are separate things. Mr. Lacey stated permission is needed from the land owner for trapping. Ms. McBride stated that the project should be completed by fall, ideally September. Mr. Reilly asked who the parcel owners are. Ms. McBride stated that all three parcels are owned by one couple but are three separate easements. Ms. Purinton stated that she will send the packet out the Committee.

#### **c. Beech Hill Master Plan update**

Ms. Purinton stated that this plan came out well in color. She continued, stating that given the neighbors' concerns with additional parking the wording has changed in the plan. Ms. Purinton stated that it is important to have a good partnership with neighbors. Ms. Purinton stated that if the Committee has reviewed the plan and are ready to vote then it can move forward to City Council. She continued, stating a list of additional concerns was created and will be presented to City Council as well. She continued, stating that this list has also been shared with the neighbors. Mr. Lacey stated that there is a typo on pg. 3 which reads 410 acres and should instead read 310 acres. He continued, stating that the plan should move forward and listening to the residents of the area was insightful.

Ms. Purinton stated that she and the Parks and Recreation Director discussed the problem of violators in the area with one resident. She continued, stating that the Police Department was made aware of this concern. Mr. Lamb stated that it would be premature to put more parking in the area after hearing concerns from the neighbors.

Mr. Fleeger made a motion to move the Beech Hill Master Plan forward to City Council. Councilor Manwaring seconded the motion which carried unanimously. Ms. Purinton stated that City Council will review this item next month.

#### **d. West Street Dam update**

Ms. Purinton stated that all bids have come in and the West Street Dam Project will be moving forward. She continued, stating that West Street Hydro will not have a meeting in May. Ms. Purinton stated that she will let the Committee know when the next meeting is scheduled.

#### **e. Conservation Plan and Retreat after May Meeting**

Mr. Fleeger stated that he will be sending out the latest version of the plan. He continued, stating that he will create an agenda to drive the May meeting. Mr. Fleeger stated that the purpose of the retreat will be to identify key issues and make a draft. Councilor Manwaring asked if a minute-taker will be available. Ms. Purinton stated that she will find this information out. Mr. Lacey requested a PDF file from Mr. Fleeger.

### **5. SWPO:**

This item has been tabled until the next meeting.

### **6. Staff Updates:**

#### **a. Earth Day Event- April 25**

Ms. Purinton stated that this event will be held on April 25, 2015 at the Monadnock Coop parking lot.

**d. May 14 Workshop at Keene State College**

Denis Berkstead will run a workshop on mitigating flood risks

**c. SWRPC Letter**

Ms. Purinton stated this item is informational.

**d. Trail Services Offering**

Ms. Purinton stated that this is in reference to a notice for review.

**7. New or Other Business**

**8. Adjournment- next meeting date Monday, May 18, 2015**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted by:  
Lana Bluege, Minute-taker  
April 20, 2015