

City of Keene
New Hampshire

CONSERVATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, February 16, 2021

4:30 PM

Remote Meeting via Zoom

Members Present:

Alexander Von Plinsky, IV, Chair
Eloise Clark, Vice Chair
Councilor Bobby Williams
Art Walker
Ken Bergman
Andrew Madison
Brian Reilly, Alternate (Voting)
Steven Bill, Alternate
John Therriault, Alternate

Staff Present:

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

Members Not Present:

Tom Haynes, Alternate

1) Call to Order

Chair Von Plinsky called the meeting to order at 4:30 PM and read the executive order authorizing a remote meeting: Emergency Order #12, issued by the Governor of the State of New Hampshire pursuant to Executive Order #2020-04. Pursuant to this order, members present stated that they were calling alone and stated their locations.

2) Approval of Meeting Minutes – January 19, 2021

Mr. Walker moved to approve minutes from the January 19, 2021 regular meeting, which Mr. Bergman seconded, and the motion passed with a unanimous roll call vote in favor.

3) Communication & Notifications

Vice Chair Clark recalled that during the last month's meeting, the Commission was due an annual report submitted to the Community Development Department from the Ashuelot River Local Advisory Committee. Mr. Lamb said he overlooked this and would send the report to Commissioners promptly. Vice Chair Clark said she also received a personal notification that the annual request for \$800 dues was active for the NH Association of Conservation Commissions

(NHACC). The Chairman recalled the January 2021 meeting, when the Commission decided to wait until later this spring to see where the budget stands before making the donation.

4) Informational

a. Subcommittee Reports

i. *Outreach Subcommittee*

Vice Chair Clark continues sending "Nature Nugget" Facebook and Instagram posts to Ms. Marcou for posting, which have worked out to one weekly post. To date, 24 posts have been shared and the Vice Chair is enjoying the work. The Chairman stated that he loved learning from the Nature Nuggets.

Mr. Bergman commented that at the last meeting Mr. Lamb agreed to share a copy of the wetland buffer list from Jeff Littleton. Mr. Lamb said he was working to acquire the document, which he said is old enough that it is harder to locate.

ii. *ARM Fund Subcommittee*

Chair Von Plinsky reported that the Subcommittee had not met. Still, the Commission had discussed the approaching commence of the ARM Fund season and the possibility of an application for the west bank of Beaver Brook near to Russell Park. Mr. Lamb reported that following the January meeting, he spoke with Lori Sommer (found her name on the state website) from the NH Department of Environmental Services (DES), who reported that the only 2021 ARM Funding would be for the seacoast region. Therefore, it would be good for the Subcommittee to schedule meetings and begin looking forward to 2022, potentially with an application for Russell Park. The Chairman said this news was disappointing but not unexpected given the current climate.

b. NHACC Legislative Update 2021 – www.nhacc.org

Mr. Lamb said this was a notification that the NHACC has identified several Bills they are tracking currently with plans to comment regarding right-to-know laws, current use, LCHIP, conservation easements, and some energy bills. This notification to the Commission was intended only to engender discussion.

Chair Von Plinsky described two Bills that would impact NH's environment. One regards LCHIP, for which \$25 of any transaction that goes through the Registry of Deeds is pooled into one fund for projects throughout the state; HB 621 seeks to diminish that funding, which is why the Chairman and NHACC did not support the Bill. The Chairman said that HB 177 would make it illegal to put a private landfill within two miles of a state park. He added that an upside of Covid-19 is that there are more ways for people to register their opinions on Bills like these to be heard at committees. The Chairman referred Commissioners to the general court website or to email him directly with questions. When a Bill is heard at committees, the Chairman said it does

make a difference to see that hundreds of people took time and signed-up to comment against, which he said should not be ignored.

Mr. Therriault said he researched HB 82, which is relative to amending a conservation easement between the state and a landowner. This bill would add a statement to the end of language in RSA 477:46 that says, "Nothing in this section shall prohibit a government body and a landowner from changing the terms of an established conservation easement, including but not limited to exchanging another parcel in return for easing current use restrictions, if such change is to correct an injustice or for any reason that advances the public good." He said the three sponsors of this Bill, Rep. Paul Berch, Rep. Michael Abbott and Rep. Cathryn Harvey, were all from Cheshire 1, which includes Walpole, Westmoreland, Chesterfield, and Hinsdale. He said it was a Cheshire County focused change to the RSA and said it was interesting to have three representatives from one county advocating this, asserting that would not occur unless someone in one of those towns wanted their easement changed.

5) Discussion Items

a. Planning Board referral re: Surface Water Ordinance – Eversource

i. *SWP-CUP-01-21 – Structure Replacement Project D108 Transmission Line*

Mr. Lamb referred to two applications referred from the Planning Board for Conservation Commission review and comment. Mr. Lamb introduced guests from Eversource's representatives for these two transmission line projects, GZA GeoEnvironmental: Lindsey White and Conor Madison. Guests were also present from Eversource: Lydia Morton, Jennifer Codispodi, and Jeremy Fennell.

Ms. White began the presentation on this work, which she said is similar to other projects the Commission had seen throughout the City. The plan for transmission line D108 is to replace 17 existing utility poles and remove two from service. The D108 line is approximately 1.3 miles and those 17 poles are the majority of that line, making this closer to a rebuild. Additionally as a part of this project, Eversource plans to replace existing static wire with optical ground wire (OPGW) in order to improve the transmission line by shielding conductors below it from lightning, and also serving as a telecommunication path for third party communications. As a result, the existing wooden poles must be replaced with steel poles to continue functioning safely and reliably when the OPGW is installed; the steel would also increase the poles' longevity.

Ms. White continued showing maps and photos to demonstrate the pole locations, work paths around the poles to stage equipment during construction, the location of proposed access, and where that access overlaps with wetland areas. Best management practices (BMPs) recommended by NH DES are used when traversing wetland areas by placing timber mats to minimize compaction; mats are removed post-construction and restored with sediment and mulch allowing vegetation to regrow fairly quickly, which Ms. White used photos to demonstrate. Line D108 begins at the north Keene substation and continues northeast, spanning a

wetland, continuing further through Keene and ending at a substation off of Emerald Street. Overall, along transmission line D108, two poles would be removed and 17 replaced. Additional BMPs would be followed, with contractors educated on monitoring for turtles and snakes, and how to safely relocate them from the construction zone. GZA would monitor for siltation prevention measures such as silt beds, straw bales, and straw waddle to ensure those are in place and upheld during construction. BMPs would be monitored weekly and progress reported.

Ms. White concluded summarizing the plan for transmission line D108 to replace existing lines in the same alignment. No new lines would be added and the existing right-of-way (ROW) would remain the same width. Replacing these lines is necessary to ensure safety and reliability. She showed photos of existing H-Frame wooden poles that would be replaced with similarly designed steel poles.

Mr. Therriault asked the type of seeds used in restoring disturbed areas. Ms. White said typically a native wet seed mix from New England Wetland Plants of MA. Mr. Therriault requested a list of those seeds and how pollinator friendly they are, urging the use of native pollinator plantings in those restorations. Ms. White would provide the list.

Mr. Bill stated his impression that there were some Brownfields due to an old tannery around the substation on Emerald Street; he asked whether this was considered and if there were potential problems as a result. Mr. Fennell said there was an old manufactured gas plant site around Emerald Street, which meant that GZA conducted soil testing on the structure closest to it in an abundance of caution because it is close enough to this project's site boundaries to warrant proactive testing. Vice Chair Clark cited a huge remediation project in that same area by the Friends of Open Space that resulted in hauling harmful materials from that site off to a safe location. Mr. Bergman recalled significant stream bottom sediment removal along the Ashuelot River under the West Street Bridge due to the remaining products from the coal gasification point from several decades earlier. Vice Chair Clark recalled a similar situation in the Mill Brook area.

Mr. Reilly asked the anticipated lifespan of the new steel poles and what maintenance would be required over that life. Mr. Fennell said they are expected to last at least 50 years but the current wooden ones, for example, have been in place for several decades and the steel should perform much better because they are unsusceptible to environmental factors like woodpeckers or rotting/fungus. All hardware and wires would be replaced and so not much near term maintenance is expected, though the lines are inspected every few years – most accessible from City ROW – and any issues identified would be addressed. The lines are surveyed also by helicopter after large storm events.

Vice Chair Clark stated that moving wood turtles is their death sentence and asked how far they would be moved. Ms. White said that they are only moved just off of the construction matting so they are not in danger from any equipment in the ROW, as the turtles are known to bask in the sun of the timber mats.

Mr. Bergman questioned when this work was planned, noting that in previous discussions on similar wetland impacts the Commission recommended drier times of the year. Ms. White and Mr. Fennell said that line D108 is scheduled to begin in July with completion before first snow.

Chair Von Plinsky asked about access to the area between West Street and the highways. Ms. White said there is access off West Street to get to Kohls for poles 12/13/14 and on the other side coming off RT-9 to access a large section crossing river areas.

Mr. Lamb recalled discussions from last year when it was stated that existing access roads would be used to the degree that they are still available and he asked how those roads would be returned to their pre-construction condition. Ms. White said existing access roads are used to the greatest extent possible. She continued that D108 was not from the work discussed by Ms. Morton last year and said that for D108 there are some existing access routes and where those cross buffers or wetlands, they would be restored. Mr. Fennell said all possible measures would be taken to work from the existing ROW but in some locations they would go around certain existing parking lots to avoid crossing the Rail Trail, for example. Easements would be used where possible because there is no viable access from the ROW into large wetland sections. Mr. Lamb asked about restoring the access roads, noting it is common for those to turn into trails or access points that would have to be managed by the private property owner; he cited access from West Street through the Melanson's parking lot to reach pole #12 as an example, and asked whether trees would need to be removed to build a temporary access. Ms. White stated that because the access to pole #12 is in an area of significant wetlands and buffers, that access would be restored to prior condition. Mr. Lamb asked whether all disturbances due to new access roads would be returned to the natural state and Ms. White replied in the affirmative.

The Chairman asked whether evidence would remain of the two poles removed. Mr. Fennell said that generally poles are removed, taken offsite to appropriate facilities, and no foundations remain. They attempt to remove all evidence of the poles and the only situation to cut the pole at grade would be in an excessively wet area like a bog, where removing the pole below grade would create more mess.

The Chairman heard the next matter before hearing motions.

ii. *SWP-CUP-02-21 – Structure Replacement Project L163 Transmission Line*

Mr. Conor Madison began saying that to ensure safety and reliability of the line, 14 poles in total would be replaced on transmission line L163 in the same alignment and using the same changeover methods and same BMPs as described above for line D108 regarding timber matting, wildlife relocation, and post-construction restoration. Replacing the existing static wire would require three similar pole pads in Keene where OPGW is proposed to be pulled. Mr. C. Madison used maps and photos to demonstrate where L163 lies in the flood plain and those pole locations

in the upland floodplain that would be matted, but not restored, in coordination with the property owner.

Mr. Lamb asked how this project was different than one in a similar easement that the Commission heard last year. Mr. Fennell said that the completed work along L163 last year was to determine what asset conditions passed inspection. The current project is to replace static wire with OPGW through the entire line and some existing wooden poles would be unable to withstand the weight, which triggered pole replacements with steel and the three additional structures to avoid matting far into a wetland to replace one structure. L163 is a much longer line than D108 and it is not financially or temporally advantageous to replace all poles along the line. Mr. Lamb wondered whether all of the temporary improvements and accesses associated with the prior year's project were successfully restored upon completion. Mr. Fennell said that all restoration work was completed but that different structure sections would be accessed with the current project. Mr. C. Madison added that there were few roads passing through L163 and so RT-12 would still be used where possible but new accesses to new structures would be required.

Mr. Therriault understood that privately owned land would be restored per the owners' wishes but he urged the use of native pollinator friendly plantings for restorations the public ROW. Mr. C. Madison said he made that note for both transmission lines.

Mr. Reilly asked whether additional poles would be replaced outside the City limits on the way to Antrim and Mr. C. Madison replied in the affirmative citing replacements through Stoddard, Sullivan, Nelson, and Antrim.

Mr. Bill asked whether poles would be replaced on L163 this time that were not replaced last time. Mr. C. Madison replied in the affirmative.

Mr. Bergman asked whether the City followed-up on work to L163 last year, citing the Commission's recommendations regarding tree trimming on Old Gilsum Road and more. Mr. Lamb said that Staff conducted a pre-project evaluation, photos, and other documentation, and visited the sites during construction and after. Mr. Lamb said that speaking generally, all were pleased with the restoration results.

Councilor Williams asked for more details on the difference between the existing wires and the OPGW replacements. Mr. Fennell said that the primary function of existing static wires is to protect from storm damage whereas the OPGW would provide that same protection through the transmission line but the OPGW would also enhance communication functionality between Eversource's substations. Councilor Williams asked whether one of the wires would be fiber optic. Mr. Fennell replied in the affirmative and said the top two skinny wires seen on the transmission line are fiber. Ms. Morton added that the OPGW are approximately the same diameter as existing wires and so the change in view is extremely minimal from the 50-foot and higher poles.

Mr. Bergman asked whether this new fiber would be available for commercial use and broadband distribution – there are broadband gaps in Keene – or just for Eversource's internal use. Mr. Fennell said that to his knowledge this would be only for internal Eversource communications and while there is a caveat of third party possibilities, he said Eversource is not an internet provider.

Mr. Lamb asked, given that new pads would be installed, whether locations exist where pads were installed previously, removed, and restored to only now have pads reinstalled at the same sites; would there be overlap between work areas and if in a wetland, how would this two-year cycle of impact be managed. Mr. C. Madison said there would be some overlap but none in wetlands. He continued that upland restoration would leave just enough space to accommodate a 30-foot by 60-foot standard bucket truck, with top soil graded to level the work area, and everything else would be restored. Ms. Morton added the possibility that previously timber matted roads would need to be treated the same way again. Mr. C. Madison said that in some instances sufficient room must be available to accommodate a crane for future replacements, but otherwise just enough space for the standard bucket truck to enter and exit.

Mr. Bergman referred back to line D108 and noted that the project description mentioned the common nighthawk – which has been observed near the Hannaford side of West Street – and their preference of ground nesting in sandy soils. The common nighthawk's breeding success has been on the decline and it is heavily monitored in NH due to great concern. The most recent few decades of nesting records show the species using flat gravel roofs instead of sandy streambanks. He suggested that the project should be particularly attentive to this species, as many people in Keene would be thrilled to learn of those sightings. Ms. White said that part of the wetland permit work with NH Fish & Game and the NH Natural Heritage Bureau, and their BMPs call for the contractor to be provided detailed photos and information, as well as the instruction to notify NH Fish & Game immediately upon sighting the species. Mr. Bergman suggested extra caution, given that the species could be difficult to spot from as close as 10 feet.

Mr. Bill referred to section seven along L163, where work would pass over the area upstream of the Check Dam, which he thought might be problematic for this work and he wondered about the approach. Mr. C. Madison replied that the only work around the Dam area would be on the other side of Rt.10. Last year, most or all of the structures along 175 and Ferry Brook – as referred on the maps provided – were replaced and so no additional work was needed there at present. The Chairman asked whether any new access points to L163 would be created. Mr. C. Madison said that there would be new access roads but no new construction entrances off the public ROW.

Mr. Lamb said that if the Conservation Commission had any recommendations to the Planning Board for when they consider these projects, now was the time to do so in a simple motion. He heard commentary on pollinator friendly plantings and concern about better representation for the common nighthawk. Mr. Lamb was yet unsure of the date for Planning Board review of the Conditional Use Permit, but the Conservation Commission's comments would be used as conditions for their approval.

Vice Chair Clark asked what steps would be taken to keep access roads inaccessible to off-road vehicles. Ms. Morton said that Eversource is happy to work with underlying property owners if there is a need to block access for both D108 and L163. Eversource does not take these actions by default without property owner permission, but rather complies in all cases with requests from property owners for gate or boulder placements. Mr. Bohannon stated that Eversource has worked well with the City to block various access points, such as on upper Court Street.

Chair Von Plinsky moved to recommend that the Planning Board insist upon remediation with pollinator friendly plantings on sites after Eversource completes work on transmission lines D108 and L163. Mr. Bergman seconded the motion, which passed on a unanimous roll call vote.

b. Continued Discussion – Greater Goose Pond Forest Management Plan Stewardship Committee

Mr. Lamb and Mr. Bohannon shared a draft motion to City Council recommending the formation of a Greater Goose Pond Forest Land Stewardship Committee, its composition, and its charge or purpose. He recalled that the Greater Goose Pond Forest Management Plan established a set of actions to occur in the forest over a certain number of years. Several locations in the plan recommend forming a Stewardship Committee as a forum for the public to provide unique and specific advice to Council as the forest projects move forward from recreation, to habitat preservation, to active timber management, and more. Mr. Lamb shared the draft motion and charge that was developed based on previous Commission discussions:

Move to recommend that: City Council establish a “Greater Goose Pond Forest Land Stewardship Committee” with the charge to advise the City Council and other City boards and commissions regarding implementation of the 2019 Greater Goose Pond Forest Land Stewardship Plan including the stewardship of natural resources, preservation of wildlife habitat and forest ecology, and promotion of recreational and educational opportunities; and, That the committee should be comprised of members representing the following areas of expertise and interest: a representative from the Conservation Commission, a person with professional experience as an ecologist/biologist/naturalist, a professional forester, an abutter to the property or a resident of the nearby neighborhood, a representative of a local mountain biking club, a person with experience in community education and outreach, a student representative from Keene State College or Antioch University New England.

Mr. Lamb said he received input from various City Staff to identify the New England Mountain Bike Association (NEMBA) instead of referencing a generic mountain biking club because the organization's work history in the forest.

In response to the Chairman, Mr. Lamb said that the draft language was sufficiently clear that the Conservation Commission is not an intermediary for this new Committee, but rather that this

would amend Chapter Two of the City Code on Boards and Commissions, establishing this as an advisory board to City Council and not to the Conservation Commission.

Vice Chair Clark asked whether two members of the Conservation Commission could serve on the Committee if they fulfilled those functions listed and Mr. Lamb thought that was possible, stating that this list provided to Council would be a suggestion and not absolute. In his experience, fulfilling the goal credentials is not always possible, which results in no quorum.

Mr. Reilly asked the process to identify potential members from a list like this and once those individuals are found, who assigns them to the Committee and for how long. Mr. Lamb said that the Mayor nominates Committee members to the City Council, which ultimately votes to appoint. Members of this Commission could recommend potential members to Staff to ensure the nomination occurs. Terms are always three years, staggered for the first terms so that all members' terms do not expire at the same time. Mr. Reilly asked whether the recommended list should include alternates to ensure quorum. Mr. Lamb said that if the Council agrees with this recommendation then the new Committee would be written into City Code, at which time the number of alternates, frequency of meetings, etc., would be established.

Mr. Bergman asked, from the City Council's perspective, whether it would be better to recommend a range of seven to 10 members. Mr. Lamb said such a range could be recommended in the memo transmitting the recommendation, but typically an odd number is used for the sake of voting and in his experience, anything over seven becomes unwieldy.

Chair Von Plinsky said he felt comfortable with the recommendation. The Chairman had contacted Keene State College (KSC) and Antioch University New England, the latter of which thought the Committee was a good idea and the information was distributed to professors to gauge student interest. The Chair's only other concern was whether the Committee should include slots for regular Keene citizen users of the park; Mr. A. Madison suggested something like an at-large position. Chapter Two of the City Code, as written, requires that membership of boards and committees reside in Keene unless there is a special call for outside residents due to regional subject matter or expertise, for example. Mr. Lamb did not think it necessary to establish at-large positions, stating that there was enough room in the recommendation to apply a more general standard to include an eligible user of the park. Instead of an abutter or resident of adjacent neighborhoods, the Chairman suggested stating a citizen with stake in the property; he wanted a more general statement so that an active forest user citizen of Ward One, for example, is not precluded from participation because they do not abut. Instead of merging one slot to state an abutter or nearby resident, Mr. Lamb thought it more prudent to maintain the category for an abutter and create a new category for an active public user of the park.

On replacing the language referencing a local mountain biking club to identify NEMBA, Councilor Williams expressed concern for 15 years from now when that group might not exist any longer as a reason to keep the language generic. Mr. Bohannon said that the City has an existing relationship and memorandum of understanding with NEMBA that outlines clearly their

scope of possible work with him. While the group could divide in the future, Mr. Bohannon thought it was in the best interest of that established relationship to state their name. Mr. Lamb noted that NEMBA is already engaged fully in trails management in the Goose Pond Forest.

Chair Von Plinsky made the following motion, which Mr. Bergman seconded, and the motion passed with a unanimous roll call vote in favor.

The Conservation Commission unanimously recommended that the City Council establish a Greater Goose Pond Forest Land Stewardship Committee with the charge to advise the City Council and other City boards and commissions regarding implementation of the 2019 Greater Goose Pond Forest Land Stewardship Plan including the stewardship of natural resources, preservation of wildlife habitat and forest ecology, and promotion of recreational and educational opportunities; and, that the committee should be comprised of members representing the following areas of expertise and interest: a representative from the Conservation Commission, a person with professional experience as an ecologist/biologist/naturalist, a professional forester, an abutter to the property or a resident of the nearby neighborhood, a representative of the New England Mountain Bike Association, a member of the community who is an active park user, a person with experience in community education and outreach, and a student representative from Keene State College or Antioch University New England.

c. Update – Bee City Designation

The Bee City application required identifying a media contact and email, which Mr. Lamb accepted. As such, the Bee City Resolution was completed, had been approved by the Municipal Services, Facilities & Infrastructure Committee, and the City Council would vote on whether to approve at their February 18 meeting (*note – the Council voted unanimously to adopt the resolution at the aforementioned meeting). Upon formal documentation and the Mayor's signature, the application would be submitted to the Xerces Society as the final administrative step. Mr. Therriault recalled the requirement to post a sign acknowledging Keene as a Bee City in at least one public place. He cited the half dozen Sister(Partner?) City signs around town as reasonable locations on the same sign posts. He said that the Xerces Society has artwork available for signs. Commissioners thanked Mr. Therriault for his efforts bringing this to fruition.

d. Discussion – Garlic Mustard Challenge

Councilor William referred to pages on the Garlic Mustard Challenge with ideas for implementation and a timeline that he compiled, which were included in the agenda packet. The proposed timeline was between this meeting and mid-May, during which time there would be two more Commission meetings and so it is good to begin acting now. The timeline that Councilor Williams presented was built on the assumption that the first two weeks of May would be the best time for the challenge to align well with spring weather and ideally full bloom, with the ability to adjust the timeline slightly as needed. Councilor Williams suggested partners: the Conservation Commission to oversee the project and volunteers, City Staff for operational

support, the Mayor and City Council happy to publicize the event to the extent appropriate, the University of NH (UNH) Cooperative Extension that runs the region-wide Garlic Mustard Challenge, Nature Groupie is already involved with the challenge and could be a tool to recruit volunteers, local schools and organizations, restaurants and merchants.

Councilor Williams cited examples from successful challenges in Hanover, NH, where they have stations around town stocked with bags and information on how to pull the plant, with volunteers checking the stations every few days to collect returned bag full of the plant. Last year, Hanover collected 113 garbage bags full of garlic mustard. The Councilor thought it sounded like a good socially distant way to engage a large group of volunteers for one big garlic mustard pull. The UNH contact provided a Nature Groupie resource to help with publicity and sourcing volunteers; they also suggested a training day earlier than the main event to coordinate the pull-here stations and to then begin engaging the broader audience. Councilor Williams said Hanover is a successful model and that Keene could replicate much of what they have done well.

As a way to train volunteers and the public in a socially distant way, Mr. Therriault suggested creating a short YouTube video demonstrating what garlic mustard looks like in bloom and where people can pull the species around town. He also suggested that if referring people to large patches that would be pulled, those would be opportune locations to drop native pollinator seeds in the process, which could be acquired in advance with recommendations from the Xerces Society.

Mr. Bill asked the fate of all of the plants pulled and whether they could be composted. Councilor Williams said that the BMP recommendation is to fill black plastic bags and unfortunately take them to the landfill, but alternatively creating compost could spread the species vastly in the future.

Mr. A. Madison said the timing, activities, and materials distribution sounded much like the annual spring Green Up Keene, which he said could also be used as a streamlined model, with the Garlic Mustard Challenge possibly incorporated into Green Up Keene for those first few years, and then separate them over time. He suggested another partner could be the Cheshire County Conservation District, which is helpful in facilitating other partnerships with non-profits and NH and Federal agencies; Amanda Littleton there might have good ideas to help get this started. The annual Ashuelot River Cleanup is run by the Cheshire County Conservation District and they do a lot of general invasive plants work.

The Chairman said the difficulty is the bloom timing. He liked the idea of modeling this effort on these other well-run programs.

Mr. Bohannon noted that he has a grant application through the Cheshire County Conservation District for pollinator gardens or green infrastructure that he thought to use with the sustainability project at Ashuelot River Park. The Conservation Commission could submit similar applications for other areas.

The Chairman stated his intention for the Commission to leave the March meeting with a concrete plan to get this off the ground this year. He was unaware of any good pulling spots and Councilor Williams cited one on North Lincoln Street near to where the annual amphibian crossing occurs; the Councilor said that area could be problematic due to its proximity to the roadway but that was where he planned to pick as much as possible. He imagined other areas along trails and he thought that the agenda for April should be serious scouting. Vice Chair Clark said that garlic mustard likes shade to semi-shade more so in woodlands and woods edges. The Chairman said that early publicity would be essential and he asked that the Vice Chair prepare some Nature Nuggets to accompany the event, and some on invasive plants in general, to which she agreed. Chair Von Plinsky said that a lot of planning would occur in March and while Keene has a lot of learning to do this was a good plan, and he thanked Councilor Williams.

Mr. Bergman suggested that the challenge include a citizen reporting component for volunteers to send photos or share where they saw the species most rampant. The Chairman said that three or four rampant areas could be suggested to volunteers this year while further areas are scouted for next year. Councilor Williams said that invasive plant maps exist, including for garlic mustard, and he would research existing user-generated data through UNH. Mr. Lamb thought the Community Development Department might be able to help with a map generating component of citizen reporting.

6) New or Other Business

7) Adjournment – Next Meeting Date: Monday, March 15, 2021

There being no further business, Chair Von Plinsky adjourned the meeting at 6:14 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Katie Kibler, Minute Taker
February 23, 2021

Staff edits submitted by,
Corinne Marcou, Administrative Assistant
February 24, 2021