

# Town of Newington, NH

## CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes for Thursday, June 5, 2014

- Call to Order:** Chair, Jane Hislop called the June 5, 2014 meeting at 6:38 p.m.
- Present:** Chair, Jane Hislop; Nancy Cauvet; Jane Kendall; Ann Morton; Jim Weiner; and Thomas Morgan, Town Planner
- Public Guests:** Doug LaRosa with TriTech Engineering; Ms. Julia Peterson with Natural Resources Outreach Coalition;

1) **Dredge/Fill Permit:** Paul Belanger re: former Watson property at the corner of Fox Point Road and Nimble Hill Road.

Commissioner Jim Weiner said he attended preliminary discussions with the Planning Board meeting and he reviewed the original lot line adjustment application that was approved with one curb cut off Nimble Hill Road. He said the applicant knew they purchased a single dwelling lot. Commissioner Ann Morton said they were now asking for two variances for two curb cuts over wetlands and suggested they deny the permit. Town Planner, Tom Morgan clarified that it was DES' jurisdiction for granting wetlands impacts or not. He said they were asking for a recommendation and reasons for or against the proposed dredge and fill application and curb cuts were not applicable.

Chair Hislop said they needed to look at the wetlands crossings to make their recommendation. Mr. Morgan said he would volunteer their thoughts to the Planning Board. He said the problem was that the applicant had filed the dredge and fill application before the Planning Board had an opportunity to go through the review process so it was his opinion that the dredge and fill application was premature because they didn't know how many lots would be approved and there should be more discussion between the Planning Board and the developer.

Mr. Weiner agreed that they needed to make sure the Planning Board was in agreement with the curb cuts and they should know Conservation Commission's mind set before trying to reconfigure over wetlands

Chair Hislop said they needed to send a letter to DES and asked Mr. Morgan if he would write the letter.

*Mr. Weiner moved that the Conservation Commission not recommend the dredge and fill permit because it was premature before the Planning Board had an opportunity to discuss further, but they could resubmit another application at a later date. Ms. Cauvet seconded and all were in favor.*

Chair Hislop asked Mr. Morgan if the Conservation Commission needed to communicate their thoughts to the Planning Board that they were not happy with wetlands crossings. Mr. Weiner said he thought they should recommend that only one building lot be allowed and wetlands crossings not be allowed. Ms. Kendall said she was not sure agreed with Mr. Weiner that only one lot and no wetlands crossings would

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be ideal, but she wanted to hear all the considerations before the Planning Board to see what other alternatives were being considered.

### **2) Community Education: NH Sea Grant and UNH Cooperative Extension**

Ms. Julia Peterson with Natural Resources Outreach Coalition returned to brainstorm public education outreach plans. Ms. Peterson said she recently learned that Mr. Jay Aube with the NH Department of Environmental Services did education outreach as time permitted, which was an on again, off again thing. She said she left a message with his office asking if there was any outreach going on. She said there was a website with frequently asked questions and also had a fact sheet about vegetation maintenance within the protected shoreline. She said the regulations only applied to particular water bodies, but GB was one that qualified.

Mr. Weiner thought it made sense to look at other programs in other towns that had been implemented, and compare their list to the Commission's list and edit. Ms. Peterson said every community had different issues and was comprised of a culture so they needed to determine a target nutrient, to focus on the intended outcomes, and how to implement education and involvement.

Discussion continued regarding venues for getting information to residents, from brochures at the library, the Town Hall and the transfer station. Ms. Cauvet said people didn't just need environmental data to read, but they also needed some interpretation. Ms. Peterson said some of their communications could target shoreline property owners with tax maps to familiarize them with the State shoreline regulations.

Mr. Weiner said information links could be included in their communications on the Town website. Mr. Morgan said they needed to be provocative to get people to click links.

Ms. Cauvet said educating and following best practices for fertilizing, pesticide use, and watering for lawn and garden care involved everyone in town. She said proper septic care and household hazardous waste disposal was also very important. Mr. Weiner agreed an approach that affected the largest audience in town would be best.

Chair Hislop agreed that proper septic system maintenance was one of the most important issues. Ms. Cauvet said some towns required every septic tank be pumped every year. Ms. Peterson said her town was beginning to make that a requirement because they had a beach advisory for bacteria, which was an indication of septic failures.

Ms. Peterson said some people didn't know they had a septic systems or how they worked. She asked how many households in Newington had private septic systems and Mr. Morgan said as of last count there were 153 households with only 3 houses on Old Dover Road on the Town sewer system. Ms. Peterson said many towns required a septic system inspection at the time of sale and Mr. Morgan said that was not a requirement in Newington.

Ms. Peterson said septic leaching affected drinking water as well as the health of the bay and species like shellfish. Chair Hislop said many older houses didn't go in on Portsmouth City water so they continued to have wells. Mr. Morgan said Peggy Lamson

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might have the only copy of how many homes had wells from the count she took when she was the Town health officer.

Ms. Kendall asked about Federal assistance for individuals that had limited resources to upgrade their septic systems. Ms. Peterson said they were based on serious economic need. She said some grants were available through the USDA, but the need had to be strong. Chair Hislop said some older residents with older homes might have economic need. Ms. Peterson suggested they look up information through the USDA Rural Development Grant Program, but it could be under a different name.

Ms. Cauvet said there had been a few septic issues in town. Chair Hislop said there were cases where people's systems failed on neighboring properties. She said the space requirements for septic systems had increased from what they used to be so one of the former Commission chairs did a lot line adjustment with her brother-in-law to work the issue out.

Mr. Weiner said he thought they should educate people and not create edicts. Ms. Cauvet agreed and said they should recommend septic tanks be pumped on an average of three years depending on the household size, and the use of dishwashers, washing machines, and showers. Ms. Peterson said the biggest barrier they faced in getting people to participate pumping their septic systems was the fear of the worse news that they would need a whole new system.

Mr. Weiner said a list of what nots to flush would be helpful. Ms. Kendall said bleach alternatives like baking soda or borax to prevent killing beneficial bacteria that helped sewage breakdown. A discussion ensued regarding the use of products like RidX that claim to increase beneficial bacteria. Ms. Peterson said she worked with a septic specialist the products didn't seem to do any harm, but there was little evidence that they did any good.

Ms. Peterson asked about getting residents together for educational discussions on septic systems and Ms. Kendall said she thought that many New Englanders and people busy with their work and family were difficult to get together. Ms. Peterson said they could consider different methods of communication for different cultures. Ms. Cauvet said the Board of Selectmen sometimes sent out information. Mr. Morgan said the problem with suggesting the Board of Selectmen send out information is that one of the selectmen ran a septic system business and it might be perceived as promoting his business. Mr. Weiner said they could send out information through the Conservation Commission instead. Ms. Peterson suggested they include links to more information on the mailer. She said they could also consider informational links to youtube.com. Mr. Weiner said an informational welcome packet could be a useful educational outreach tool for new residents as well.

The next work session was set for Thursday, July 10, 2014.

### **3) Old Business**

#### **A) Town Forest update**

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Chair Hislop said she met with the UNH Thomson Forestry students and they were proceeding with their educational brochure that would be laminated and ready soon.

### B) Baird property conservation easement

Chair Hislop said she had talked with Southeast Land Trust and they were still working on the survey

### C) Beane Property

Mr. Morgan said Town wetlands consultant, Mark West was compiling a report, which would be ready for the June 9, 2014 Planning Board meeting.

### D) Fox Point Easement

Chair Hislop said Attorney F.X. Bruton and former Commission chair, Justin Richardson were still discussing the language of the easement.

### E) Langdon Library Rain Forest

Ms. Cauvet said she met with library trustee, Lee Lamson two weeks ago and they went over the plant list recommended by UNH and realized there were too many plants on the list for the space so she was going to take something off the web and lay out the plan to see how they fit.

Ms. Cauvet said she had someone who worked for her who might be able to do planting with supervision. She said the problem with plantings in town was that there were no funds set up beyond installation and no ongoing fund for maintenance after planting. Mr. Morgan said it was the library's jurisdiction. Chair Hislop said they had discussed the issue in the past and she would like to see the Board of Selectmen hire someone for the summer just as the Town of Durham hires summer crews. Ms. Kendall said there had been discussion the previous year about having the building inspector get landscaping bids that would include all the town properties including the area that the Conservation used their Beautification fund to landscape between the fire station and the school.

**4) New Business:** Proposal by NH Department of Transportation to impact wetlands near the Flagstones Brook.

Mr. Morgan said he hadn't heard anything more from DOT for the following week's meeting.

### **Correspondence:**

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Ms. Cauvet said Great Bay Water Keeper, Jeff Barnum had sent a letter requesting donations toward community education on reducing nitrogen pollution.

*Ms. Kendall moved to approve a \$100 contribution from the Conservation Commission's Education Fund toward education on the reduction of nitrogen pollution. Mr. Weiner seconded and all in favor*

**Minutes:** *Jim Weiner moved to approve the Minutes for the May 8, 2014 meeting with corrections. Ann Morton seconded, and all were in favor.*

**Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

**Next Meeting:** Thursday, July 10, 2014

**Respectfully  
Submitted by:** Jane K. Kendall, Recording Secretary