

Town of Newington, NH
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes, Thursday, January 10, 2013

Call to Order: Co-Chair Justin Richardson called the January 10, 2013 meeting at 6:38 PM.

Present: Justin Richardson, Co-Chair; Nancy Cauvet; Nell Ann Hiatt; Jim Weiner; and Thomas Morgan, Town Planner

Absent: Jane Hislop, Co-Chair; George Fletcher; Marge Hislop; and Margaret Lamson

Public Guests: Mark West, Environmental Consultant

1) Town Forest Management Plan:

Co-Chair, Justin Richardson welcomed environmental consultant, Mark West to review his recommendations for managing issues and use in the Town Forest. Mark West suggested looking at access first, to determine where parking would be. Currently there is nearby parking available at the Langdon library and Old Town Hall. A discussion of what to do with the boulders that had been dumped at the entrance near the sign near the Old Meeting House ensued. Town Planner, Tom Morgan said the Historic Commission requested local industrial developers to dump the boulders there for future projects requiring stonework. Mark West suggested some of the boulders could be strategically placed to discourage parking in unwanted areas. Jim Weiner said the majority could be moved to the Town Public Works garage. Justin Richardson said he was concerned the task would not be done by Public Works, and Tom Morgan said the request would need to come from the Board of Selectmen.

Justin Richardson moved to have Tom Morgan coordinate the removal of rocks from the Town Forest to be moved stockpiled elsewhere. Nancy Cauvet seconded. Co-Chair Richardson abstained, and all others were in favor.

Justin Richardson said he would like to see a map on the sign, and Mark West said many public trails utilize a kiosk with a map under Plexiglas and a holder for paper maps.

West noted that there are two sections of land divided by a road, and there is already a parking area for one or two cars off Arboretum Drive where a sign could be put up to indicate parking and no dumping, and any other restrictions. West said he came across leaf and debris disposal off Arboretum Drive. Justin Richardson expressed concern with visibility, and Tom Morgan said the Town of Newington Police Department is supposed to patrol Arboretum Drive. Nell Ann Hiatt expressed concern with increased traffic. Tom Morgan said bicyclists; bird watchers, joggers, walkers and Great Bay National Wildlife Refuge visitors make up a most of the traffic going down Arboretum Drive. Nancy Cauvet asked how large is the Town Forest, and Mark West said it is about 80 acres. Justin Richardson agreed the majority of people would be interested in outdoor recreation. Mark West said the area would be usable as is with no need for

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grading, and Nancy Cauvet said they could leave as it is and just put a sign up. Justin Richardson said the original sign was dropped, and broke, and was to be repaired, but it still hasn't been put up.

West pointed out the need to address regulations and restrictions in response to the presence of ATV trails, noting that snowmobiles usually have less impact on forest than ATV's. West said the area where the ATV's come in would be one of the only areas he would suggest restricting access. Tom Morgan said there are many more ATV trails in the Forest. Tom Morgan suggested the Commission might consider some policy discussions. Justin Richardson said he would be concerned with ATV use if people were hiking, and biking through the Town Forest regularly, but because they are not at this time, he is glad it is getting some use. Tom Morgan suggested encouraging bicyclists, and hikers to encourage lower environmental impact recreation, noting that there is a bike rack at Great Bay National Refuge, which encourages bikers. Jim Weiner said he is concerned with inviting more bikers into Town, and Tom Morgan said bikers already come through Town.

Justin Richardson said he would like to see the map expanded to include trail connections on the PDA property. Tom Morgan said they could overlay some of the PDA zones, some of which are National Resources and others are earmarked for further development. Justin Richardson said much of the area is owned by the Air National Guard, is wetlands and probably not developable.

Mark West then went through some of the safety issues that need to be addressed, such as the removal of a rotting wood bridge over a culvert in picture 9 of page 7 on his report. West suggested the bridge would not have to be replaced, but creating a boardwalk, or laying down rocks under wide boards would suffice. West also pointed out another broken culvert, surrounded by trash, including metal in picture 7 on page 6. Tom Morgan requested the picture numbers be referred to on the map. Jim Weiner suggested the Town Public Works department do some of the projects instead of spending extra money on an outside contractor. Mark West said some of the projects could be done in a day.

Mark West also stressed the importance of addressing the old Town Dump site, which is full of trash, and invasive species. West said the nearby wetlands area is a potential habitat for turtles, possibly endangered species, and numerous vernal pools in March, would be a high quality educational opportunity for students in the springtime. West then said DES would like to see the Town evaluate, and create a closure plan, and cap the site. Justin Richardson said the site dates back to the 1950's and there would be no way of knowing what chemicals could have been dumped there, and expressed concern for the cost involved in evaluating. Nancy Cauvet asked why they would couldn't just cap the site instead of drilling monitoring wells, and Justin Richardson said they would then be operating a solid waste landfill, and would need a permit. Richardson said they would need to take small steps in proceeding with the management plan. Tom Morgan asked if they might do a sight walk in winter, and Justin Richardson agreed it might be easier to navigate then.

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Justin Richardson moved that:

- ***Have Mark West mark photo areas on the management plan map***
- ***Have Town Planner, Tom Morgan contact the Board of Selectmen to have the Public Works Department move the rocks from the entrance off Nimble Hill Road***
- ***Place the other Town Forest sign on Arboretum Drive***
- ***Remove the broken bridge and culvert for safety reasons***
- ***Remove the junk as shown on photo 7***

Jim Weiner seconded the motion, and discussion followed. Nell Ann Hiatt said she didn't agree with putting up the sign on Arboretum Drive out of concern with additional traffic, and Jim Weiner agreed. Justin Richardson said he was in favor of it, and Nancy Cauvet agreed.

Due to a tied vote, the motion was amended to remove the request to place the sign on Arboretum Drive. Jim Weiner seconded, and all were in favor.

Minutes: Nancy Cauvet moved to approve the Minutes of December 13, 2012. Justin Richardson seconded, and all were in favor.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm

Next Meeting: Thursday, February 14, 2013

Respectfully

Submitted by: Jane K. Kendall, Recording Secretary