



**CONSERVATION COMMISSION
MEETING**

Thursday, March 15, 2018 6:00 PM
City Hall, Council Chambers, Claremont, NH

**MINUTES
Approved 4/17/2018**

Mr. Dickerman called the meeting to order at 6:03 PM and asked for a roll call.

I. Roll Call

Present: Gary Dickerman, Steve Wood, Kim Gogan, Eileen Skowronski

Absent: Cortney Nichols, Scott Magnuson

II. Review of Minutes of Preceding Meeting(s)

a. February 15, 2018

Corrections requested: Clark should be Clarke; roll should be role

Motion: To approve the minutes as amended

Made by: Ms. Skowronski **Second:** Ms. Gogan

Vote: Unanimous in favor

III. Finance Report

The Commission reviewed the latest finance report. There have been no expenditures since the payment of dues for NHACC. Everything appeared to be in order.

Trail layout project

Lew Shelley, owner of Snow Hawk LLC, (Walpole), talked to the Commission about a trail loop at Stevens Brook. Mr. Shelley had walked the area last November with Mr. Dickerman. He had intended to get back to look at it again and make some measurements, but he wasn't able to before snow came. Mr. Shelley said he had worked with SCA in various capacities for 20 years before founding his own business.

Snow Hawk is a company that focuses on trail design and building. The company works primarily with land trusts, conservation commissions, and small organizations that need help. He quite often works with volunteers.

Mr. Shelley said he feels the best way to approach a new project is to create a plan with all of the required elements – grade and slope of trails; sustainability: etc. He said he doesn't think this project will be terribly difficult. Some areas will need laying out; a few structures, e.g. a bridge across the stream; some turnpiking in the wet areas, and so on. The old roadways will make it easier. There are lots of opportunities in this project for volunteers of all ages. They will need training for safety and quality control purposes and supervision.

Mr. Shelley said he needed to return to the site to get a better idea of what's needed. This may take a bit, given the current weather. The best times to view the site are in the fall, when the leaves are off, and in the spring to get a sense of high water and where the wet areas and features (e.g. vernal pools) are.

Mr. Shelley felt the trail project is doable/achievable, despite the configuration of the easement and its topography.

Mr. Shelley develops the plan, trains volunteers, presents to the Commission; then makes a proposal. Once the plan and budget are agreed to, he develops a schedule and implements the plan.

For stream crossings, Mr. Shelley said bank to bank crossings don't need permits.

It is best to have a 10:1 ratio of volunteers to skilled workers.

Mr. Shelley said the project may be feasible before next winter; either later summer or early fall.

It would cost \$950 for the initial plan and the map. The project could cost \$4,000 - \$5,000 if it were done entirely by contractors. The cost would be less with volunteer labor.

There may be grant funding available through the Forest Society. Mr. Shelley will keep Mr. Dickerman informed of when the funding may be available this spring. He said there are two pots of money - one for trails; one for easement acquisition.

The project may take one to two weeks to complete, depending on whatever structures are needed.

Mr. Shelley provides all of the tools that would be needed. He only asks that whatever gets broken is replaced. It will be up to the Commission to get volunteers.

Mr. Shelley worked with 2 other contractors on trails in Moody Park.

The Commission should contact Mr. Shelley if it wants him to go ahead with the plan. The Commission thanked Mr. Shelley for his time.

IV. **Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

V. **Old Business**

a. **Stevens Brook Conservation Easement**

i. **Permanent Access:**

Mr. Dickerman sent a letter to Mr. Osgood to open the conversation about the Commission's plans for the easement area. He has not heard back.

Mr. Dickerman said the best access is the area is behind the Tractor Supply store. The access from North Street across Osgood's land is wet and too

narrow to turn around, which would lead to people backing out onto North Street in the middle of the hill. The access across from the cemetery is too narrow.

Nancy Merrill is to get in touch with the owners of the Tractor Supply lot and see if they have any plans for further development of the land behind the store. She asked the Commission to mark its desired parking/access area on the map before she makes the call.

There followed a lengthy discussion about the risk of developing a trail system before knowing where a permanent access might be. Mr. Dickerman will follow up with Ms. Merrill.

ii. Trail layout project (see above)

b. Rail Trail Oversight: It was agreed that the next step is to write a letter to City Council regarding the vote from the last meeting.

c. Annual Budget Development

The Commission worked on creating a draft budget.

Fixed expenses

Membership NHACC \$500

Invasives control \$1000

Pollinator Gardens \$300

Public outreach/education \$200 – information on kiosks on rail trail; paid speakers?

Plan Implementation

 Master Plan – Natural Resources chapter

 Conservation Plan

Stevens Brook – trail - \$5000

Ms. Gogan suggested a category called “Local Projects” that would include pollinator gardens, invasive species, water quality, etc.

d. Forest Management Plan

Mr. Dickerman spoke with Ms. Merrill about updating the Forest Management Plan. Ms. Merrill will be meeting with Mr. Brislin and Mr. Sweet when Mr. Brislin returns from medical leave to discuss sending out an RFQ for the Plan’s update. She will be using a modified version of the Sullivan County RFQ being sent out now, because it’s a very good RFQ. Mr. Dickerman agreed that the County’s RFQ was good and read a few excerpts from it to the Commission. The Commission will be called into the process at the appropriate time.

VI. New business

a. Stevens Brook Conservation Easement

i. Expansion? – It was agreed to contact UVLT for help with approaching the landowners.

b. Natural Resource Inventory

- i. **Next step** – Mr. Dickerman left a message with Jeff Littleton this morning regarding the Commission’s desire to take the next step with the NRI. Mr. Dickerman asked Mr. Littleton what does he suggest? There are recommendations at the end of the inventory. Mr. Dickerman read through them. Some of them have been completed already.

c. Municode/RSA Review

d. Goals and Objectives for 2018 – the Commission created the following list as their goals for 2018:

- i. Permanent access to Stevens Brook easement
- ii. Research funding for Stevens Brook expenses
- iii. Continue with ideas on public education and outreach
- iv. Identifying a rating system to rank land parcels – then work with landowners for easements on key parcels within the ecologically significant areas
- v. Learning about mapping systems
- vi. Closure on the rail trail saga
- vii. Master Plan implementation (to be decided next meeting)

e. NHACC Annual Survey 2018 –The consensus of the Commission was to work on the survey at home and complete it at the April meeting.

VII. **Communications**

VIII. **Other Business**

There will be a City-wide clean-up during the month of April. The City will provide gloves and bags. The Commission agreed to clean up the boat launch. Tentative dates are April 21st or April 28th. Mr. Dickerman will notify the City Manager of the Commission’s chosen location.

Ms. Gogan will invite Robin Tamula, biology/environmental teacher at Stevens High School, to the next meeting to discuss water quality testing at Stevens Brook.

IX. **Future Agenda Items**

X. **Adjournment**

Motion: To adjourn the meeting

Made by: Mr. Wood **Second:** Ms. Gogan

Vote: Unanimous in favor

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

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