

Town of Newington, NH
CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes, Thursday, April 12, 2018

- Call to Order:** Co-Chair Jane Hislop called the April 12, 2018 meeting at 6:37 p.m.
- Present:** Co-Chair Jane Hislop; Co-Chair Weiner; Commissioner Ann Morton; Alternates Sandra Devin; Jane Kendall and Bill Murray
- Absent:** Town Planner, Gerald Coogan
- Public Guests:** Devin Batchelder and Cindy Balcius with Stony Ridge Environmental; Ken Berry with Berry Environmental Engineering; John Wendell; Meg Ripley; Bob Byrnes

1) NHDES Permit Request: Major Wetland Impact by John Wendell regarding property at 75 Little Bay Road, Tax Map 9, Lot 6

Devin Batchelder and Cindy Balcius with Stony Ridge Environmental appeared before the Commission with their proposal for the applicant.

Ms. Batchelder stated that the applicant's home was built in the 1930's, abutted a 75% grade steep slope on a coarse sandy base that was exposed to tides and winds and had sloughed off at the bottom and created a vertical face creating instability and a safety hazard when approaching the shore.

Ms. Batchelder stated that they did a site walk with the Department of Environmental Services (DES) in November 2017 and recommended that the best method for erosion prevention was to combine the placement of boulders and bio-stabilization plantings above for quick growing roots. She added that the work within the tidal buffer zone would involve both a temporary and a major wetlands impact.

Ms. Balcius presented details on the proposal. Ms. Balcius explained that they could not cut back the slope because of homes in area, but they would remove the trees that were pulling the slope down further. She said the three ton, three to five-foot boulders would be partially imbedded on top of wrapped gravel that would allow drainage and the hard armoring would absorb the force of tidal flow and wave action.

Ms. Balcius continued with a review of native plantings that would include silky dogwood, bayberry and low bush blueberry with dense root systems that would be rolled out in a sod-like carpet and would establish quickly.

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Discussion ensued regarding additional causes for shoreline erosion. Co-Chair Hislop commented that pack ice flows slamming into the beach area did a lot of damage as well. Ms. Balcius replied that despite a preference for bio-stabilization DES was allowing boulders because there was no denying that ice would lift soil from beneath plants.

Co-Chair Hislop asked about the use of coconut fiber. Ms. Balcius replied that the low bush blueberry mats were similar to coconut fiber, which they will also be using.

Co-Chair Hislop asked about long-term maintenance plan and monitoring and Ms. Balcius replied that informational information would be included on the permit.

Discussion ensued regarding the cost of bringing boulders onto the shoreline. Ms. Balcius explained that there were three neighbors in a row, including the applicant, John Wendell and that his neighbor Jim Nelson would also be seeking a permit and that Mr. Nelson's shoreline included a concave area that would be easier to access. She said an excavator would bring the rocks in and would then park in the swale during high tide.

Co-Chair Hislop commented that it appeared that little was supporting the homes that were very close to the edge. Mr. Wendell replied that they would move the house away from the edge when it was rebuilt.

Ken Berry with Berry Engineering stated that the Hiatts had lost about ten feet off one corner of their shoreline in ten years' time because of trees falling over and pulling the soil away. He added the last storm took their bulkhead out. Mr. Wendell added that four to five pines had fallen on Jim Nelson's property since the last Conservation Commission meeting.

Jim Weiner moved to recommend the approval of the Major Wetland Impact Permit request by John Wendell regarding property at 75 Little Bay Road, Tax Map 9, Lot 6. Sandy Devins seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

2) Fox Point Shoreline Stabilization and A.R.M. Funding Request

This item was delayed in order to hear the next item first.

3) Mitigation and Conservation Easements: Update regarding proposal by John and Meg Ripley regarding their property at 50 Old Post Road, Tax Map 15, Lot 17.

Co-Chair Weiner informed Ms. Ripley that the warrant article requesting funding toward the purchase of their easement as well as the request to have funds added to the Conservation Fund had passed at the March 2018 Town Meeting.

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Co-Chair Weiner added that Planning Board Chair, Denis Hebert was still working on the committee regarding Eversource's transmission expansion "Reliability Project" along with the Town of Durham, but no decision had been made so they had not granted the \$81,000 of wetlands mitigation funds that might be used for the easement.

Commissioner Jane Kendall reminded everyone that Mr. Ripley (who was not present) had previously informed the Commission that he was considering putting up a smaller parcel of three acres into easement rather than waiting for an indefinite period for the Eversource funds to come through for the larger ten-acre parcel.

Meg Ripley asked if it would be acceptable to put a smaller parcel into conservation and Co-Chair Hislop clarified that a smaller parcel would not meet the Aquatic Resource Mitigation (A.R.M.) funding criteria that Eversource was following so the Conservation Fund and Warrant Article funds were what would be used instead.

Co-Chair Weiner stated that he would be in favor of looking into other alternatives to fund the larger parcel even if the Eversource funds didn't come through soon because he was not in favor of leaving a parcel large enough for another home subdivision. Discussion ensued regarding other methods of funding. Co-Chair Weiner suggested having Town Administrator, Martha Roy update the co-chairs on the current Conservation Fund balance.

Commissioner Kendall commented that the Commission would need to request additional funds at the next Town Meeting if it was determined that there were not enough funds to purchase the ten-acre parcel, unless Eversource came through before then.

Commissioner Devin pointed out that it would still be up to the Ripleys whether they wanted to wait for additional funds or if they wanted to put the smaller parcel into conservation as soon as possible.

2) Fox Point Shoreline Stabilization and A.R.M. Funding Request

This item was delayed in order to hear the previous item first.

Co-Chair Hislop presented a summary the March 26, 2018 site walk and workshop. Co-Chair Hislop said the site walk included a walk along the Hiatt shoreline, the Town docks and beach at Fox Point.

Co-Chair Hislop stated that DES members expressed concern for the private docks that were being stored on the shoreline salt marshes and recommended that they be moved. She said the Town could be applying for Aquatic Resource Mitigation (A.R.M.) funds for restoration work at Fox Point and that would be an issue.

Co-Chair Hislop stated that the group walked over to the beach side of Fox Point, noting the treacherous stairs and erosion below the trails overlooking the beach, but it was determined that it would be a major expense requiring multiple permits.

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Co-Chair Hislop said the group discussed the cause of the erosion and that cutting the overhanging trees would help prevent them from falling and breaking up the cliff further. She said they also noted boulder sized holes along the salt marsh and was informed that the Canada geese were tearing up the marsh grass to eat the roots, as they had been doing in a lot of salt marshes along the coast.

Co-Chair Hislop said Seth Wilkinson of Wilkinson Ecological Design did a presentation showing the use of coco mats or tubes and deep root grass vegetation as anchors to prevent erosion. She said they reviewed the pros and cons of a living shoreline with coco matting and taking trees down to give grasses more light.

Commissioner Sandy Devin suggested working with the Jackson Lab at the University of New Hampshire on how to protect the grass seedlings. Co-Chair Hislop said that no one walked on the salt marshes on the dockside of Fox Point, but the geese were disturbing the grass on the beach side so building screened fencing to protect the seedlings was suggested.

Commissioner Devin also commented that a lot of people walked their dogs at Fox Point, but the Board of Selectmen had sent a letter out to dog owners last year that dogs had to be leashed and couldn't go out to Fox Point, behind the Old Town Hall, the Town Forest or Newington Public Elementary School. Co-Chair Weiner said he knew dogs had to be leashed when walking Town roads, but that he thought they could be off leash when at Fox Point or on the trails because otherwise there would be no place in town for owners to allow exercise their dogs off leash.

Co-Chair Hislop said Town Planner, Gerald Coogan had worked with Tracy Degnan at Rockingham County Conservation District and Tristan Donovan of Tighe and Bond Engineering had worked on the application for the New Hampshire Moose Plate Conservation grant for hardscape restoration of Fox Point, however, they agreed to work on another preproposal for A.R.M.'s funding if the Commission was interested.

Jim Weiner moved to approve Tracy Degnan at Rockingham County Conservation District and Tristan Donovan of Tighe and Bond Engineering work on Tracy Degnan and Tristan to work on a preproposal for A.R.M.'s funding. Ann Morton seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

4) Potential Aquatic Resource Mitigation (A.R.M.) Grant Projects

Co-Chair Hislop commented that it was important to select projects that the Department of Environmental Services would support. She said she thought Mr. Coogan was going to put a spreadsheet together with a list, but it was not included in the packet, however, she recalled that they had discussed cleanup of Carter's Rock, Fox Point, the Town Forest dump and culvert replacements.

Commissioner Devin inquired as to how much money would be available for requests if the Town had ten different projects and how they would determine priorities.

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Co-Chair Hislop replied that she had attended an A.R.M. meeting and learned that their mitigation funds were assigned to various watersheds and that they were sometimes held in order to build the balance.

Co-Chair Hislop went on to say that there was a focus for funding the cleanup and replacement of failing and inadequate culverts around the state.

Commissioner Devin commented that she was wondering about funding to address the erosion at Fox Point. Co-Chair Hislop replied that the Moose Plate grant required matching funds, but A.R.M.'s funding didn't. She said A.R.M. funds would be decided on over the next month, but A.R.M. funding required public access for an easement, which many townspeople didn't want at Fox Point.

Commissioner Devin asked if there was an endowment for the care and maintenance of Fox Point and Co-Chair Weiner replied that there was.

Co-Chair Weiner noted that the Smith Farm in Greenland would no longer plow, plant corn and mow so the Board of Selectmen were going to find someone else. Co-Chair Hislop commented that John Frink, Lenny Thomas and possibly Dick Spinney were the only ones that still had equipment and hayed their fields so perhaps they were a possibility.

5) Announcements:

- a) **Community Conservation Outreach:** "Spring for the Bay: Living Shorelines" presentation by Kirsten Howard with NHDES and Tristan Donovan, P.E. with Tighe and Bond Engineering scheduled for Wednesday, April 24, 2018 at the Langdon Town Library.

Co-Chair Hislop said refreshments would be provided and passed out the flyer that had been made for the event. flyer for. Sd would be first time for presentation. Co-Chair Weiner said he would drop the direct mail flyer off at printer and Ann Morton would bring them to the post office.

b) **Landscape Pest Alerts and Informational Links:**

Co-Chair Weiner stated that he had learned that there was no cure once needle cast was on a tree and that keeping trees would incubate disease. Co-Chair Hislop stated that she had observed many diseased pines during her walks in town.

Co-Chair Weiner said he had asked Town Administrator, Martha Roy to put a letter out to everyone in town He said he she also asked if anyone from the Conservation Commission would like to survey Town properties to identify diseased trees. Co-Chair Hislop replied that it was up to the Board of Selectmen and Town to send out qualified arborists.

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Co-Chair Hislop noted that the letter could inform property owners with information about the disease and the Rockingham County forester's contact information for free consultation.

<http://mortonarb.org/trees-plants-advice/help-diseases/spruce-diseases>

<http://ag.umass.edu/landscape/fact-sheets/stigmina-needlecast>

<https://www.extension.umn.edu/garden/yard-garden/trees-shrubs/spruce-tree-diseases/fungi-associated-with-needle-loss/index.html>

6) Additional Discussions:

Commissioner Devin asked if anyone had followed up regarding the clear cutting on the former Eversource property Shattuck Way and River Road. Co-Chair Hislop replied that the building inspector had asked Dave Price at DES and was told that it was okay so long there was under 150 square feet of disturbance, however they had not put silt fences up to protect the wetlands prior to cutting as required, but intended to use stumps as barriers after the fact just as the property owner of Nimble Hill had done.

Commissioner Devin asked if wetlands posts were made available to property owners. Co-Chair Hislop replied that Mr. Coogan said he was going to provide sign samples for the Commission's approval, but she had not seen them, and she was not available during office hours while she was at work.

Co-Chair Weiner announced that he had responded to interest in a local gardening club that was expressed on the Unofficial Newington Resident's Facebook page by having a meeting at the Langdon Library the previous week. He said only one or two people attended, but he thought he would schedule another meeting in another couple of weeks to see if others might show an interest.

Co-Chair Weiner said some of the gardening club members might want to focus on gardening discussions and plant swapping, but he also thought some might be interested in working on some Town beautification projects such as clearing and planting at Carter's Rock.

Co-Chair Weiner noted that the Commission had asked Mr. Coogan to inquire with Martha Roy regarding a follow-up on removing the broken cement BBQ at Carter's Rock, but he hadn't heard anything yet.

Co-Chair Hislop suggested that it would be a good idea to encourage people with shoreline properties to plant species like hardy native species like bayberry, beech plum, lowbush blueberry, and silk dogwood for erosion control.

6) Invoices:

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Jim Weiner moved to approve all expenses for the March 26, 2018 workshop. Sandy Devins seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

Minutes: *Co-Chair Weiner moved to approve the Minutes for the March 17, 2017 meeting. Sandy Devins seconded the motion, and all were in favor.*

Adjournment: *Sandy Devins moved to adjourn. Ann Morton seconded the motion and the meeting adjourned at 8:07 p.m.*

Next Meeting: May 10, 2018

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

These Minutes were approved and adopted at the May 10, 2018 Conservation Commission Meeting.