

Town of Newington, NH

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes November 8, 2012

- Call to Order:** Co-Chairs, Justin Richardson and Jane Hislop called the November 8, 2012 meeting to order at 6:30 PM.
- Present:** Justin Richardson, Co-Chair; Jane Hislop, Co-Chair; Margaret Lamson; Nancy Cauvet; and Jim
- Absent:** Marge Hislop, George Fletcher, Nell Ann Hiatt, and Tom Morgan, Town Planner

1) Fox Point Conservation Easement

Co-Chair Justin Richardson informed the Commission that although they had approved hiring Attorney F.X. Bruton to do the Fox Point easement, he represents Cumberland Farms that has a project on Gosling Road that may come before the Planning Board. Richardson said he had discussed this with Attorney Bruton and Selectmen Stern and agreed to defer hiring Attorney Bruton until the Cumberland Farms project was completed.

Commissioner Jim Weiner asked about the intentions for the Fox Point easement, and Richardson said the main concern would be to put it in an easement that would allow existing recreational and agricultural uses to continue, including the caretaker's residence. An easement would prevent the property from being developed for private purposes.

Commissioner, Nancy Cauvet asked about stewardship, and Richardson said that typically the Board of Selectmen would manage and the Conservation Commission would review compliance. This would depend on the easement language that would be brought to Town meeting for a vote. Unfortunately, delays in hiring Attorney FX Bruton meant that it would not likely be ready for Town meeting in 2013.

2) Town Forest Management Plan

Co-Chair, Richardson updated the Commission on the status of the Town Forest Management Plan. He stated that he had recommended to Mark West of West Environmental that he send an invoice to complete the project so that the Commission could encumber a portion of the 2012 budget allocated for Town Forest. The Management Plan has been completed but the Commission is waiting for the Town to provide information to complete the maps to go with the Plan.

3) Budget for 2013

Commissioners reviewed last year's 2012 budget expenditures and discussed the following recommendations.

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Wages-Secretarial: After a brief discussion of the 2012 budget, \$2,000 was suggested for 2013.

FICA/Medi: Recommend \$153 (7.5% of wages).

Legal: Recommend the same as last year at \$4,000 in light of the Fox Point easement.

General Supplies: Requested that Jane Kendall make filing supply purchases before year-end. Recommend the same amount of \$50 for next year.

Dues and Subscriptions: Recommend the same amount of \$200 for 2013.

Beautification: Recommend \$500 for 2013, revised to \$1,000 for the tri-centennial.

Co-Chair Richardson said he had informed members of the Board of Selectmen and the School Board that the Commission planned to discontinue funding landscape maintenance on the new trees and shrubs which it has done for the last three years. Discussion ensued regarding who would assume responsibility. Co-Chair, Jane Hislop expressed concern that no Town entity would assume responsibility. It was noted that the Board of Selectmen hire John Newick as a private contractor to do the mowing of all Town lawns. Jane Kendall added that the Town Building Inspector took on the task of managing landscape maintenance around the Town Hall this year, and might be given charge of other Town owned lots.

Jane Hislop moved to send a letter informing the Newington Board of Selectmen that the Conservation Commission would no longer budget for the maintenance of the landscaping on the Newington Public School grounds. Peggy Lamson seconded, and all were in favor.

Nancy Cauvet asked if the Commission had any plans for the Town Tri-Centennial Celebration, suggesting it would be appropriate to budget for more beautification. Commissioner, Peggy Lamson said the Conservation Commission could do the plantings, but she would like to see the Board of Selectmen oversee repair of the damage to the triangle at the intersection of Nimble Hill Road and Little Bay Road by the cemetery.

Co-Chair, Hislop said considering Newington has the oldest town forest in America, it would be a good opportunity to do a historical demonstration so she talked with Gail Pare, Chair of the Historic District about inviting the UNH Woodsman team in for a demonstration on Friday or Sunday afternoon of the celebration. Hislop also recommended signage that would include a map of the Town Forest. She said it would also be helpful to improve the appearance of the entrance by moving the rocks which the entrance. Hislop said a group like the Forest Service could come in to do some clean up of blow downs on the trail. Co-Chair Richardson said Timberland also does some of that, and Nancy Cauvet said members of the Coast Guard stationed at the Naval Shipyard are also looking for things to do.

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Consultant: Recommend \$1,000 for 2013.

Reference Materials: Recommend \$1 to keep line item open for next year.

Town Forest: Recommend \$2,500 for 2013.

The Commission discussed **encumbering** up to \$2,000 from the 2012 budget for Town Forest Management plan that is nearly complete (discussed above).

Justin Richardson moved to approve the amended total of \$12,904 for the 2013 Conservation Commission Budget. Peggy Lamson seconded, and all were in favor.

Board of Selectmen meeting to discuss budgets scheduled on Monday, November 19, 2012 at 6:30 PM.

Budget Committee meeting scheduled for Wednesday, December 5, 2012 at 6:30 PM.

Discussion ensued regarding the Conservation Fund for land acquisition, noting that it had been reduced down to \$25,000 a year since 2009. Jane Hislop pointed out that they also lost a Current Use Tax Penalty contribution when the Board of Selectmen approved of a waiver without discussing it with the Conservation Commission. Hislop expressed concern that a precedence would be set for the future.

Jane Hislop moved to recommend that the Board of Selectmen put \$30,000 in as a Warrant Article for the Conservation Fund. Jim Weiner seconded, and all were in favor.

4) Additional Conservation Discussions

Nancy Cauvet asked about the status of the Saba property, and Justin Richardson said little has changed since the Town acquired the property. Hunters were parking along Old Post Road. Richardson expressed concern with the blind spot at the intersection with Fox Point, and thought it would be helpful to have designated parking, along with improving existing trails. He indicated there is also an open well on Dave Hislop's conservation easement lot. Peggy Lamson recommended they work on plans for other easements next year, and budget for it in 2014.

A brief discussion ensued regarding the library expansion proposal, and concerns with it encroaching and impacting the Town Forest. It was recommended that the Long Range Planning Committee take the Commission's concerns into account.

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Minutes: *Justin Richardson moved to accept the Minutes of September 17, 2012. Jane Hislop seconded and all approved.*

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm

Next Meeting: Thursday, December 13, 2012

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