

CONSERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES

March 6, 2024

APPROVED: May 1, 2024

AGENDA: Resignation – Alternate Bill Haskell
Catterall Easement Monitoring Report/Update
Conservation Camp Sponsorship Donation
New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NH DES) Wetlands Applications
Baptist Church Parsonage Purchase Proposal - Christina Goodwin, Town Administrator
Breck-Plankey Spring Testing Results and Instructions
Proposed Bylaws Amendments

ATTENDING: Richard Batchelder (Chair), Elizabeth Miller (Vice Chair), Carroll Brown, Richard Metcalf, and Chip Carleton (Alternate)

ABSENT: Janet Cote, Bill Haskell (Alternate)

OTHER: **Staff:** Donna Sullivan (Land Use Administrative Assistant), Christina Goodwin (Town Administrator) *in person initially and remaining time via Zoom*

Applicants, Abutters, Professionals and Public: Shaun Lagueux

Chair Batchelder called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm with a quorum present and a roll call. Due to the absence of Janet Cote, Alternate Chip Carleton was seated as voting member for this meeting.

MINUTES:

The meeting minutes of November 1, 2023, were reviewed. Mr. Metcalf motioned to approve the minutes as presented. Mr. Brown seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.

OLD/NEW BUSINESS:

Alternate William Haskell – Resignation

Chair Batchelder shared a resignation received from Alternate Bill Haskell. This was discussed and the letter was given to Town Administrator Christina Goodwin for the Select Board to act on it.

The Chair also mentioned that Janet Cote, who was up for Board Member renewal this year has asked to step down to an Alternate. He added that Shaun Lagueux expressed interest in joining the Board. The Select Board was made aware, and these appointments will be made accordingly. Mr. Metcalf asked about the process for appointment of Alternates when members step down or resign. It was explained that Alternates were offered positions vacated first and if not interested in stepping up, a search and interview process would happen for new members.

Catterall Easement Monitoring

Chair Batchelder updated the Board about the monitoring visit made by some members to the Catterall Easement property on Hemphill Road. The required report was completed and on file. He coordinated with the Land Use Office to send this report to the New Hampshire Society for the Protection of Forests.

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Conservation Camp Sponsorship Pledge Received – Barry Conservation Camp

Ms. Goodwin updated the Commission about its proposed budget review indicating the number to send a local youth to Conservation Camp was cut by Budget Committee and Select Board. She stated that a citizen came forward with a private sponsorship donation to do this.

Discussion followed and because currently there is no candidate, this will be researched to get more information about deadlines for applications and outreach to find a prospective camper. Ms. Sullivan will reach out to the camp about cost and to see if there are any openings for the 2024 season. Flyers will be made up and posted at Minot-Sleeper Library and Tapply-Thompson Community Center (TTCC), the Newfound Memorial Middle School (NMMS) and the local Boy Scouts.

NH DES Wetlands Permit Applications

Camelot Acres – M/L 104 -063

Ms. Sullivan stated the Standard Dredge and Fill application was received for the Conservation Commission to review and comment. The plans were reviewed, and the Commission indicated there were no issues with this restoration plan and saw no reason to intervene.

Holiday Hills Drive – M/L 110-036

Ms. Sullivan stated this application for Standard Dredge and Fill was received and a notice to intervene was sent from the Land Use Office on behalf of the Commission. The intervention time will expire on March 25, 2024.

Discussion followed about the previous Land Use Case that was withdrawn after Conservation and Planning Board review.

Mr. Metcalf stated that this NH DES application includes language that this is an “after the fact” permit application. He stated that the application is confusing because it is dealing with the culvert and fill but it also included the plans to build a home. More history of the alterations, fill and culverts previously placed on the lot without permits and the non-buildable lot status of this property was discussed. There was some concern about maintenance of the culvert that runs from the wetland, and through the property into town drainage on the road.

Mr. Brown talked about the “after the fact” process that is allowed with NH DES. More discussion followed about the confusion about culvert replacement narratives and the submittal of the home plans indicating this culvert replacement.

Chair Batchelder stated that the Town and Commission concern is the setbacks. To intervene more information may be needed. The history of the subdivision, the original culvert from 1967 mentioned in the application, another reference to 1973 activity, then 2005, and in 2019 a new culvert and fill was placed from the wetland to the street drainage. The other concern within the application is mention of the septic system and home. Ms. Miller questioned what the end result would be if this is approved by NH DES. The issue is whether this an after the fact approval for the culvert or a permit for the home and septic system. At issue is whether NH DES should be made aware of the Land Use Permit denials due to setbacks and the information found about this being considered a non-buildable lot.

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Holiday Hills Drive – M/L 110-036 - continued

With the deadline for intervention looming, Ms. Miller motioned to ask for more information of the owners and NH DES to allow for making an informed decision and submitting any feedback to the NH DES. Mr. Carleton seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.

Ms. Sullivan will contact the NH DES for clarification on the intent of the permit application.

Pikes Point Road - M/L 105-004

Chair Batchelder spoke about a Permit by Notification application for the repair of a dock. He indicated that he visited the property and indicated that he saw no issues with this, and it was a typical task for lake property owners. Discussion followed about this and that if no intervention was needed, the Chair could sign off on this application to expedite it. Mr. Batchelder signed the application waiving intervention by the Commission.

Baptist Church Parsonage Purchase Proposal - Christina Goodwin, Town Administrator

Ms. Goodwin presented this proposal to the Conservation Commission as required for a purchase proposal that is on the Warrant for approval by the Town voters at the Town Meeting. She described the plans to demolish the Parsonage and landscape and improve access for parking lot which will become public parking. She shared the cost estimates and other information. She stated a recommendation or comments from the Conservation Commission are needed before the Planning Board meeting on March 13th.

Chair Batchelder asked if there were any wetland areas of concern on the property. Ms. Goodwin stated she did not think so. More questions followed about the proposed activities on the lot and whether the parking lot would increase in size. It was explained that this would be a bare minimum for safe access improvements to the driveway and landscaping where the parsonage is removed.

Both Mr. Carroll and Mr. Lagueux commented on the Warrant Article, plans, and other information.

Following discussion and determination of the time constraints to respond, Mr. Batchelder indicated he would be available to tour the property with members of the Select Board on March 7th and could make recommendations for the Commission.

Mr. Metcalf motioned to authorize the Chair to attend the Parsonage property tour and speak for the Commission with any recommendations or comments due for the Planning Board. Ms. Miller seconded. The motion carried 4-0-1 with Mr. Brown abstaining.

Following the presentation, Ms. Goodwin returned to her office to participate in the meeting via Zoom.

Breck-Plankey Spring Testing Results & Instructions

Mr. Brown and Ms. Goodwin shared information about the latest Plankey Spring test results. This was a full test which included metals and other information. It was shared that no e coli was detected. Comparisons were made to November testing. The results were discussed.

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Breck-Plankey Spring Testing Results & Instructions - continued

The remaining testing dates were considered for 2024 with the next one determined to follow in April. Members were invited to attend to observe and participate in the process. Chair Batchelder will notify Ms. Sullivan when the actual dates are set.

The Spring Cleaning/Testing Instructions were discussed. Mr. Brown elaborated on the cleaning process which had been done in the past by Mason Westfall and Mr. Brown. He indicated that there may be a need to talk with the Fire Department about closed space access safety for working in the well.

Conservation Commission Bylaws Revisions

Ms. Sullivan shared the only revisions made to the Bylaws was a change of meeting times from 7 pm to 6 pm.

Mr. Metcalf motioned to approve Bylaw revision of the meeting start time change from 7 pm to 6 pm. Ms. Miller seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.

COMMISSION MEMBER ITEMS:

Chair Batchelder updated the Commission about a visit with Hilda Bruno. This visit was about the parcel she had previously come before the Commission to discuss the Conservation Commission acquiring part of the property off Danforth Brook Road. He reported that she indicated this would have to be surveyed first and she was not in a position to donate the property but could make it available for sale. She stated she would meet with Chair Batchelder again after the land is surveyed. Her intention in offering this opportunity to the Conservation Commission was to keep the fields open and protect the brook.

The conservation and recreation value of the parcel was discussed, noting the wetlands, brook, and connection to snowmobile trails. Other considerations discussed included purchase process options including Town Meeting Warrant Article and approval. Other organizations were discussed to assist with this type of property acquisition should the Commission opt to pursue this further.

NEXT MEETING: April 3, 2024

ADJOURNMENT:

With no other business, Mr. Brown motioned to adjourn and Chair Batchelder seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0. The meeting adjourned at 7:37 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Janet Cote
Land Use Associate