

CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Boscawen Municipal Complex

October 18, 2022
Final Minutes

Present: Alan Hardy, Chair, Mark Kaplan, Jeff Abbe, Henry Carrier, Betsey McNaughten, Matt Burdick, Aurel Mihai

Absent: Lyman Cousens, Norm LaPierre

Guest: John Keagan

Staff Present: Kellee Jo Easler, Planning and Community Development Director, Kara Gallagher, Clerk and Rose Fife, Recording Secretary

Regular Business

- Open by Chair at 6:35 pm
- Roll call by Recording Secretary

Hardy discussed consent agendas and how they work. They would include Minutes, Accountants Report, and any material that was mailed in to the Commission, etc. The agendas would get sent out ahead of the meeting for review. Easler thought it would be sent out by the Thursday before the Tuesday meeting. Kaplan asked if at the start of each meeting they would make a motion to accept the consent agenda as presented. A **motion** to return to a consent agenda format as long as the agenda is sent out a minimum of three days prior to the meeting was made by Kaplan, seconded by Mihai and passed by a unanimous vote.

- Review Minutes 09.20.22 – Hardy noted that line 153 needs to read ‘sign’ not ‘signk’. A **motion** to accept the Minutes was made by Mihai, seconded by Kaplan and passed by a unanimous vote.
- Accountant’s Report – Hardy discussed the operating budget, which is not funded by the forest fund or the conservation fund but by the town budget. Their operating budget that they have had for several years is \$2,200.00. Hardy noted that they have spent less than \$900 and of it. They received a bill for dues for the 2022 and 2022 for the conservation commission state level and paid it, not realizing they over paid for 2023. In 2023 they will not have this, roughly \$250 expense, as it is now prepaid. Upcoming expenses may be things like signs that they may need to purchase etc. He’d like to request the same amount for their operating budget for 2023 at budget time. Abbe discussed November being the NH Association meeting and he believes there is a charge per person to attend. Easler noted that they would be okay to do that. Kaplan asked when that meeting was. Abbe answered that the meeting is on November 5th. Hardy asked the Commission to let O’Brien know as she is doing the registrations for who would like to go. Easler added that anyone interested should let O’Brien know as soon as possible.

A **motion** to request \$2,200 for the 2023 budget, which is the same as they have had for prior years, was made by Abbe, seconded by Mihai and passed by a unanimous vote.

A **motion** to accept the accountant’s report, as presented, was made by Mihai, seconded by Carrier and passed by a unanimous vote.

- Invasive Plants – John Keagan – see above.
- Invasive Plants – John Keagan

John Keagan, who is part of the Agricultural Commission (AgCom) discussed Invasive Plants. He has a small wood lot in town. He attended a program that the Forest Society put on in August. At the morning presentation, Jill Kilbourn of NH Fish and Game presented 'Picking Your Battles'. It's a comprehensive program on to deal with the invasive species issues. Ms. Kilbourn and some people from the north country have put together a plan, picking specific targets, and systematically attacking the invasive plants based on a plan instead of responding randomly as it is an issue each year. He thinks Boscawen could do something similar. Dean Hollins, DPW, has about \$3,000 in his annual budget dedicated to controlling invasive plants. Right now there is no plan in using that. Each year Dean Hollins gets together with a pesticide applicator and responds to citizens that request something be done in their area. Mr. Keagan spoke with Dean Hollins about this and he is interested in being part of this type of program. Mr. Keagan asked Hardy if the Commission would be interested in being part of this. He asked if any of the commissioners would be willing to sit down with Jill Kilbourn and go through a plan. He submitted a memo dated 8/31/22 that had ideas that he and Hardy and Easler discussed. Kaplan asked if this application was for public land and private land owners that were interested. Keagan said yes. Abbe asked about Dean Hollins \$3,000 budget. Are they going to use his budget in the town forest? Hardy said no. Hollins focus is very visible on the roadside. Hardy thought they should work together. Abbe noted that he went to the afternoon session of that program and Hardy was also there. The Merrimack County Extension did a good job of presenting the program. Mr. Keagan noted that Doug, the Department of Agriculture expert, expressed to him that the invasive issue is a challenge for all. Kaplan asked if there was a concentration along the river. Mr. Keagan answered that there is. Mr. Keagan left a copy of the presentation with Easler. Kaplan believes that everyone in town could relate to this subject. Mr. Keagan also noted that they have developed some novel approaches to attack invasive. He'd like to bring together a coalition and keep going with that. Burdick asked if this was just a financial partnership or volunteer partnership. Mr. Keagan thought it would be a combination. One of the important players are the private land owners. Abbe suggested the Nature Groupies, which is part of the Cooperative Extension. They have done a lot of eradication. Hardy asked if the right hand side of the chart submitted on the memo needs to be filled out. Mr. Keagan answered yes. Hardy thought Niebling's name should be moved out of the Conservation Commission column and added as Town Forester. Abbe gave a few names. Hardy though they could look to see if there is some money in the UCONN program. McNaughten noted that they have spoken about getting the power point to the commissioners, but she would like to know what the list of people are that they are discussing. Is this a group of people they need to discuss invasive plants with? Are they discussing getting people together to discuss this? Mr. Keagan thought that he'd like to talk with this Conservation Commission to see if there is interest in this type of program. He'd like to make contact with the people listed in this table and see if they could get them all together to present the power point he saw presented. The focus would be on work in Boscawen. Betsey McNaughten volunteered to be the liaison for Fish and Game. Mr. Keagan feels that if he got positive feedback here he would contact other folks and come up with potential meeting dates. He'd like to do this, at the latest, sometime in November.

Old Business

- Town Forest Discussion Items – Abbe presented. The new 'carry in, carry out' signs at Walker Pond have been working well. There has been very little litter. Hardy noted that they received good support at the Select Board meeting. A neighbor brought up that those signs were having a positive effect. Hollins Avenue trail head: Dean Hollins recently mowed up and down Queen Street on the lower end. He asked to have some widened out around the trail head. Abbe was at Walker Pond on Sunday and there are still Loon chicks there. He located the large sugar maple in the Town Forest. It measures 9.2 feet around. It's extremely tall as well. It's almost 70 feet before the first branch. You can see that tree from 4 places on the trail. Hardy asked if they wanted to add it to the map. McNaughten answered no. Abbe said no. Leave it be. He mentioned Niebling's hawk watch he had on his property was well attended. Mihai wanted to thank Niebling for opening up his property for this program. He would also like to thank Bob Vallieres for doing the presentation.

Burdick wanted to discuss the new Town Forest and a recent incident of 4 wheelers running through the trail. The Commission discussed posting the Town Forest 'NO OHRV'. Abbe noted that McNaughten had given them signs that say 'motorized vehicles prohibited' and those are placed at the entrance. McNaughten noted that people who ride the OHRV's need written land owner permissions or permissions from town Select Board if it's a Class VI road in order to ride there. Hardy noted that they have heard about a lot of OHRV's running through Walker Pond area. McNaughten has walked out to the bridge from the pump house and there are 4 wheeler marks, but it looks like they are from folks that live out there.

Hardy asked if the Commission wanted the Walker Pond land to be a Town Forest. Mihai asked what the down side would be. Hardy couldn't think of a down side. It would allow the area to be managed as a Town Forest. McNaughten asked if there was a difference in management of a Town Forest vs. town property. They have 2 Town Forests in a town that have trails in them. She'd like to see a Town Forest without trails. Kaplan agreed. Do they have to create a trail system if it is a Town Forest? Hardy discussed there being protection in name it a Town Forest. If they use the Town Forest statute to get town meeting to designate it, then you are using the protection of the statute and then you have a piece of land that a future board could not convey out. Easements were discussed and how they affect the land and the management of the land. McNaughten asked if the parcel could sit as conservation land for another year. Hardy answered that it could. Kaplan asked if they designate it as a Town Forest, could they put an easement on it in the future. Hardy said it could be wild land. McNaughten asked if they had management plans for the other Town Forests. Hardy answered that they have Forestry Management Plans that Niebling did. Hardy believes that Walker Pond will need more involvement over time. The biggest concern Hardy has is the access along Chadwick Hill Road and the parking etc. McNaughten asked if the snowmobiles use it now. Easler said yes. Hardy noted that they were going to have a proposal from the snowmobile club, but Norm LaPierre isn't here to present. Abbe noted that Dean Hollins has added 5 to 6 loads of gravel to the boat launch area. Kaplan isn't sure if there is a down side to it. Hardy just wanted to bring it up for discussion. Abbe thought that on the north side, along Tina Laroche's shore line, would be a nice place to have a boat access only picnic table. Kaplan thought it would make sense to have a trail from the pump house out to a picnic table. He doesn't want to do anything that would restrict their options. Kaplan asked how soon Easler would need to know if they chose to make this a Town Forest. Kaplan will talk with a folks for input and they can bring it back next month for a decision. McNaughten suggested waiting a year as they just purchased this property. Hardy explained that they need to get work done at the dam. And it needs to have a deed. Easler explained that Penacook Boscawen Water Precinct owns the dam and they are supposed to buy it for \$1.00. Kaplan asked if the designation item of discussion would affect that purchase. They are trying to get the dam on the plan. Then town council can draft up a deed and show the legal description and show what they are asking for. They are waiting on the surveyor. Abbe asked they should get the dam issue taken care of first before the Town Forest designation. Hardy said yes. Kaplan will reach out to speak with people.

- Walker Pond Discussion Items -

- Emergency Lane Declaration Update – The Select Board did approve the Emergency Lane Extension. They now have a document about how emergency lanes happen. Burdick noted that they also approved a parking ordinance that may ease some of the congestion on Chadwick Hill Road. Abbe asked what the signs would say. Hardy said 'no parking'. Mihai asked if there would be signs showing where they can park, especially for the winter time.

- Fall Festival 2023 – Kearsten asked Hardy to present this and asked if the Commission would like to participate with this event. This event will be located at the park. Hardy wasn't sure how they could participate. But the one thing that could occur to him was a way to support the program was bring in something about reptiles or raptor speakers. McNaughten suggested something on identifying plants. Hardy asked if they are interested in staying involved in some form. He thinks he's hearing that they

would. Abbe asked if it would negate Old Home Day. Burdick said no. Abbe asked if this was like Warner's Fall Festival. Easler explained. It's on a weekend that is not the same as the Warner Fall Festival. Burdick noted that Franklin was instituting one this year. Hardy said they are still interested.

- Ex-Officio Voting Member – In the rules and procedures, historically to conservation, the Ex-Officio has not been a voting member. Whatever the reason was back then, they have developed the voting Ex-Officio role as valuable. Is that something they would support? Easler explained it would help with the quorum. Kaplan asked if they were only adding a commissioner. Hardy explained it wouldn't be an appointed member. There would be a proposal at the November meeting for the modification and act on it in December. Abbe said 5 years ago he believed the Ex-Officio had a vote. A **motion** to approve the Ex-Officio as a voting member was made by Kaplan, seconded by Carrier and passed by a unanimous vote. Easler asked Hardy to look at the Rules and By-Laws to update the wording.

UMRLAC update by Kaplan. They give input into permits that could affect the river. If there is someone else that is interested in this and wants to know what is going on along the Merrimack River, there is room for another person from Boscawen. Six towns participate. The November 14th meeting is here in this meeting room. He thinks they should add the town's NRI to the agenda. He'd like to have the maps available to look at. Kaplan asked if it would be okay to present this. Hardy asked if the Commercial Street town own property was within the UMRLAC? Easler believes the Contoocook. Kaplan thought this group should look at an early version of the King Street proposal. Kaplan thought the Economic Development group should make a connection with the UMRLAC group. Kaplan said he would show the NRI maps and talk about 2 projects that they may not be aware of i.e. Commercial Street clean up and the King Street development.

- Conservation Master Plan Update – Kaplan presented. He sent it back to O'Brien and/or Easler and they have sent it out. What is the realistic way to update the document? Easler explained they are taking it in pieces. They won't be able to do that this year due to staffing issues. They are hoping to do it next year. Once everyone on the Conservation Commission has looked at it, send it to her or O'Brien and they will work on the document and will send out a final draft to the Commission. Easler wants to add what is missing in the document. i.e. two Town Forests, Walker Pond, easements, etc. Kaplan thinks they should look at the goals at the start of the document and decide if those are the right goals for this commission. Easler explained that everything they have in the master plan is where they get their capital improvement plan from. Kaplan wants to make their objectives clear. Mihai noted that the objectives don't prioritize and they don't have what they want to accomplish in the next couple of years and what they want to accomplish long term in this document. Kaplan wanted to put that on the next agenda. Hardy suggested that Central NH may be able to provide a facilitator to help. Hardy asked to get Mike Tardiff, the Executive Director of Central NH Regional Planning Commission in to talk with the Commission. Abbe was happy to see that this is being worked on. He read the old one with the NRI and they are really lacking in trails and that needs to be updated in Chapter 8.

- Commercial Street-EPA Removal Project – Hardy stated they are still in the renewable program and probably will be for a good 30 days. The removal of the contaminated material is what they may see. Once that is off the property, there is still the paperwork part to take care of. That will take time. It may be done by Spring. They found some very interesting granite at the bottom of the foundation. There is a wall that is impressive. Niebling made contact with Andrus Lezar and another stone worker named Pete Ryder, members of the Stone Trust and they will maintain contact with them. When they get to taking it apart, how do they do it? Will the State preservation office allow them to take it apart? On the other side of that stone wall is the river. This may be an interest to the Commission because of that proximity. The river connection was how they got the removal program established. A little over 2 million of additional spending. Because the river rose up to the building and some of the building was in the river that allowed the EPA to trigger emergency action. McNaughten asked if Boscawen has a historic commission. Easler said no.

New Business

- Invasive Plants – John Keegan – see above.
- Snowmobile Club Presentation – Norm LaPierre was not here to present. Continue to next month.

Hardy designated McNaughten and Henry Carrier as voting members.

Hardy asked if they want to continue having their meetings at 6:30 pm. A **motion** to continue meeting at 6:30 pm was made by McNaughten, seconded by Carrier and passed by a unanimous vote.

Do they accept the meeting date calendar? A **motion** to accept the meeting date calendar showing their meetings the third Tuesday of the month at 6:30 pm was made by Kaplan, seconded by Mihai and passed by a unanimous vote.

Next Meeting

- November 15, 2022 @ 6:30 PM

A **motion** to adjourn the meeting at 8:20 pm was made by Mihai, seconded McNaughten and passed by a unanimous vote.

*Respectfully submitted by
Rose Fife, Recording Secretary*