

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

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

**Tuesday, January 18, 2022**

**4:30 PM**

**Council Chambers,  
City Hall**

**Members Present:**

Councilor Andrew Madison, Vice Chair  
Eloise Clark  
Councilor Robert Williams  
Art Walker  
Ken Bergman  
Thomas Haynes, Alternate  
Steven Bill, Alternate  
John Therriault, Alternate  
Brian Reilly, Alternate

**Staff Present:**

Corinne Marcou, Administrative Assistant

**Members Not Present:**

Alexander Von Plinsky, IV, Chair

**1) Call to Order**

Ms. Clark called the meeting to order at 4:35 PM.

**2) Vote for Chair and Vice Chair 2022**

Both Mr. Von Plinsky and Ms. Clark were willing to serve again, which the Commission supported. Ms. Clark was happy to have someone else serve as Vice Chair and Councilor Madison offered to serve, which the commission supported; his schedule could be most challenging in the winter, when he is busy at a whim as a first responder.

Mr. Bergman moved to approve Sparky Von Plinsky, IV, as Chair and Councilor Andrew Madison as Vice Chair of the Conservation Commission for the 2022 calendar year, which Mr. Bill seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Vice Chair Madison took his seat as Chair of the meeting at 4:39 PM and the whole Commission thanked Ms. Clark for her years of service as Vice Chair and Chair Von Plinsky for his continued service.

3) **Approval of Meeting Minutes – December 20, 2021**

Revision: Line 137, change the name “Lou,” to “Lew.”

Ms. Clark moved to approve the December 20, 2021 minutes as amended, which Councilor Williams seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

4) **Applications**

No applications.

5) **Informational**

A) **Subcommittee Reports**

i) ***Outreach Subcommittee***

Mr. Haynes had nothing new to report. He reiterated that there was a walk at Goose Pond on February 5 and that Ms. Clark continues her Nature Nuggets. Vice Chair Madison said the Nature Nuggets are excellent.

Ms. Clark noted that she had been producing Nature Nuggets for 18 months and stated that they do not get many “likes” on social media. Therefore, she was considering revamping them. Ms. Marcou said there was a Community Development Department discussion about social media and trying to brand the Nature Nuggets better as coming from the Conservation Commission to draw more attention and make them more appealing. Mr. Bill asked whether there would be a sign-up for the February 5 Goose Pond walk. Mr. Haynes said to contact Parks & Recreation and ask to be on the list.

Mr. Bergman noted that there were not links to the Nature Nuggets on the City’s Conservation Commission webpage and Ms. Marcou said the Department would be working on that. Mr. Bergman thought that many in the Keene community who do not use social media would appreciate that access. Ms. Marcou noted that they are currently posted to the Community Development Department social media pages and she will work with the City’s IT Department to have them posted on the Commission webpage. Councilor Williams noted that one way to draw more attention is for everyone on the Commission with social media followers to share the Nature Nuggets so they are exposed to a wider audience and can get more likes.

ii) ***ARM Fund Subcommittee – Non-Public Session***

No update.

iii) ***Greater Goose Pond Forest Stewardship Subcommittee***

Mr. Haynes said the Subcommittee met the week before this meeting. Mr. Haynes also walked around Goose Pond with Lew Shelley to talk about trail maintenance workshops and get Mr. Shelley's feedback on trail maintenance at Goose Pond. Mr. Shelley, from Walpole, oversees SnowHawk, LLC, as a trails consultant and trail builder. Mr. Haynes said that Mr. Shelley expressed excitement at the idea of trail maintenance workshops. They discussed the working idea of individual workshops for different trail components, like building tread, stonework, or bridgework. They are still brainstorming. Mr. Haynes said they also identified some areas of maintenance needs around the Greater Goose Pond loop, some of which could be incorporated into the workshops and other larger portions might be more suitable for grant applications under consideration. Mr. Haynes said the Subcommittee would meet again in February to discuss signage, kiosks, and blazing as the components that help people get around the loop trail and other connected trails. Discussion ensued.

**B) Invasive Species**

Councilor Williams looked forward to engaging other interested Commissioners and volunteers to develop a scheduled for the summer and fall programming. It worked well last year to have events on the Monday of a holiday, like Indigenous Peoples Day, when people are available.

**6) Discussion Items**

**A) Conservation Commission Speaking Events**

Vice Chair Madison tabled this item until the Covid-19 threats are less.

**B) Multiyear Pollinator Census Results for Cheshire County**

Mr. Therriault recalled that he already presented this to the Commission. Mr. Therriault continued using his time to discuss the annual Bee City USA membership report. He would have reviewed it with the Community Development Director in the past but was unsure who to do so with now. Ms. Marcou said she would get him the help needed and be in touch. Mr. Therriault continued stating that Bee City USA requires a \$200 membership fee each year for a population less than 23,000 *after the first full year of membership*. As of January 1, Keene had only been a Bee City for 10 months. Therefore, Mr. Therriault would inquire with Bee City USA as to whether the Commission owes that fee at this time and report back at the next meeting.

Mr. Therriault also recalled that last year he began discussions with the Director of Parks, Recreation, & Facilities, Andy Bohannon, about establishing a pollinator strip at the Monadnock View Cemetery on Park Avenue. He would meet with Mr. Bohannon again the week of this meeting to confirm details about the location and size of the strip, so they are ready to act after ground thaw. Discussion ensued about a pollinator strip established by the Friends of Open Space in the community garden adjacent to the cemetery. Mr. Therriault noted that the initial plan is to use a portion of a 2.5-acre area of the cemetery that used to be hayed and convert 1/8-

acre initially into a wildflower strip that cemetery visitors can pull from to place on graves. If it is popular, they could expand annually within that 2.5 acres. Discussion ensued.

Mr. Haynes recalled that an obligation of being a Bee City is to have community involvement and education, and he wondered if this pollinator strip was intended to serve that purpose. Mr. Therriault said that there could be signage about pollinators as an educational component. However, Mr. Therriault was trying to contact SAU-29 that services Keene about offering honeybee and pollinator presentations to grade schools this spring when they are learning about pollinators in science class, which he has done in the past. Vice Chair Madison suggested contacting Mr. Bohannon for help with the SAU. Mr. Bill said that the Healthy Home Habitats could be another connection. Discussion ensued.

**C) Beaver Brook to Cemetery**

This was tabled until Chair Von Plinsky returns in March. Mr. Bill noted a possible contact from Friends of Pisgah newsletter, Steve Lisle from Grafton, VT.

**D) 2022 Healthy Home Habitats' Monadnock Sustainable Backyard Workshop Series**

Vice Chair Madison welcomed Michele Chalice of 25 Beech Street and owner of Healthy Home Habitats.

Ms. Chalice was present to inform the Commission of her upcoming six-session workshop series called Create a Sustainable Yard, beginning on Saturday, February 19 at 10:00 AM at Heberton Hall. Because she is a private entity, she is unable to partner with the Commission, which she said is a shame because she wants to network and collaborate. Thus, she wanted to inform the Commission of this opportunity. The subsequent sessions would occur at Ms. Chalice's home, where she has different rain capture and composting methods, and a variety of pollinator gardens. She is sharing and raising awareness of items families can do now that impact family health, the community, and the ecosystem. She plans to interview others in the community doing the same in their yards and to pass out profiles on those neighbors at the events to show attendees that she is not the only one doing so, with the broader eventual goal of a sustainable yard tour through the community. Ms. Chalice added that her series is based on a Chicago Environmental Protection Agency grant on sustainable backyards. It was a large grant that reimbursed people for installing rain barrels to help with stormwater and for planting shade trees. Her approach is about saving on water bills. Discussion ensued. The early sessions at Heberton Hall would also be available online and archived by the library. She welcomed the Commission to distribute flyers and information.

Vice Chair Madison said it sounded like a wonderful program and something that people in his neighborhood and more densely populated areas would be interested in conducting themselves. Councilor Williams noted that Ms. Chalice's yard inspired his own. He was appreciative and said

it was something other people would do. He also noted that at a recent Council goals workshop there was discussion of community complaints on flooding with all the rain last year and rain garden techniques like these could help mitigate flooding problems.

**7) New or Other Business**

Mr. Bergman referred back to the agenda item on Beaver Brook, recalling that Mr. Bohannon was going to share a video with the Commission before this meeting, but had not. Vice Chair Madison said he would follow-up with Mr. Bohannon.

Mr. Bergman referred to the new solar array adjacent to the Airport near the end of Airport Road before the entrance to the Wastewater Treatment Plant, for which a significant number of trees were cleared. He wondered who authorized the tree clearing because the Commission had not heard about it and there could be wetlands issues. Ms. Marcou said that is City-owned land, but it is in Swanzey. Ms. Clark said the matter was reviewed by the Swanzey Conservation Commission and the project did receive an Alteration of Terrain permit from the State. It was just outside the Ashuelot River Local Advisory Committee's (ARLAC) purview but there was discussion in their minutes. Ms. Marcou would follow-up with the Airport Director and the Public Works Department to see if there was a record of this decision. Mr. Therriault noted that fences surrounding solar farms make great pollinator strips. Mr. Bergman said that would be great for caterpillars and suggested that Mr. Therriault contact Sam Jaffe of the Caterpillar Lab. Discussion ensued.

**A) 2021 ARLAC Annual Report**

The report was included in the agenda packet. Ms. Clark welcomed questions. Mr. Haynes said that the Commission is grateful for the great work ARLAC does. Ms. Clark noted that there would be an opening on the ARLAC Board of Representatives if any Commissioners were interested. Discussion ensued.

**8) Adjournment – Next Meeting Date: Tuesday, February 22, 2022**

There being no further business, Vice Chair Madison adjourned the meeting at 4:21 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Katrinya Kibler, Minute Taker  
January 25, 2022

Reviewed and edited by,  
Corinne Marcou, Administrative Assistant