

City of Keene
New Hampshire

CONSERVATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES

Monday, March 18, 2019

4:30 PM

**2nd Floor Conference Room,
City Hall**

Members Present:

Alexander Von Plinsky IV, Chair
Councilor George Hansel
Art Walker
Brian Reilly
Thomas Haynes, Alternate

Staff Present:

Rhett Lamb, Community Development
Director/Assistant City Manager
Andy Bohannon, Director of Parks,
Recreation & Facilities

Members Not Present:

Denise Burchsted
Eloise Clark, Vice Chair
Ken Bergman

1) Call to Order

Chair Von Plinsky called the meeting to order at 4:30 PM.

2) Approval of Minutes – February 19, 2019

Councilor Hansel moved to approve the minutes of February 19, 2019, which Mr. Haynes seconded and the Conservation Commission carried unanimously.

3) Informational

**a. Updates to Section 2-774 of the City Code of Ordinances Related to
Conservation Commission Powers, Duties, and Guidelines**

Mr. Lamb informed the Conservation Commission that the City Council approved the change to Section 2-774 of the City Code of Ordinances related to the Conservation Commission. Copies of the updated section were provided to the Commission.

4) Discussion Items

a. Greater Goose Pond Forest Stewardship Plan

Mr. Lamb reported the public forum is scheduled for Tuesday, March 19th at 6:30 PM at the Michael EJ Blastos Room on Marlboro Street. He stated that Jeff Littleton and Swift Corwin will give a 20 minute presentation. Mr. Lamb noted the intent is to hear from the public and those at the first public meeting that are willing to participate.

In addition, Mr. Lamb reported that Andy Bohannon, Director of Parks, Recreation and Facilities will be going on WKBK Radio on the morning of Tuesday, March 19th on the Danny Mitchell show at 9 AM.

Mr. Haynes asked how the public forum will be set-up. Mr. Lamb responded that he and Mr. Bohannon have a call with Mr. Littleton (project consultant) tomorrow to sort out all of the

logistics and process. In addition, he noted the forum will be a facilitated series of questions. Mr. Lamb explained the intent is to let people say their piece on the document and for the Commission to review public comments at their April meeting.

Mr. Lamb added that a draft of the Greater Goose Pond Stewardship Plan has been posted to the City's website under the Conservation Commission page as well as the City's Facebook page. Mr. Haynes added that it would nice for people to know the Conservation Commission is involved and part of the process.

Mr. Lamb recognized Mr. Corwin asking if he had anything to add pertaining to the presentation. Mr. Corwin reported they have a PowerPoint presentation and they think it would be better to talk about by example for different areas rather than talk about the numerous amounts of lots. He explained there would be a discussion about the four different areas and the basis for their recommendations. He further explained they would talk about the wildlife justification, subcultural ideas and the processes.

Mr. Lamb stated that it sounds like the intent is to be talking about using the four areas and what they are trying to achieve is not just in those areas but across the forest itself. Mr. Corwin responded in the affirmative. He noted the four areas are the north piece of the Paquette lot, the Minister's lot that is east of the Gilsum Road, the Burrows lot that is south of the pond and the Drummer Hill lot. Mr. Corwin stated they believe these lots are significantly different enough to warrant explaining why they are looking at doing different things.

Mr. Littleton added they would be showing examples of the different types of silviculture activities based on the different types of wildlife habitat management. He explained what they plan to do is provide a basic introduction of the background to the project in order to give everyone a sense of why the stewardship plan was exists. Mr. Littleton stated they would go through their findings, existing conditions and then move into their recommendations. The recommendations are based on the three different themes of education, recreation, wildlife and habit. Mr. Corwin added they would also emphasize the idea of promoting the development of the endowment fund and development of the steering committee. Mr. Littleton asked if there are certain elements or topics the Committee would like for them to cover. Mr. Haynes responded that if people have delved in deep enough they will provide recommendations or ask questions to have a better understanding. Mr. Littleton noted they plan to forego answering any questions until the end of the presentation in order to stay on target. Mr. Haynes suggested making the presentation as concise as possible and to leave more time for questions.

Mt. Littleton asked if at the end of the presentation if the City was planning on talking about a wrap up. Mr. Lamb responded this conversation still needs to take place between himself and Mr. Bohannon. He added that there does need to be introduction, a wrap up and to let people know what to expect after the meeting is over.

b. Beaugard Property Acquisition

Mr. Lamb reported the appraisal came back in and that it was not substantially different than it was in 2010. He stated they went through the City Council in December and the City Manager at that point had been authorized to negotiate with the appraisal in hand. Mr. Lamb reported they brought it back to the City Council and the City Council approved acquisition of the land at the new appraisal amount. The City Council authorized them to acquire the property after having spoken to Mr. Beaugard. Mr. Lamb noted that Mr. Beaugard agreed on the appraised number.

Mr. Lamb reported they are ready to move forward to the transfer of the property using the Land Use Change Tax Fund.

Mr. Lamb then recommended the Commission walk the property sometime in the spring.

c. Community Development Department mission statement

Due to the absence of Mr. Bergman, the Commission agreed to table this matter until the April meeting.

d. NH Association of Conservation Commission membership costs

Mr. Lamb stated that the Commission needed to make a decision on the NH Association of Conservation Commission annual fee which is \$900. He stated that Ms. Clark was familiar with the fact that the same membership costs substantially less in other communities. Mr. Lamb reported that Ms. Clark suggested the Commission make a donation in the amount of \$400 in order to preserve some of the Commission's budget. Mr. Lamb added the thought is that the Commission is not taking full advantage of the membership and to see if the NH Association of Conservation Commission would accept a lower rate.

Mr. Haynes made a motion to support the NH Association of Conservation Commission for a \$400 membership donation. The motion was seconded by Councilor Hansel, which was unanimously approved.

e. Commission Priorities

Due to the absence of several members, the Commission agreed to table this matter until the April meeting.

f. West Street Dam-Rhode Island School of Design

Mr. Lamb recalled the proposal the Commission heard from Dr. Emily Vogler with the Rhode Island School of Design. He stated that staff sent an email reaching out to Dr. Vogler to refresh intent and to see if they are ready to move forward in April with their proposal for community meetings and staff is waiting for a response. Mr. Reilly asked if there has been any discussion at the Council level. Mr. Lamb responded not at this time.

5) New or Other Business

Mr. Haynes reported that he met with Ms. Clark informally and they talked about the idea of an education outreach subcommittee. He stated they brainstormed different ideas and wrote them down. Mr. Haynes noted that Mr. Reilly was not able to attend.

Mr. Haynes reported that one of the ideas was to reach out to the partners of other City departments and organizations. He stated one idea was to reach to Meghan Spaulding of Parks and Recreation to begin collaborating. Mr. Haynes reported that Mr. Bohannon mentioned the Ashuelot River Park Advisory Board. He stated that Mr. Bohannon reported the ARPAB wants to do more educational outreach and that the Board also has an open vacancy on the Board for a member from the Conservation Commission. The ARPAB meetings are generally held the second Tuesday of each month at 8:00 AM in the Recreation Center Room 12.

Mr. Haynes volunteered to attend the next ARPAB meeting to see if the Conservation Commission can be helpful.

Mr. Haynes announced the UNH Extension Service is offering on March 23rd a seminar for Easement Monitoring for Volunteers. The seminar will be held in New Durham at the Town Hall at 9 AM until 2PM.

Mr. Reilly asked as a follow-up to the minutes at the last meeting about the tree cutting at the Cheshire Medical Center. Mr. Lamb reported that last month the City received a letter from the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services about a second area of tree cutting along the Ashuelot River near Keene State College. He explained the report from the NH DES was that a determination would need to be made about whether there was a violation. Mr. Lamb noted they did not have the ability to access under winter conditions and that NHDES will inspect that area in the spring. In addition, he noted this was a question if this is a Shoreline Protection Act violation.

6) Adjournment – Next Meeting Date on April 15, 2019

Hearing no further business, Chair Von Plinsky adjourned the meeting a 4:58 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Jennifer Clark, Minute Taker

Reviewed by Rhett Lamb, ACM/Community Dev. Director
Edits by Lee Langella