

Town of Newington, NH
CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes, Thursday, August 10, 2017

- Call to Order:** Co-Chair Jane Hislop called the August 10, 2017 meeting at 6:35 p.m.
- Present:** Co-Chair Jane Hislop; Co-Chair Weiner; Commissioners Ann Morton and Alternate Jane Kendall
- Absent:** Sandy Devins; Bill Murray and Town Planner, Gerald Coogan
- Public:** Christopher Cross

1) Conservation Easements and Mitigation Projects: Update on John and Meg Ripley's conservation easement purchase and sale regarding their property located at 50 Old Post Road, Map 17, Lot 15

Co-Chair Hislop announced that Town Planner, Gerald Coogan said he had met with Town counsel, Attorney John Ratigan and they were working on the wording of the easement language.

2) Grant Proposals: NH Moose License Plate Grant Application

Co-Chair Hislop opened by reading Mr. Coogan's preliminary draft proposal for a grant from funds accumulated from New Hampshire's moose conservation plate purchases.

Discussion ensued regarding best uses for funds that might be received from the conservation grant. Co-Chair Weiner commented that he thought the Town was already spending money on restoring the Town docks at Fox Point and they might consider adding funds for that work.

Co-Chair Hislop commented that the docks were more protected from Nanny's Island, but the tip of Fox Point itself eroded from storm currents on both sides.

3) Conservation Stewardship: Carter's Rock Restoration

Co-Chair Weiner said he had visited Carter's Rock conservation easement twice, noting that there was no water access so there was nothing to be done by the water, but

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he thought they could beautify the area by removing the old brick grill, cleaning up and planting a few shrubs.

Commissioner Ann Morton commented that her husband, Matt plowed the circle in the winter and mowed the area occasionally. Co-Chair Weiner replied that that was something that the Town should be doing.

Co-Chair Weiner said the Board of Selectmen agreed to providing Public Works labor and a sign. Commissioner Morton commented that she thought the correct name was Carters Rock without a possessive apostrophe.

Commissioner Morton pointed out that only half of the rocks by the water were owned by the abutting Pickering lot, but they were covered up. She added that the Pickerings were also storing their canoes on the rocks as well, which blocked access.

Co-Chair Hislop added that the Pickerings had also filled along the shore line gradually over time, which could be seen by aerial mapping and could be reported to Dori Wiggins at the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (DES).

Alternate Commissioner Jane Kendall noted that it was in previous Minutes that the Commission had asked the Board of Selectmen to review David Hislop's survey of the easement area and send a letter to the Pickerings regarding encroachment on the Town's boundaries and the Town's intention to clear the area, but she didn't recall having received a copy of such a letter. Commissioner Morton agreed that the Pickerings might not be aware that the Town intended to clean the area up and that a letter should be sent for her children to read to her.

Co-Chair Weiner said he would take photos of the area and speak with Select person Jan Stuart and Town Administrator, Martha Roy about having a letter drawn up.

4) Other Business:

a) Pease Development Authority Tree Clearing and Planting Update

Co-Chair Hislop informed the Commission that she had received an update on the tree planting agreement, which had not been sent to the other commissioners or included in their packet.

Co-Chair Hislop stated that the PDA planned on planting the trees from September to October, but they hadn't cut the trees yet. She said they were to vote on the agreement earlier in the day, but they were still in negotiation so the final decision had been tabled until August 21, 2017.

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Co-Chair Hislop commented that the plan called for forty Canaan fir trees that would only grow to forty feet, but she was concerned that planting a single species could be vulnerable to disease and she thought it would be better to plant three different species. She suggested they consider white pine that didn't grow very tall. Co-Chair Hislop said the PDA originally said they were only going to plant three rows, but the Commission requested five rows and the PDA compromised with four rows, however she thought they were proposing to plant the trees too close and weren't allowing enough space for the trees to expand and fill in.

Co-Chair Hislop said the PDA was going to provide the labor for planting, two to four inches of woodchip mulch around each tree, purchase tree irrigators costing between \$500 and \$670, and \$350 of netting for protection from grazing deer, bringing the total of the project to \$8,000 to \$9,000. She said they were requiring the Town to be responsible for mowing twice a year for the first two years and every two years after that, and watering during drought for at least two years, but there was not mention of specifics for the maintenance schedule.

Co-Chair Weiner commented that Newington's Conservation Commission did not have a large enough budget to handle the watering and maintenance of the trees that would be planted and so the Town would have to cover the costs. Commissioner Kendall commented that she found it odd that the Town would be held responsible for the maintenance of trees planted on property owned by the PDA.

Co-Chair Hislop stated that the PDA was looking for input.

(Chris Cross arrived at 7 p.m. at this point in the meeting.)

Commissioner Kendall commented that Mr. Cross had explained the importance of cutting trees off to either side of the center for safety should a jet's engine go out, but she said it was disappointing that the PDA's engineers wouldn't consider requesting a wetland permit to cut the taller trees in the center. Mr. Cross agreed and noted that they hadn't hesitated to encroach on wetlands when they put the golf course in, however.

Mr. Cross commented that the PDA could clear cut if they wanted, but thought they didn't because they were restricted by setbacks. Co-Chair Hislop replied that the setback requirements only applied along wetland buffers, but not along property lines.

Co-Chair Hislop informed the Commission that a letter had been sent in from Don Bly at 340 Little Bay Road asking what the PDA was doing by his house. She said she was surprised that he didn't know considering Lulu Pickering had gone to all the abutting houses to let them know what was going on and to invite them to the meetings for commentary.

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Commissioner Kendall commented that notifications for the meeting would have been sent to property owners, but the owners might not have shared the information with the tenants.

Jane Hislop moved to request that Town Planner, Gerald Coogan write a letter of explanation the compromise between the PDA and the Town to Don Bly at 340 Little Bay Road for the Co-Chairs to sign on behalf of the Commission and cc the Commission. Jim Weiner seconded the motion and all were in favor.

Jane Hislop moved to have Town Planner, Gerald Coogan write a letter notifying Newington's PDA representative, Margaret Lamson of the Commission's recommendation that they plant one or two other species in addition to the Canaan fir to avoid disease risks to a monoculture and ask that they plant them further apart to allow more room to grow. Jane Kendall seconded the motion and all were in favor.

b) Setting SAIL Follow-up:

Co-Chair Hislop asked the Commission when they thought a good time for Setting SAIL to do a community education outreach. Discussion ensued and it was decided that a presentation on Saturday, September 16, 2017 after the annual yard sale ended at 2 p.m. and before the September Fest began at 3:00 p.m. would be a good date if everyone agreed.

Co-Chair Hislop suggested that perhaps Setting SAIL could do demonstrations of local invasive species and that residents could sign up for a volunteer invasive removal work session scheduled at another time. Commissioners noted some of the invasive species such as bindweed, bittersweet, flora rosa, knotweed, and loosestrife required informed techniques for removal and disposal to prevent spreading in other areas.

Co-Chair Hislop stated that she had some pop up tents and tables for displays. Co-Chair Weiner suggested that instead of the Recreation Committee being responsible for covering the cost of a tent, it would be a good idea for the Board of Selectmen to provide a tent for townspeople to sit under in case it rained during September Fest. Co-Chair Hislop agreed that it would be a good idea to have the Board of Selectmen contribute to September Fest considering that they used to do more when it was Old Home Days and the Parsonage and Old Town Hall were open for displays, BBQ's, ice cream socials, and skits.

Co-Chair Hislop asked Co-Chair Weiner if he would talk with the Recreation Committee about the arrangements.

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Commissioner Kendall commented that Lisa Graichen's presentation on Setting SAIL at the last Conservation Commission meeting was excellent and the information she shared would benefit other Town land use boards, but many citizens and members on other boards weren't in the habit of reading the Commission's minutes on a regular basis. She suggested that Mr. Coogan share the Setting SAIL link www.nhcrhc.org that listed activities for citizens and towns with other Town land use boards.

5) **Additional Discussions**

Mr. Cross stated that Alternate Planning Board member, Peter Welch was spearheading Newington's seaport revitalization study and had recently met with Gino Marconi, Director of the Portsmouth Port Authority regarding the realigning the Sarah Long Bridge to enable larger ship access. He said they had received Federal funding and there would be dredging by Tycom to deepen the channel to 44 feet and allow ships a wider turning radius from 500 feet to 700 feet.

Mr. Cross said Mr. Coogan could also ask Julie LaBranch with Rockingham Planning Commission to come up with a joint impact letter from Newington if there was interest in addressing future environmental impacts to businesses along the waterfront in the future that would go along with the Board of Selectmen's economic development plan. He added that the Conservation Commission could recommend projects like shoreline plantings that would reduce erosion or other enhancements along the shoreline to show community interest in our seaport.

Mr. Cross went on to say that there were properties up for sale along Shattuck Way that had a lot of wetland tributaries that would require wetlands permits from the Department of Environmental Services (DES) and it would be good to identify some wetland mitigation strategies so that DES didn't send the funds out of town to inland waterway projects. He added that Rockingham Planning Commission would do free maps.

Co-Chair Hislop commented that the Commission was looking for projects for grants, but they were geared toward the Residential Zone along Great Bay, not the Industrial Zone.

Mr. Cross commented that the Town had been successful in putting open spaces into easements and asked if the Commission required access for town residents, noting that U.S. Fish and Wildlife had locked up public access to some areas of their easements. Co-Chair Hislop replied that privately owned easements like the Beane easement were not held by the Town and didn't have to have public access, but other easements required public access, but the agreements could be worded to require notification of

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the owner prior to access. Co-Chair Hislop added that anyone walking off designated easement trails could be arrested.

Mr. Cross asked if the Commission was requiring flags identifying wetlands. Co-Chair Hislop said flags were being requested for wetlands in easements and Town wetlands consultant, Mark West had already identified prime wetlands, which were on a different level.

Minutes: *Jim Weiner moved to approve the Minutes for the July 13, 2017 meeting. Jane Hislop seconded, and all were in favor.*

Adjournment: *Ann Morton moved to adjourn. Jim Weiner seconded the motion and the meeting adjourned at 8:04 p.m.*

Next Meeting: Thursday, September 14, 2017

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

These Minutes were approved and adopted at the September 14, 2017 Conservation Commission Meeting.