

Town of Newington, NH
CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes, Thursday, February 8, 2018

- Call to Order:** Co-Chair Jane Hislop called the February 8, 2018 meeting at 6:30 p.m.
- Present:** Co-Chair Jane Hislop; Co-Chair Weiner; Commissioners Sandra Devin; Alternate Jane Kendall and Town Planner, Gerald Coogan
- Absent:** Ann Morton and Bill Murray
- Public Guests:** Meg Ripley

1) Mitigation and Conservation Easements: Update of proposed conservation easement on property owned by John and Meg Ripley, located at 50 Old Post Road, Map 17, Lot 15

Co-Chair Weiner updated the Commission on his discussions with the Budget Committee regarding the request to renew the warrant article for funds toward the proposed conservation easement on the Ripley property. Co-Chair Weiner informed the Commission that the Budget Committee had asked for additional explanation of where the public would access the easement as it had not been discussed at the previous year's warrant article presentation.

Co-Chair Hislop replied that the Commission had previously discussed public access from the Town owned Saba property because there was no access through the abutting Hislop property, which was privately owned. She added that anyone from the public wouldn't need to call in advance because of the Town owned public access through the Saba property.

Co-Chair Hislop went on to say that hunting was allowed on the Saba easement and signs identifying easement areas would be helpful to keep people on the easement area, noting that she had experiences with hunters encroaching on her private property.

Co-Chair Hislop asked if Planning Board Chair, Denis Hebert who was heading the Town's response to Eversource's Reliability Project for transmission expansion had talked with Eversource about other options for the \$81,000 of mitigation funds if the Ripleys were not able to wait. Mr. Coogan replied that Mr. Hebert said he was reluctant at this time, but would when he felt the timing was right.

Co-Chair Weiner commented that Eversource was still tied up with Durham's concerns with their approach in crossing Great Bay. Mr. Coogan added as a side note

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that the proposal for the Northern pass was turned down for the time being, but it should not be assumed that Eversource would walk away from their investments, even if Eversource officials had denied a connection between the Northern Pass and the Seacoast Reliability Project. Co-Chair Hislop added that Eversource would be concentrating on the Northern Pass issue, which would probably delay the Seacoast Reliability Project, however.

2) Conservation Easements and Grants: Discussion on Fox Point and DES Aquatic Resources Mitigation grant

Mr. Coogan informed the Commission that Kristen Howard with the Department of Environmental Services (DES) would be conducting a site visit on Fox Point at 1 p.m. and a discussion with Tristan Donovan and Seth Wilkinson around 2:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. at Town Hall on Monday, March 26, 2018 regarding an interest in shoreline erosion stabilization and funding options. Mr. Coogan added that Ms. Howard suggested that plantings for shoreline protection would probably work better than rip rap. Mr. Coogan said Ms. Howard had also expressed interest in attending the Thursday, March 8, 2018 Conservation Commission meeting.

Co-Chair Hislop asked if the meeting would be open to other towns, like Greenland and Stratham. Mr. Coogan replied that he didn't know the particulars, but that he was told to expect 30-40 people. Co-Chair Hislop suggested that the Town could provide light refreshments.

Mr. Coogan stated that a couple of residents had expressed concern with the building of sea walls changing the character of shoreline further down. Commissioner, Jane Kendall commented that there had been previous discussions that placing boulders with spaces between maintained the shoreline better.

Mr. Coogan went on to say that he and Co-Chair Hislop had attended separate Aquatic Resource Mitigation (A.R.M.) funding workshops and Director, Lori Sumner suggested that because Fox Point was for town residents only, they wouldn't want to apply for a grant that required public access in the same way that was required for acquisition of open space. Mr. Coogan said the deadline for the final application was October 30, 2018.

Co-Chair Hislop said DES encouraged each town to develop a list of their top ten desired restoration projects on a spread sheet and note how each proposal would apply to the A.R.M.'s grant criteria. Co-Chair Hislop said they could also use the list for large subdivision mitigation projects. She said they also discussed providing legal protection for the Town Forest conservation area.

Co-Chair Hislop said it was a State fund, and matching grant funds with Town funds added points. She added that they also recommended utilizing Southeast Land Trust or Rockingham County Conservation District for additional funding.

Co-Chair Hislop said the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (DOT) and DES were also making efforts toward culvert replacements and had come up with a

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New Hampshire Aquatic Mapper that included conservation lands, stream crossings, and species habitat of interest. She said they needed to see what had been done in Newington because all of data has not been entered and suggested that the Town identify stream crossings and culverts that would be of concern.

Mr. Coogan commented that Julie LaBanche had noted that there were half a dozen undersized culverts in Newington. Co-Chair Hislop suggested that they take that list and apply for A.R.M.'s funding.

Co-Chair Weiner commented that the Town had replaced the culvert to Motts Pond, but had not dredged it and that it was filling in with silt because it was fed by a natural stream. Co-Chair Hislop replied that she was not sure DES liked dredging projects.

Co-Chair Weiner suggested they also look into the culvert by the dam on Newington Road by the Baird conservation easement, across the road from the Fish and Game easement.

3) **Additional Discussions:** New Construction on parcels with wetlands

Commissioners discussed redevelopment near wetlands and establishing communication between the building inspector, the Conservation Commission and the Planning Board.

Co-Chair Weiner added that he thought that it would be good to have the building inspector have a wetlands scientist review properties with wetlands that were sold. Commissioner Kendall noted that developments were required to adhere to the Ordinance for wetlands setbacks for all subdivisions and new developments and that DES required a new assessment of wetlands delineations for any property that waited five or more years to develop after the initial delineation.

Mr. Coogan added that there was a Zoning Ordinance amendment proposal that a new building would require a certified plot plan.

Co-Chair Hislop suggested that another amendment be proposed that any remaining funds from properties that were subdivided and taken out of Current Use be put into the Conservation Fund and not be abated.

4) **Updates:** Town Planner Report

Mr. Coogan informed the Commission that the Town had received Rockingham County Conservation District's annual easement monitoring report for Frink's Farm property, and Southeast Land Trusts' easement monitoring report for the Baird property.

Mr. Coogan informed the Commission that he had received an email response with estimates for wetlands and conservation plaques as requested.

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Discussion ensued regarding the kinds of markers wanted and it was decided to request an estimate for "Wetland Buffer – Do Not Disturb" markers with an image of a spring peeper, and additional "Conservation Area" markers with an image of a fox.

Mr. Coogan announced a presentation hosted by the Portsmouth Historic District Commission on Sea Level Rise on February 22, 2018 at 6:30 p.m. in Portsmouth City Hall Chambers.

Minutes: *Jane Hislop moved to approve the January 11, 2018 Minutes. Sandy Devins seconded the motion, and all were in favor.*

Jane Hislop moved to accept and seal the January 11, 2018 Non-Public Minutes. Sandy Devins seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

Adjournment: *Jane Hislop moved to adjourn. Jim Weiner seconded the motion and the meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.*

Next Meeting: March 8, 2018

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

These Minutes were approved and adopted at the March 8, 2018 Conservation Commission Meeting.