

Town of Newington, NH

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes, Thursday, August 13, 2020

- Call to Order:** Chair Jane Hislop called the August 13, 2020 meeting at 6:00 p.m.
- Present:** Chair Jane Hislop; Vice-Chair Weiner; Commissioners Benjamin Hutchins; Andrew Meigs; Alternate Jane Kendall; and Town Planner, John Krebs
- Absent:** Commissioners Ann Morton and Jim Tucker; Alternate Murray
- Public Guests:** Denis Hebert

The Commission welcomed newly appointed Commissioner Benjamin Hutchins.

1) Invasive Species Management: Grazing at Fox Point

Chair Hislop stated she had heard that the Board of Selectmen had invited someone to bring their goats and pigs to graze along Fox Point Conservation area in an effort to curtail poison ivy growth, but wish they had discussed the ramifications further with the Conservation Commission because the pigs had disturbed soil along an entire ravine, and the shoreline that would contribute to erosion and destabilization.

Chair Hislop shared photos of destabilization along the ravine and shoreline, noting that the Commission had been looking at remedies and grants for shoreline stabilization of Fox Point, but the Board of Selectmen had wanted to address the Town dock and boat ramp area first. Chair Hislop said she texted and called Dave Price with the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (DES), as there had been a fair amount of erosion, and a concern for E.coli bacteria from animal waste washing into Great Bay and affecting water quality for the oysters, and other marine life.

Chair Hislop said she had read an article from the U.S. Forest Service that did not recommend using goats or sheep for grazing because they would eat everything, including endangered plant species.

Vice-Chair Weiner stated that the livestock grazing had been at Fox Point for a week, and he had been told by a resident that the goat grazing on poison ivy should be done earlier in the year before the seeds develop because the poison ivy would be spread further through their excrement.

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Vice-Chair Weiner stated that he had asked former Town Planner, Gerald Coogan to write letters to the Board of Selectmen that the fields weren't being plowed, planted and mowed once a year, and were overgrowing as a result; as well as noting that invasive Oriental Bittersweet was pulling down many trees along center tree lines that divided the fields.

Discussion ensued regarding methods of reducing the spread of bittersweet. Vice-Chair Weiner talked about cutting it close to the ground, and Alternate Commissioner Kendall commented that it was important to cut it early in the year before the berries and seeds formed in the fall, dropped and were spread by birds as well.

Vice-Chair Weiner went on to say that the pavilion proposal fund had been combined with the general maintenance fund for Fox Point during a Town Meeting vote, but it was controlled by the Board of Selectmen, and they needed to be mindful that poor timing would ultimately increase costs.

Alternate Commissioner, Jane Kendall talked about necessity of cross communication between boards to reference priorities and expertise.

Vice-Chair Weiner asked Recording Secretary, Jane Kendall to write a letter informing the Board of Selectmen that the Conservation Commission had not been included in discussions and decisions on the management of Fox Point Conservation area, and that they would appreciate being consulted in the future to provide their combined knowledge and experience in conservation management.

Vice-Chair Weiner added that DES had not been contacted by the Board of Selectmen regarding shoreline erosion, but he had contacted them after talking with Chair Hislop.

Jane Hislop moved to have Recording Secretary, Jane Kendall send a letter to Town Administrator, John Krebs to print on letterhead, addressed to the Board of Selectmen Chair, Ted Connor, Board of Selectmen Ken Latchaw, and Mike Marconi, Town Administrator, Martha Roy, informing them of the Conservation Commissions concerns with erosion from the use of pigs, and the potential for destroying non-target, endangered plants, and spreading poison ivy from grazing goats. Jim Weiner seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

2) Additional Discussions:

(Commissioner Andrew Meigs arrived at this point in the meeting at 6:31 p.m.)

A) Fox Point Conservation Area Maintenance

Vice-Chair Weiner said he wanted to see if there were any funds available in the maintenance budget set aside for clearing and mowing that could be used to curtail the bittersweet growth that was killing trees at Fox Point.

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Vice-Chair Weiner noted that a farmer had prepared the field with controlled burn for a pumpkin patch, but then backed out. Vice-Chair Weiner suggested that the Town look into the planting of rye seed in the fields if they couldn't find a farmer that was interested in planting. Chair Hislop responded that the fields would still need mowing twice a year and replanting yearly to prevent the succession of early growth forest in the fields.

B) Landscape Plan Approval: Medical office facility by **Newington Falls, LLC** at property located at **River Road and Shattuck Way, Tax Map 13, Lot 6-A**

Chair Hislop pointed out that the final landscape and maintenance plan for the medical office proposal on Shattuck Way had not been signed off on by a licensed landscape architect. Planning Board Chair, Denis Hebert recommended sending an email to Mr. Krebs so that he would ask the applicant to follow through.

C) Virtual Community Education

A brief discussion ensued in follow-up to holding a virtual community education outreach for conservation or gardening.

Vice-Chair Weiner said he would talk with someone at the library about what programs they used.

Minutes: *Jim Weiner moved to approve the Minutes for the July 16, 2020 meeting. Andrew Meigs seconded, and all were in favor.*

Adjournment: *Jane Hislop moved to adjourn. Andrew Meigs seconded the motion and the meeting adjourned at 6:48 p.m.*

Next Meeting: Second Thursday of each month, 2020 as needed

Respectfully

Submitted by: Jane K. Kendall, Recording Secretary

These Minutes were accepted and adopted at the October 8, 2020 Conservation Commission Meeting.

