



## **CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

### **AGENDA**

**Monday, November 18, 2024**

**4:30 PM**

**Room 22, Recreation Center**

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#### Commission Members

Alexander Von Plinsky, IV, Chair  
Councilor Andrew Madison, Vice Chair  
Art Walker  
Councilor Robert Williams, Ex-Officio  
Steven Bill  
Kenneth Bergman  
Barbara Richter

Deborah LeBlanc, Alternate  
Thomas P. Haynes, Alternate  
John Therriault, Alternate

**SITE VISIT: Commission members will conduct a site visit of the property at 0 Court Street (TMP #228-016-000) at 3:30 pm immediately prior to the meeting.**

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Approval of Meeting Minutes** – October 21, 2024
- 3. Advice and Comment** - Fieldstone Land Consultants, on behalf of owner Guitard Homes LLC, is seeking input from the Commission regarding a potential Cottage Court Development & Surface Water Conditional Use Permit (CUP). The parcel is located at 0 Court Street (TMP #228-016-000) in the Low Density District.
- 4. Discussion Items:**
  - a) Citywide approach/strategy for invasive species management
  - b) Red pine scale and future impacts to City parklands (Andy Bohannon)
  - c) Airport wildlife control fence – letter of support for preferred alternative
  - d) Keene Meadow Solar Station project update
  - d) NHDOT Route 101 Project
  - e) Master Plan Update
  - f) Outreach
- 5. Report-outs:**
  - a) Greater Goose Pond Forest Stewardship Subcommittee
  - b) Invasive Species
  - c) Land Conservation
  - d) Pollinator Updates
- 6. New or Other Business**
- 7. Adjourn** – Next meeting date: Monday, December 16, 2024

1 City of Keene  
2 New Hampshire

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5 CONSERVATION COMMISSION  
6 MEETING MINUTES  
7

Monday, October 21, 2024

4:30 PM

Room 22,  
Recreation Center

**Members Present:**

Alexander Von Plinsky, IV, Chair  
Councilor Robert Williams  
Art Walker  
Ken Bergman  
Steven Bill  
Barbara Richter  
Eloise Clark, Alternate (arrived 4:36 PM)  
Thomas Haynes, Alternate  
John Therriault, Alternate (Voting)  
Deborah LeBlanc, Alternate

**Staff Present:**

Mari Brunner, Senior Planner  
David Hickling, Airport Director

**Members Not Present:**

Councilor Andrew Madison, Vice Chair  
Lee Stanish, Alternate

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9  
10 **1) Call to Order**

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

13  
14 **2) Approval of Meeting Minutes – September 16, 2024**

15  
16 Revisions: Line 144, add “or not” after “whether.” Line 304, indicate that Matt Kelly is still the  
17 current Cheshire County Forester.

18  
19 A motion by Mr. Walker to adopt the September 16, 2024 minutes as amended was duly  
20 seconded by Mr. Bergman and the motion carried unanimously.

21  
22 **3) Report-Outs:**

23 **A) Greater Goose Pond Forest Stewardship Subcommittee**

24  
25 Mr. Haynes reported that since the Commission’s last meeting, the Subcommittee had met for  
26 three different work sessions, one on a Friday and two on Saturdays. Most of this work had been  
27 on the Rope Tow Trail, as well as an adjacent trail, where crushed stone and rocks were moved

28 to create a nice, small bridge over a wet area. Weather permitting, the Subcommittee was  
29 planning for two more work sessions on the second Friday and third Saturday in November. In  
30 December, the Subcommittee would transition to indoor meetings and start planning for 2025  
31 projects. If any Commissioners have ideas for the Subcommittee to consider for 2025, they are  
32 encouraged to approach Mr. Haynes, Mr. Walker, and/or Mr. Bill. The initial plans are to  
33 continue trail work in addition to more educational outreach. Mr. Haynes added that the bridge  
34 over the spillway is still a pretty high priority. He also explained an idea for an all-access trail for  
35 the lower pond that connects to the spillway.

36

37 Mr. Haynes also reported that on October 9, he led a group of 15 people who do a Wednesday  
38 walk through four miles of trails that are not normally used, and he said it was a lot of fun.  
39 Additionally, he reported that Mr. Bill would be leading another Goose Pond Through the  
40 Seasons fall walk about geology on Saturday, November 9, beginning at the North Trailhead at  
41 9:00 AM.

42

#### 43 **B) Invasive Species**

44

45 Councilor Williams reported that there was an invasive species event at Robin Hood Park on  
46 October 11 addressing areas of Japanese knotweed for the fourth year, noting that it was starting  
47 to make a difference by growing back in lower quantities; in the best case situations, this allows  
48 native species to grow back and thrive in its place. Councilor Williams was pleased with this  
49 latest event. He reported that the final event of the year would be on November 11, Veterans  
50 Day, at 4:00 PM, pulling vines along on Eastern Avenue and the Rail Trail.

51

#### 52 **C) Land Conservation**

53

54 Chair Von Plinsky reported that he and Ms. Brunner were able to locate the conservation  
55 easement monitoring documents that had been missing that the Commission discussed at the  
56 previous meeting. They unpacked the contents for the various conservation easements in the  
57 City. He said a Commissioner would need to take the lead on the annual easement monitoring  
58 that is required; essentially, walking each property and noting any changes or concerns. Ms.  
59 LeBlanc offered, if other Councilors are willing to advise at the beginning. Chair Von Plinsky  
60 agreed that she would have plenty of help and guidance.

61

62 Ms. Clark arrived.

63

#### 64 **D) Pollinator Updates**

65

66 Mr. Therriault said that there were no new pollinator patches in the City to report on. However,  
67 he reported that the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation published a guide to creating  
68 an integrated pest management plan for public works organizations, highway departments, cities,  
69 etc. Because the City of Keene is a Bee City USA via the Xerces Society, this guide is available

70 to the City. In particular, there is a focus on reducing the use of pesticides. Chair Von Plinsky  
71 agreed that would be a fantastic resource.

72  
73 Mr. Bergman asked if there was an update on the Washington Street Extension Property. Ms.  
74 Brunner said she did not have an update.

75  
76 Chair Von Plinsky asked if there was an update on the Edgewood Neighborhood pollinator  
77 garden. Mr. Therriault said it would be bigger than he expected, noting that during every step of  
78 the neighborhood's planning process, the garden plans kept getting bigger. Chair Von Plinsky  
79 said he looked forward to seeing it in the spring.

80  
81 **4) Airport Proposed Wildlife Control Fence – Project Update**

82  
83 Chair Von Plinsky welcomed David Hickling, the City of Keene's Director of the Dillant-  
84 Hopkins Airport, for an update on the proposed wildlife control fence at the Airport. The  
85 Commission had long-term interest in this project and there had been public interest due to  
86 wildlife viewing along Airport Road. Mr. Hickling recalled that this project is the scope of the  
87 Swanzey Conservation Commission, but he had been keeping Keene's Conservation  
88 Commission informed and Mr. Bergman had been contacting Mr. Hickling offering the Keene  
89 Commission's help. As such, due to recent project developments, Mr. Hickling felt this was an  
90 opportune time for another discussion with this group.

91  
92 Mr. Hickling explained that over the previous few months, he had been working through the NH  
93 Department of Transportation (DOT) Natural Resource Agency Coordination Meetings, through  
94 which he said there had been some pushback on the City's preferred location of the wildlife  
95 control fence, which would be in the runway's object free area. The pushback was such that now,  
96 the project's engineering consultants—McFarland Johnson—proposed locating the fence at the  
97 closest point to the runway possible without entering the object free area. However, this would  
98 place 800 feet of the fence in the wetland along its edge, which the NH Department of  
99 Environment Services (DES) has said is unacceptable and told the City to consider the other  
100 option along Airport Road. However, Mr. Hickling said that the City told NH DES multiple  
101 times that siting the fence along Airport Road is not preferred, and further, it is not even practical  
102 for the objective of the project, which is to keep wildlife away from the runway. Still, he said  
103 DES did not seem to want to budge.

104  
105 So, due to these challenges, Mr. Hickling said that McFarland Johnson's environmental  
106 specialist reviewed the possibility of putting the fence along Airport Road. Environmentally, Mr.  
107 Hickling said that the specialist told Mr. Hickling that it would be better to locate the fence along  
108 the edge of the runway (the City's preferred location) because the fence could not actually be  
109 constructed right along Airport road but would have to be offset into the wetland. This would  
110 include enclosed utility poles farther from the fence into the wetland that would have to be  
111 accessible to the utilities. Significantly, though, Mr. Hickling said that if the fence was along  
112 Airport Road, approximately 136 acres of habitat—including approximately 108 acres of

113 wetland habitat—would be fenced into the Airport property and separated from other habitat.  
114 From an environmental standpoint, Mr. Hickling said this was the greatest standout to the  
115 consulting environmental specialist. Further, Mr. Hickling recalled the strong public opposition  
116 to a fence along Airport Road due to the popular wildlife viewing and bird watching. He said it  
117 seemed that NH DES might have been more focused on their concern for direct physical impacts  
118 on the wetland from the object free area. However, Mr. Hickling recalled that the wetland impact  
119 would only really be from the installation of the fence. Once the fence is installed, he said there  
120 would really be no overall impacts on the functions or values of the wetland, which are part of  
121 the criteria that NH DES are supposed to use when making these determinations. Rather, Mr.  
122 Hickling said that Mr. Hoffman indicated that DES was not looking at those criteria but were  
123 focused on the impact of installing the fence along the edge of the runway.

124  
125 Mr. Hickling continued, explaining that following a site visit at the Airport with all parties  
126 involved, NH DES still wanted the City to consider alternatives to siting the fence along the  
127 runway, which he said left Mr. Hoffman from McFarland Johnson unsure how to proceed. The  
128 agency asked Mr. Hickling to ask the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) if they would  
129 allow for placing the fence further from the wetland and closer to the runway. Mr. Hickling  
130 agreed to inquire, but doubted it would be approved because the object free area is generally a no  
131 pass zone.

132  
133 Mr. Therriault asked about the length of the runway. Mr. Hickling said 6,200 feet. Mr. Therriault  
134 asked if it would make a difference if the runway was 6,000 feet. Mr. Hickling said no, the  
135 runway length is not a factor; the object free area is parallel to the runway, not off the end of it,  
136 and the wetland issue is not at the end of the runway. The issue is along the edge parallel to the  
137 runway running north–south.

138  
139 Mr. Hickling explained that due to these challenges, the consultants at McFarland Johnson  
140 advised that he should bring these updates to the Keene Conservation Commission so this would  
141 be documented in the minutes, which would reflect that the Keene Commission supports siting  
142 the fence closer to the runway object free area as the better environmental alternative, and not  
143 along Airport Road. He hoped the Commission would consider writing a letter in this regard.

144  
145 Chair Von Plinsky welcomed a discussion from the Commission.

146  
147 Ms. LeBlanc asked how much of the wetland would be enclosed in the runway area if the fence  
148 was closer to the runway. Mr. Hickling said 800 feet. Mr. Therriault said 800 running feet and  
149 Mr. Hickling said yes. Mr. Bergman said roughly parallel to the terminus of the short runway  
150 and Mr. Hickling said south of that, so Mr. Bergman said it would be somewhat parallel to  
151 Airport Road but at the upper far end of the marsh. Mr. Bergman asked about the shape of the  
152 object free area. Mr. Hickling explained that the object free area runs 500 feet from the center  
153 line of the runway and within that area, there can be no objects unless they are frangible and used  
154 for navigation (e.g., runway lights). Mr. Hickling said it was possible that he could ask the FAA  
155 to move the fence 5 feet closer to the runway and they might say yes, but it is a static object, so it

156 technically is not allowed in the object free zone. NH DES asked the City to pursue an  
157 alternative that takes the fence out of the wetland and as close to the runway as possible.

158

159 Chair Von Plinsky asked about the footprint of the fence; 800 feet long and 5 feet wide, so  
160 approximately 4,000 square feet. Mr. Hickling said it would not even be 5 feet wide because the  
161 footprint of the fence posts would only be a cement block. Once the fence is installed, Mr.  
162 Hickling said there should be no impact to the wetland.

163

164 Mr. Bergman asked if the Swanzey Conservation Commission participated in the most recent site  
165 visit. Mr. Hickling did not think so. Mr. Hickling noted that the project consultants would be  
166 presenting before the Swanzey Conservation Commission on November 4.

167

168 Chair Von Plinsky discussed next steps the Commission could take. He suggested that Mr.  
169 Bergman could draft a letter on behalf of the Keene Conservation Commission to discuss and  
170 vote on at the November meeting (after the Swanzey meeting on 11/4). The letter would  
171 expressly outline the Commission's concerns about the different possibilities for the fence. Mr.  
172 Hickling said that voting on the letter at the November 18 meeting would be timely; these  
173 meeting minutes demonstrating the Commission's position would also be approved then. Mr.  
174 Hickling said he could ask the Swanzey Conservation Commission to write a letter as well; Mr.  
175 Bergman hoped their letter would not be contradictory, and Mr. Therriault suggested that they  
176 could receive a copy of Keene's draft letter in advance of their meeting to reference.

177

178 Mr. Bergman agreed to draft a letter on Keene Conservation Commission advocating for siting  
179 the Airport's wildlife control fence closer to the runway, not along Airport Road, as well as to  
180 attend the Swanzey Conservation Commission's meeting on November 4. Then, the draft letter  
181 would be submitted to Ms. Brunner in advance of the November Commission meeting to share  
182 with the whole Commission for discussion. Mr. Bergman asked to have an additional  
183 conversation with Mr. Hickling and/or Mr. Hoffman before drafting the letter to ensure he  
184 accurately understood the options and Mr. Hickling agreed.

185

186 Mr. Haynes commented on the fact that this is meant to be a wildlife control fence—keeping  
187 wildlife away from the Airport runways for safety—and placing the fence along Airport Road  
188 would enclose wildlife within the Airport property. Mr. Hickling agreed that was his concern,  
189 because if the fence is along Airport Road, 136 acres of habitat would be enclosed on the Airport  
190 property, making it almost impossible to eliminate the primary concern for aircraft safety: white  
191 tailed deer. He cited a similar problem at the Syracuse, NY, airport. Mr. Haynes said that should  
192 be one argument against having the fence along Airport Road and Mr. Hickling said that is his  
193 biggest argument.

194

195 Mr. Hickling stated that if DES forces placing the fence along Airport Road, he would likely  
196 cancel the project entirely, because he thinks it could create a more dangerous situation. While  
197 Mr. Hickling said it would be terrible to cancel the project, he was concerned about the safety of  
198 flights because of the number of deer. Then, he would have to write a letter to the FAA,

199 indicating that the City was trying to make the Airport safer, but was denied that opportunity, so  
200 if something bad happens in the future, the City is not liable.

201

202 Mr. Hickling shared a funding update. If this hurdle is overcome with DES, there would be a  
203 smaller grant for the rest of the design and permitting for FY-2025, with construction in FY-  
204 2026.

205

206 Mr. Bergman asked to what degree the public could be mustered for this cause without somehow  
207 undermining Mr. Hickling's credibility. Mr. Bill suggested incorporating NH Audubon. Mr.  
208 Bergman said he reached out to NH Audubon 4–5 years ago about this, and Mr. Bergman  
209 indicated that NH Audubon said that birds could fly over the fence, so they were not concerned  
210 about birding. Mr. Bergman felt that was atypical of NH Audubon's general promotion of  
211 environmental education, birding, and natural history. He said the Commission could try again.

212

213 Mr. Hickling said that if DES is adamant that the fence cannot be along the runway, then he  
214 would try to leverage the FAA to pressure them about the fact that this is for the safety of  
215 aviation. Mr. Bergman recalled that when George Hansel was on the Commission, he suggested  
216 a last resort of installing viewing stations in a fence along Airport Road if it has to be there. Mr.  
217 Hickling noted that would be costly. The Commission thanked Mr. Hickling for his work.

218

219 **5) Discussion About a Citywide Approach/Strategy for Invasive Species Management**

220

221 Chair Von Plinsky welcomed Bob Milliken of Allen Court, an invasive species expert, who sits  
222 on the Board of the Hogback Mountain Conservation Association, and is the Invasive Species  
223 person for this year. The Association has been fighting invasives inside the Conservation Area  
224 along Rt-9 (e.g., the hedgerows along Rt-9 traveling to Wilmington, VT) for more than 7 years.  
225 They are fighting substantial Japanese knotweed manually—no herbicides. However, they fight  
226 wild chervil and wild parsnip the hardest. Mr. Milliken said he had never seen those species in  
227 Keene, until one day walking by the pond near Elm Street and Court Street, near the daycare for  
228 Cheshire Medical Center when he saw wild parsnip and he was devastated. In most cases, he said  
229 both of those plants arise because they are spread when snow is plowed over them after the seeds  
230 pop, or if dirt is transported from other places. This year, over the 2-mile stretch of the Hogback  
231 Mountain Conservation Area along Rt-9, he said they only pulled 20 plants.

232

233 Mr. Milliken was concerned that these invasives were spreading to NH and Keene, so he  
234 reported it to the City, and learned about Chair Von Plinsky and the Commission; he was  
235 concerned that there were rules prohibiting him from pulling the invasives on public property.  
236 Unfortunately, after he reported the plants, the City mowed over some of the invasives that were  
237 seeding, so those probably spread. Another invasive of concern is bittersweet. Mr. Milliken  
238 described working with a scientist who used an herbicide called Buckthorn Blaster, which is not  
239 a spray—he compared it to a bingo dauber—that is applied to woody plants after they are cut at  
240 the root; it kills one plant and does not spread. Mr. Bergman asked if a license if needed to apply  
241 the Buckthorn Blaster and Mr. Milliken said yes.

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Chair Von Plinsky thanked Mr. Milliken for coming and sharing his expertise as a master gardener, as the challenges he described are ones this Commission had been grappling with for some time; people want to help with this problem but they do not know who to call, what to do, if they are allowed to help, or where. Chair Von Plinsky thought that Mr. Milliken’s expertise and comments bolstered the Commission’s decision to write a letter to the Council calling for a broader Citywide approach to invasive species management. Chair Von Plinsky sought the Commission’s feedback on the letter he drafted that Ms. Brunner shared via email. Once the letter is approved by the Commission and submitted to the City Council, it could be forwarded to any of the three Council Standing Committees but should get through that process by the New Year. This would involve Chair Von Plinsky presenting to the Standing Committee, and it would be great for other Commissioners to come and speak as well. He asked for other feedback on the letter.

256 Commissioners suggested adding the following points to the letter:

- 257 • Mr. Bill suggested that at the end of the second paragraph, it might be relevant to  
258 comment on how plants damage infrastructure, particularly from a financial perspective  
259 for the City.
- 260 • Mr. Milliken noted that wild chervil and wild parsnip are dangerous to skin, and the sap  
261 will blister in the sun like a second-degree burn, so one must be trained to pull them.
- 262 • Ms. Richter emailed suggestions to Chair Von Plinsky about the overall impacts of  
263 invasives. She added the overall negative impacts to native species and potential  
264 associated impacts to human health.
- 265 • Ms. Richter also suggested adding that City staff should have some level of education or  
266 training on how to remove/dispose/control invasives. She emailed Ms. Brunner language  
267 on mowing best practices that the Public Works Department should be familiar with. She  
268 was not suggesting an intensive or long training, but said there are great resources  
269 available, especially for species like knotweed to develop best long-term practices.
- 270 • Mr. Bill noted that it would be nice if there was one person associated with the City of  
271 Keene that members of the public can call for invasive species issues.

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Discussion ensued about how important it will be to have someone on City staff that who is formally in charge of invasive species management, and the fact that it cannot be Councilor Williams or a single volunteer. Dedicated time and resources are needed, not necessarily full-time. When there is an invasive species issue a member of the public is concerned about, there needs to be a member of City staff they can call or email directly. Commissioners agreed that it would be ideal for the person in charge to regularly report to the Conservation Commission.

280 Discussion ensued on the action the Commission would be asking the Council to take in this  
281 letter, with Councilor Williams noting that the Commission would need to be convincing. The  
282 Councilor said this is an issue a lot of people care about—including a lot of Councilors—but he  
283 asked: Where do we go from here? What is the broader intent? Chair Von Plinsky thought it  
284 would be best to get the letter into the hands of the City Manager as early in the process as



285 possible to shorten the length of the process, but he was unsure how the process might fully  
286 work. Mr. Therriault thought that if the Commission was asking the City Manager to assign  
287 resources from within the Parks and Recreation or Public Works Departments, then the  
288 Commission might need to provide a measurable objective, like remediating 1/2-acre of invasive  
289 species per year; otherwise he thought it might fall by the wayside. Chair Von Plinsky was  
290 concerned that only remediating a specific area could keep focus from preventing invasives  
291 elsewhere or not getting credit for preventing them elsewhere; he said it was a fine line.  
292 Councilor Williams said that if the communication is forwarded to the City Manager, one option  
293 would be for her to appoint a committee (if not this Commission) including City staff members  
294 and the public for a short period to develop a plan, which the City has done for other issues like  
295 housing.

296  
297 Mr. Bill asked about financial support; the City cannot hire anyone without money. Councilor  
298 Williams agreed, noting that the Council/City Manager would likely look to the Conservation  
299 Commission's budget, which he said gains \$25,000 annually from the Conservation Land  
300 Acquisition Fund for conservation purposes—in the past, used mostly for land purchases. The  
301 Councilor did not want to shift it all toward invasive species management. However, he thought  
302 the Commission could ask the Council to be a little more generous in their portion of that tax that  
303 is provided to the Commission, and that balance could be directed toward invasive management.  
304 Chair Von Plinsky thought that might help contribute toward the accountability needed, but he  
305 still thought that while the Commission could make recommendations, it would be Councilor  
306 Williams' and the other 14 Councilors' jobs to determine the details. Still, Chair Von Plinsky felt  
307 strongly that there should be a point of contact on City staff.

308  
309 Mr. Milliken noted that the Hogback Mountain Conservation Association has a website,  
310 pamphlets, and flyers for public outreach. The public is asked not to pull plants because they are  
311 not trained. Instead, flags are available, and members of the public can mark things and email the  
312 Association to send trained volunteers out.

313  
314 Ms. Richter asked about Conservation Land Acquisition Fund cap. Ms. Brunner explained that  
315 \$25,000 goes into the Fund annually regardless of whether there was any funding from the Land  
316 Use Change Tax. Mr. Haynes noted that there is a complex formula for this, but explained that in  
317 the past, the City was getting less and less money in that tax from the exchange of land, so the  
318 Commission lobbied to get that \$25,000 as one fee each year so the Commission would have  
319 more stability in its budget. Ms. Richter was curious to know if the Commission's budget could  
320 be supplemented if there was more than \$25,000 in Land Use Change Tax in a given year. Chair  
321 Von Plinsky still hesitated to spend the Commission's whole budget on this effort, but said the  
322 Commission could contribute/partner with the City.

323  
324 Mr. Bill recalled mention at the previous meeting that someone was applying pesticides along a  
325 stretch of Beaver Brook. Ms. Brunner said that was not a City staff member, but someone hired  
326 by the City. Mr. Bill wondered—if that is a regular budget item for the City and something that  
327 is relevant to what the City is trying to do on a broader scale—if it would make sense to expand.

328 Ms. Brunner said the person to ask would be the Public Works Director, Don Lussier. Given the  
329 overall discussion, Mr. Haynes thought it might be ideal to invite the Public Works Director for a  
330 conversation with the Commission to discuss how to approach this with the City. Chair Von  
331 Plinsky agreed, and added that involving the Parks and Recreation Director, Carrah Fisk-  
332 Hennessey, could be wise too, to understand their concerns ahead of time. However, they might  
333 be involved through the Council communication process. Mr. Haynes suggested consulting them  
334 first so there is less for them to figure out once the Commission's letter reaches the Council.  
335 Chair Von Plinsky agreed, noting that the only downside was time. The Commission agreed to  
336 invite the Public Works Director and Parks and Recreation Director, or their representatives, to  
337 the Commission's November meeting.

338  
339 The Commission thanked Mr. Milliken for his contributions. Chair Von Plinsky noted that they  
340 were looking for new Commissioners if Mr. Milliken is interested.

341

342 **6) Discussion Items:**

343 **A) NHACC Intern Opportunity**

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345 Chair Von Plinsky informed the Commission that their NH Association of Conservation  
346 Commissions (NHACC) internship application was not selected. When writing the letter, Chair  
347 Von Plinsky and Councilor Williams identified how to start the actual, on the ground process, so  
348 they still could envision a way forward without a dedicated intern. Ms. Brunner asked Ms.  
349 Richter to share a copy of the application form and Ms. Richter agreed to send it.

350

351 Mr. Bill asked if there was an indication of why the application was not selected. Ms. Richter  
352 said it was very competitive with 16 applications and only three were chosen due to funding. She  
353 recalled that this was a pilot program to see the interest level and how the NHACC could work  
354 with towns. While Keene was high on the list, she said towns were chosen because of specific  
355 projects that had compelling support for the interns as a part of the applications, so Ms. Richter  
356 said it was a challenge for the selection committee; she was not on the committee.

357

358 Mr. Haynes thought that in terms of the broader discussion, having developed this well-  
359 organized application and plan could provide the Commission with more leeway/leverage to  
360 apply for future internships or projects through the local colleges, etc.

361

362 **B) Keene Meadow Solar Station Project Update**

363

364 There was no update on the Keene Meadow Solar Station project.

365

366 Mr. Bergman mentioned recent conversations about other solar projects, such as at the  
367 Monadnock View Cemetery and another a new one being explored at the Airport. Ms. Brunner  
368 said the Monadnock View Cemetery solar project was moving forward and she thought they had  
369 received the Zoning Variance needed for that use in a Conservation Zoning District. Revision  
370 Energy would be building that solar array, the City would be leasing the land, and Cedarcrest

371 would be purchasing the energy. Mr. Bergman had heard about the new solar possibility at the  
372 Airport during a recent event at the Airport, which Ms. Clark said was hosted by the Monadnock  
373 Sustainability Hub. Ms. Brunner noted that the City’s Energy and Climate Committee (ECC) has  
374 work groups and one tracks the various local solar locations being considered, including both of  
375 these sites. Chair Von Plinsky added that he spoke with City Councilor Bryan Lake—a member  
376 of the ECC—about finding a way to work together because there is a lot of overlap between  
377 what the ECC and Conservation Commission do.

378

379 **C) NHDOT Route 101 Project**

380

381 Chair Von Plinsky checked the project website and said the next public engagement should be in  
382 early 2025 with a design presentation. This should remain on the agenda so the Commission can  
383 have a presence then, because he was proud the Commission had input in how the project made  
384 it through the early stages of the process.

385

386 **D) Master Plan Update**

387

388 Ms. Brunner shared handouts of the outputs from the Master Plan Future Summit in October.  
389 She showed the six pillars that the Master Plan Steering Committee had identified based on all of  
390 the public input received so far: Livable Housing, Thriving Economy, Connected Mobility,  
391 Vibrant Neighborhoods, Adaptable Workforce, & Flourishing Environment. The handout  
392 provided an overview of the community vision. By mid-November, the consultants would have a  
393 discussion board online for each of the six pillars, and task forces would be formed for each  
394 pillar that would meet virtually with consultants and City staff during January–April 2025;  
395 anyone interested should contact Ms. Brunner or Chair Von Plinsky. Chair Von Plinsky  
396 encouraged participation, noting that environmental decision making takes place at every  
397 pillar—infrastructure, housing, business, etc. Ms. Brunner agreed, adding that things like  
398 collaboration and sustainability are the underpinnings and foundations of every pillar. She also  
399 agreed that representation was needed for each task force and encouraged those interested to  
400 contact her.

401

402 **E) Outreach**

403

404 Chair Von Plinsky said that the Master Plan is one form of the Commission’s outreach, as will be  
405 the invasive species letter when it moves forward. If there are passionate members of the  
406 community, he urged Commissioners to invite them to participate.

407

408 **F) NHACC Annual Meeting & Conference – November 2, Pembroke Academy**

409

410 The keynote presenters this year are Dave Anderson and Chris Martin from NHPR “Something  
411 Wild.” Ms. Richter said there would be eight separate tracks focused on everything from  
412 fundamentals of wildlife to land conservation. Mr. Bill asked if there would be same day  
413 registration. Ms. Richter said not typically, but they would be unlikely to turn anyone away who

414 wants to pay the registration fee cash that day or online via credit card in advance. Mr. Bergman  
415 said last year, he was unable to enter some of the sessions he was interested in because they were  
416 already booked. Ms. Richter said the workshops are not policed, so it is best to let those who  
417 signed-up for a workshop go in first, and if there is extra space, you can sneak in the back.

418  
419 Chair Von Plinsky recalled that in 2023, the Commission voted to approve paying for four  
420 Commissioners to attend the Conference.

421  
422 A motion by Mr. Therriault for the Conservation Commission to pay from its budget for up to  
423 four (4) Conservation Commissioners' registration to attend the New Hampshire Association of  
424 Conservation Commissions Annual Conference was duly seconded by Mr. Bill. The motion  
425 carried unanimously.

426  
427 **G) CCCD Annual Conservation Commission Potluck – November 19, 6:00 PM–**  
428 **8:00 PM, Stonewall Farm**

429  
430 Discussion ensued about this informal event. The keynote speaker is Josh Megyesy of NH Fish  
431 & Game, a turtle specialist, who would talk about turtle crossings. Chair Von Plinsky  
432 encouraged participation. Sign-up on the Cheshire County Conservation District website. Ms.  
433 Richter agreed, noting that the NHACC partners with the Cheshire County Conservation District  
434 on this event. She said the goal is to eventually have more of a program or project that would  
435 look at areas within Cheshire County to protect turtle habitat and crossings. Chair Von Plinsky  
436 said this would be a great opportunity to meet others working on conservation in the region.

437  
438 **7) New or Other Business**

439  
440 Mr. Bergman advised driving up Arch Street by the High School where the dam was being  
441 constructed, noting that it was in an interesting stage of semi-completion and was worth looking  
442 at to get a sense of what the dam is made of.

443  
444 Councilor Williams reported that he saw an announcement on the extensive Japanese knotweed  
445 problem at Ladies' Wildwood Park, which was treated with what he thought was glyphosate. He  
446 anticipated that some would survive but he thought it would have killed a lot. However, he saw a  
447 lot of native species damaged by the herbicide too, so there were advantages and disadvantages.  
448 He encouraged everyone to keep an eye on it and the effect of that treatment over the next few  
449 years.

450  
451 Councilor Williams also spoke about trees, recalling that in 2023, the Commission wrote a letter  
452 to the City Council asking for action on trees, which had been slow. However, he said that the  
453 week following this meeting, the City Council's Finance, Organization, & Personnel Standing  
454 Committee would be discussing ways to fund street trees. He explained that the City had been  
455 fined for air pollution at the Transfer Station, and as a part of that fine, the City negotiated that  
456 some of the money could be spent on street trees. If all is approved, it would be \$44,000 to plant

457 30 trees hopefully in 2025. This would be a one-time source of funding, so the Commission/City  
458 would need to be on the lookout for other sources, but he said this would get the program started.  
459 Chair Von Plinsky thanked Councilor Williams for being the Conservation Commission's voice  
460 on the City Council.

461  
462 Ms. Brunner mentioned the NHACC dues and Chair Von Plinsky tabled them until the  
463 November meeting.

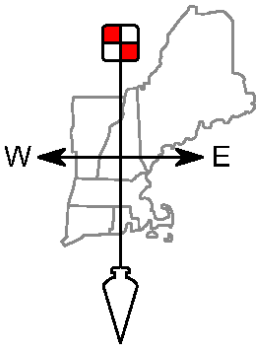
464  
465 Chair Von Plinsky recalled that his and Mr. Bergman's membership would end in December.  
466 Chair Von Plinsky would be writing a letter to Mayor Kahn with recommendations for new  
467 members and to recommend that Mr. Therriault and Ms. LeBlanc be moved up as regular  
468 members. Mr. Bergman was interested in continuing to serve as an alternate. Commissioners  
469 were advised to send any other recommendations for new members to Chair Von Plinsky. The  
470 Commission can have seven regular members and five alternates. Chair Von Plinsky liked the  
471 idea of recruiting some new members who had never served before.

472  
473 **8) Adjournment**

474  
475 There being no further business, Chair Von Plinsky adjourned the meeting at 5:49 PM.

476  
477 Respectfully submitted by,  
478 Katryna Kibler, Minute Taker  
479 October 28, 2024

480  
481 Reviewed and edited by,  
482 Mari Brunner, Senior Planner



# FIELDSTONE

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www.FieldstoneLandConsultants.com

## Cottage Court Development - Conceptual Review / Comment

Guitard Homes, LLC  
Tax Map Parcel 228, Lot 16  
Court Street, Keene, New Hampshire

October 18, 2024

### **Project Narrative:**

Fieldstone Land Consultants, on behalf of Guitard Homes, LLC, is submitting a Cottage Court Overlay development concept for review and comment. The proposal consists of developing Tax Map Lot 228-16 located on Court Street, in a Cottage Court single-family residential development with 31 dwelling units. The applicant has decided to utilize the recently adopted Cottage Court Overlay regulations with a private driveway. This layout will provide condominium style ownership for future homeowners with a goal of providing much needed affordable, owner-occupied housing.

The existing Tax Map Lot 228-16 has 9.7+/- acres with 303.59 feet of frontage along Court Street. The lot is located in the Low Density District and is currently undeveloped. The property is primarily wooded with young forest with some forested wetland areas in the lower elevations.

The proposed buildings will have access from Court Street via a central driveway that has two small spurs to utilize the dry areas on site. There is a longer spur proposed to access the buildable area along the rear of the lot. We anticipate two wetland crossings for this development and there will be buffer impacts in the wetland crossing areas as well as in some backyard areas to provide for a nice residential setting with proper spacing around the units. A homeowner's association will be formed to provide maintenance of the access road and common facilities and amenities.

The sizes of the units will vary, as there is a mix of two-bedroom and three-bedroom designs. The buildings will be 1-2 stories, and include either an optional garage or shed. The building designs contemplate a modern New England style architecture and will meet the Cottage Court standards. The plans for these units have been provided for review and comment.

The residential development will be serviced by the municipal water and sanitary sewer infrastructure that is located along Court Street. Easements will be provided to the City of Keene where necessary for the infrastructure. The stormwater management will be constructed on site and maintained by the homeowner's association. The project will disturb more than 100,000 S.F. of land, requiring an Alteration of Terrain permit with NHDES.

We would appreciate your comments and feedback on our proposed concept so we can address them in our formal design and submittal.

Respectfully,  
Fieldstone Land Consultants, PLLC



**NOTES:**

1. THE OWNER OF RECORD FOR EXISTING TAX MAP 228 LOT 16 IS GUITARD HOMES LLC - P.O. BOX 604 JAFFREY, NH 03452. THE DEED REFERENCE FOR THE LOT IS CCRD BK.3290 PG.1192 DATED OCTOBER 11, 2024.
2. THE PURPOSE OF THIS PLAN IS TO DEPICT A COTTAGE COURT STYLE DEVELOPMENT OVER TAX MAP PARCEL LOT 228-16 WITH ASSOCIATED SITE IMPROVEMENTS.
3. ZONING FOR THE LOT IS THE LOW DENSITY (LD) DISTRICT. MINIMUM LOT REQUIREMENTS ARE 10,000 SQ.FT. OF AREA AND 60 FEET OF FRONTAGE. BUILDING SETBACKS ARE 15 FT. FRONT, 10 FT. SIDE AND 20 FT. REAR.
4. IMPROVEMENTS SHOWN HEREON ARE PER NH GRANIT AND TOWN OF KEENE GIS. WETLANDS SHOWN HEREON WAS DELINEATED BY CHRISTOPHER A. GUIDA, CWS, IN AUGUST, 2024.
5. THE BOUNDARY INFORMATION SHOWN FOR EXISTING LOT 228-16 IS BASED ENTIRELY ON NH GRANIT SHAPE FILES AND THE REFERENCE PLAN CITED HEREON.
6. LOT 228-16 MAY BE SUBJECT TO A PRIVATE RIGHT-OF-WAY AS SHOWN ON THE REFERENCE PLAN. LOT 228-16 BENEFITS FROM A RIGHT-OF-WAY OVER ABUTTING LOT 228-15 PER THE REFERENCE PLAN.

**REFERENCE PLAN:**

"SUBDIVISION OF LAND OF - S.B.D. TRUST", SCALE: 1"=50', DATED: JULY 18, 1977, REVISED THROUGH: SEPTEMBER 27, 1977, PREPARED BY: DUFRESNE-HENRY ENGINEERING CORPORATION, AND RECORDED IN PLAN CABINET 1, DRAWER 00, NUMBER 71 IN THE C.C.R.D.

REV.	DATE	DESCRIPTION	C/O	DR	CK

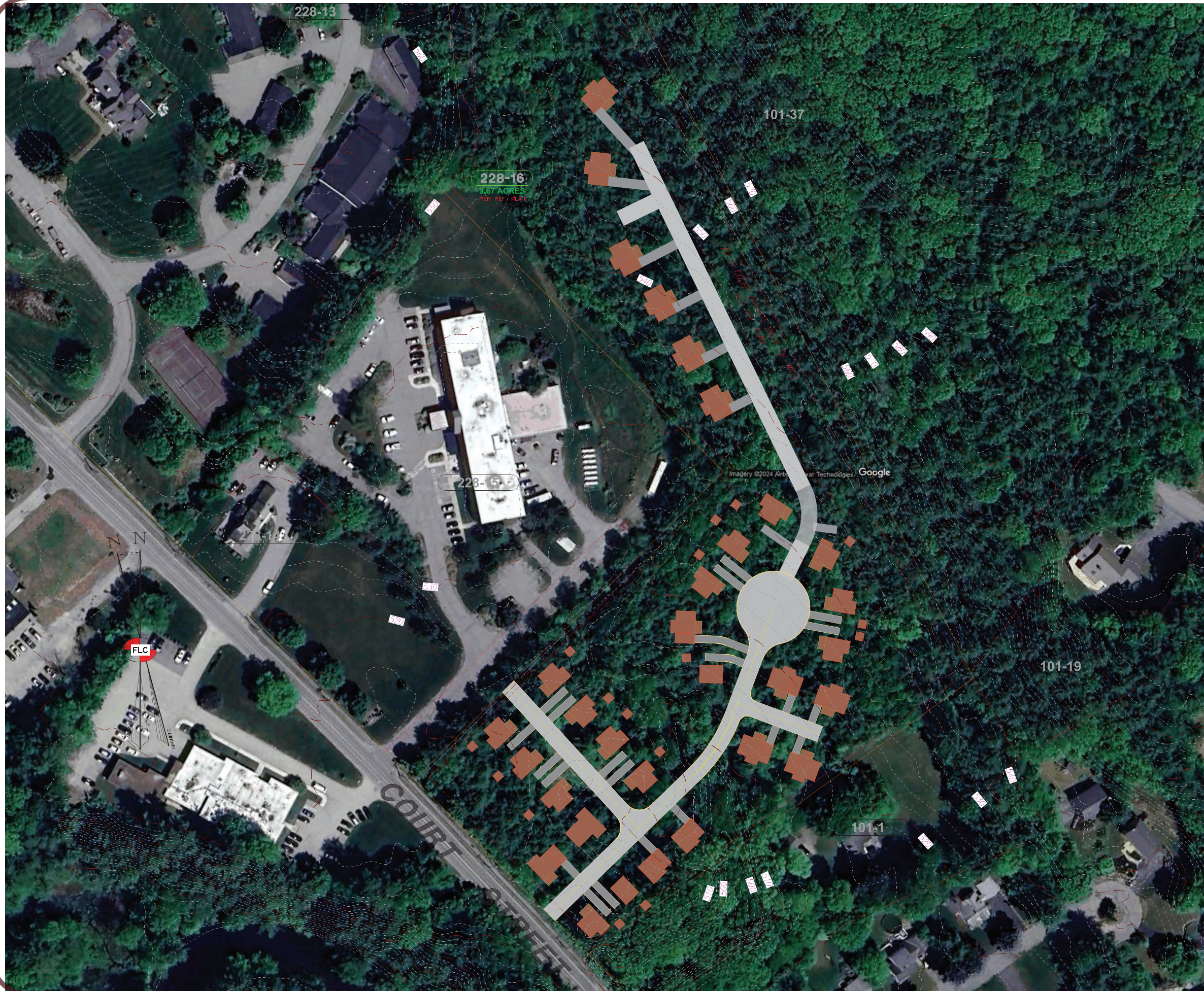
**COTTAGE COURT  
 SUBDIVISION CONCEPT  
 TAX MAP 228 LOT 16  
 (COURT STREET)  
 KEENE, NEW HAMPSHIRE  
 PREPARED FOR:  
**GUITARD HOMES, LLC****

SCALE: 1" = 60' OCTOBER 21, 2024

Surveying ♦ Engineering ♦ Land Planning ♦ Permitting ♦ Septic Designs

**FIELDSTONE**  
**LAND CONSULTANTS, PLLC**

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**REFERENCE PLAN:**

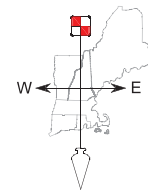
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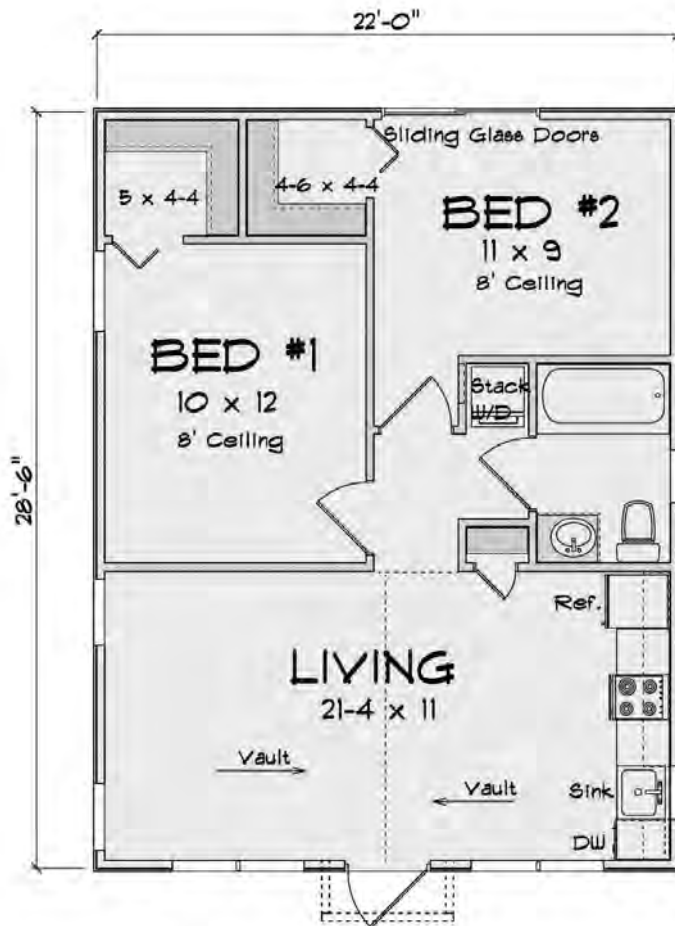


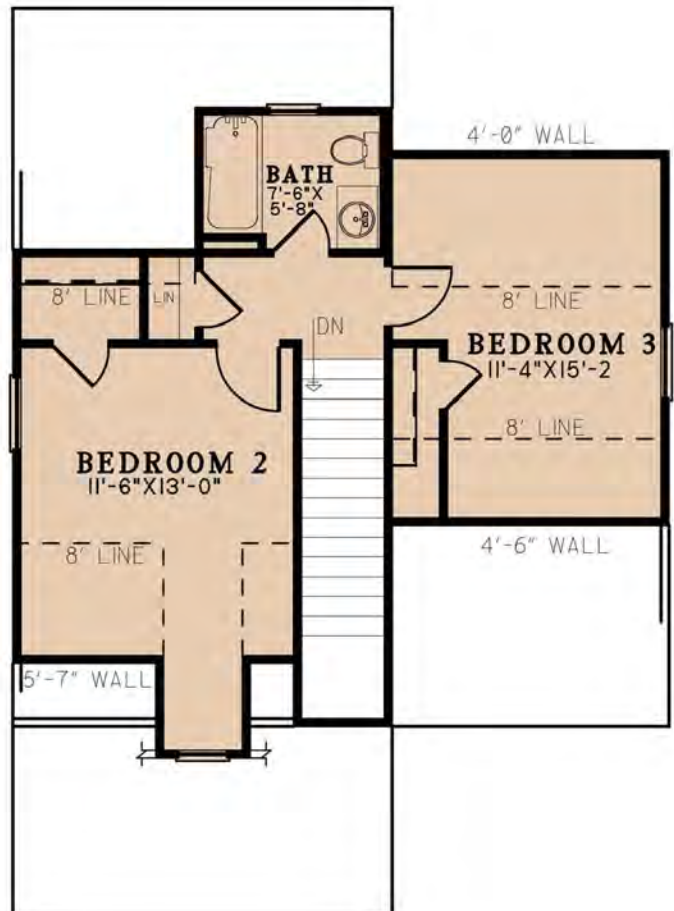
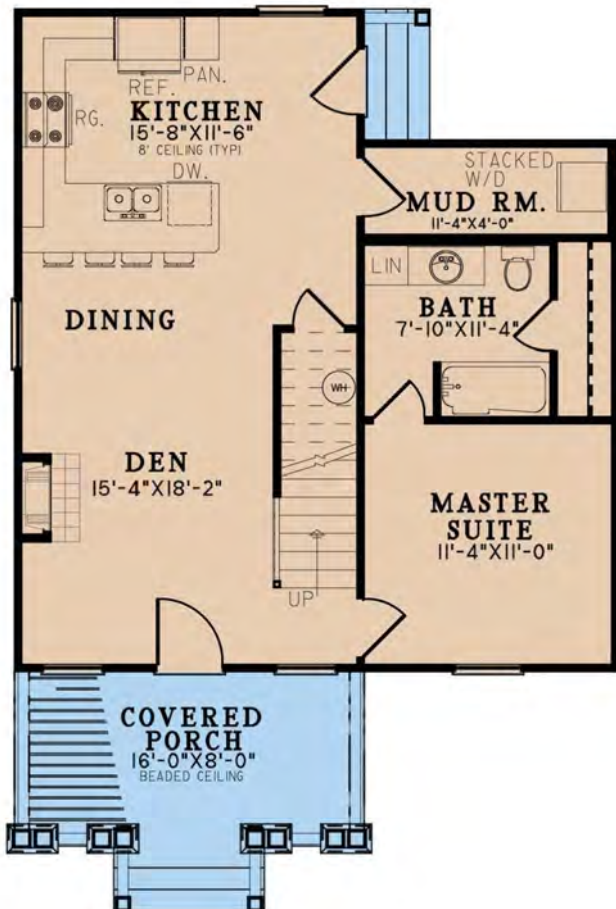
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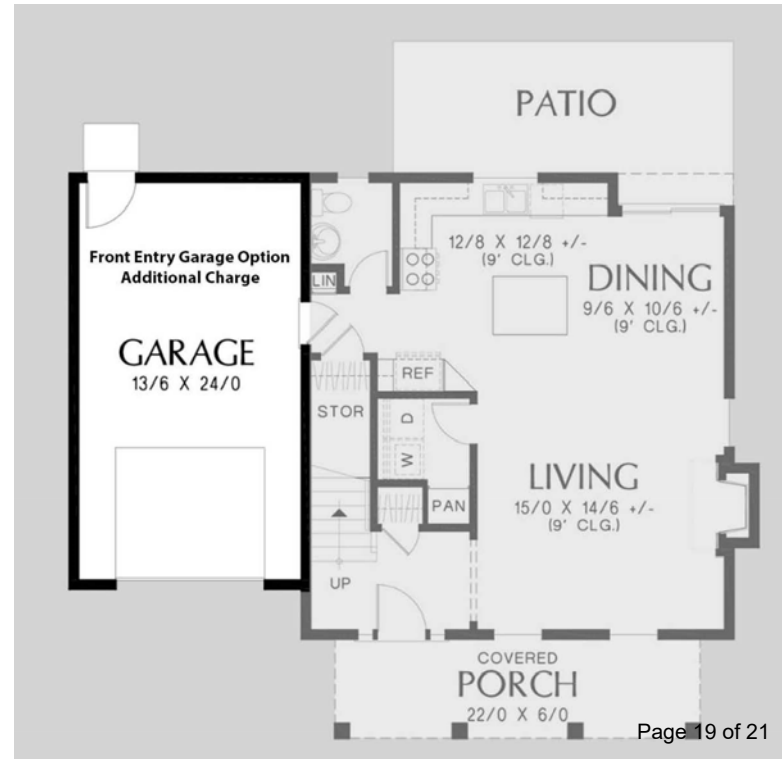
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Oct 21, 2024 - 11:44am  
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Wetlands Bureau  
New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services

Re: Proposed Wildlife Control Fence at Dillant-Hopkins Airport

The Keene Conservation Commission is committed to protecting natural resources such as wildlife habitat and wetlands, and has attempted to influence construction projects within the City that raise those issues. We support efforts to minimize permanent wetlands impacts, habitat fragmentation, and disruption of wildlife corridors. We have followed the proposal for a wildlife control fence at the Dillant-Hopkins Airport for years, consulting with airport director Hickling and listening to the concerns of biologists and members of the public who visit the airport daily to study nature and enjoy its open views of the marsh, swamp, and wet meadows flanking Airport Road. These areas, owned by Keene and lying within Swanzey, are ranked among the state's highest quality habitats in NH Fish & Game's Wildlife Action Plan, and the airport wetlands, which drain into the Ashuelot River, lie within a hundred year flood plain and certainly merit protection. The airport marsh is connected to those adjacent riparian woods and swamps via culverts that pass under Airport Road. These culverts afford restricted passage for animals, but many other animals cross the road's pavement directly to and from the marsh.

Airport Road is one of the state's prime sites ("hot spots") for viewing and photographing interior wetland birds. American bitterns, soras, and Virginia rails breed here, as do other waders, and many songbirds (swamp sparrows, marsh wrens, Acadian and alder flycatchers, two species of cuckoo, Baltimore orioles, rose-breasted grosbeaks, various warblers, and several thrush species) nest in the thickets and small trees that lie between Airport Road and the marsh. Bitterns and rails, including newly fledged chicks, sometimes cross Airport Road on foot in the early mornings. Canada geese breed here, adjacent to the runways, and wood ducks often bring newly fledged young from the forest across or under the road to forage in the marsh. During migration season, many other species of waterfowl visit the marsh. A variety of mammals pass across Airport Road to enter the wetlands by the runways: these include white-tail deer, black bear, Eastern coyotes, bobcats, muskrats, beaver, river otters and mink, and occasionally moose.

A wildlife control fence is certainly in order, but its location must be carefully considered. Northern ribbon snakes (NH rank: "vulnerable") breed in the vegetation above one culvert on the shoulder of Airport Road; wood turtles ("special concern") have died behind the chain link fence at the water treatment plant, unable to return to the Ashuelot River. We strongly urge the state to maintain connectivity between the marsh and riparian woods by rejecting the Airport Road fence alternative, which interposes a wildlife barrier along the road, trapping some creatures (geese, deer) within the enclosure, failing to mount a protective barrier between the marsh and runways, and preventing the natural movement of other animals across Airport Road between adjacent areas of habitat. The ROFA alternative, on the other hand, would effectively serve the purpose of the fence project by excluding wildlife from the runways while maximizing wildlife access to that prime habitat.

The airport consulting firm McFarlane-Johnson has responded to the initial comments of the NH DES with a memo, prepared by Mr. Stephen Hoffman, that tabulates the relative impacts of the two alternative fence routes. Analysis of the ROFA path shows temporary wetlands impacts that

can be minimized by careful scheduling of construction and – compared to the Airport Road option – will cause less permanent damage to the marsh (340 square feet vs. 542 square feet), due to the small cumulative area occupied by fence posts scattered across the marsh in the ROFA route next to the runway. Those posts will not interfere with animal movement, water flow, or the health of marsh vegetation and wetland functions. During fence construction, the ROFA route, by Mr. Hoffman’s reckoning, would temporarily disrupt less wetland (only about 70% as much) than the more radical Airport Road alternative.

The ROFA fence route would preserve the ability of members of the public to view the natural world of the marsh. Amateur and professional naturalists and photographers from other parts of New Hampshire, Vermont, and Massachusetts visit Airport Road frequently to enjoy unobstructed views of wildlife that are difficult to find elsewhere in this part of the State. Many local residents walk the road daily and also appreciate the opportunity to view wildlife here.

In contrast, the Airport Road fence route would virtually eliminate this public value by obstructing sight lines along most of the length of Airport Road and by eliminating parking and picnicking opportunities, a development that will dismay and frustrate conservation-minded members of the public. Additional significant disadvantages of the latter route are its creation of a long barrier to terrestrial wildlife movement, fragmentation of high quality habitat, and the trapping of wildlife in the marsh, close to the runways, increasing the risk of aircraft-wildlife collisions. In addition, the Airport Road fence could place utility poles beyond the reach of work crews, interfere with mowing and with control of roadside vegetation and litter, and possibly necessitate running the fence through wetlands below the road and utility poles.

We urge state regulators to base their judgment of these two fence alternatives on a comparison of permanent wetland impacts and on a holistic approach to landscape and habitat protection. Please endorse the ROFA fence path selected by airport management and its environmental consultants.

Keene Conservation Commission  
Kenneth D. Bergman, PhD member  
Sparky von Plinsky chair