



**CONSERVATION COMMISSION  
MEETING**

Thursday, May 17, 2018 6:00 PM  
City Hall, Council Chambers, Claremont, NH

**MINUTES  
Approved 6/19/2018**

Mr. Dickerman called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM and asked for a roll call.

**I. Roll Call**

**Present:** Gary Dickerman, Steve Wood, Scott Magnuson, Eileen Skowronski, Kim Gogan (arrived at 6:24)

**Absent:** Cortney Nichols

It was agreed to take items on the agenda out of order to accommodate guests.

**Water Quality Testing Program – Robin Tamula (Stevens High School)**

Ms. Tamula was present to answer any questions the Commission might have had about the Stevens Brook water quality monitoring program.

Mr. Dickerman confirmed that Ms. Tamula had spoken with Dawn Dextrase (from the County) and that Ms. Tamula has experience with water testing in other areas. He asked Ms. Tamula to tell everyone about her experience.

Ms. Tamula said she participates in the Twin State mercury project through the Dartmouth toxic and heavy metals laboratory. She collects dragonfly larvae to monitor mercury levels in various waterways. She has two sites on the Sugar River and a site on Marshall Pond (recently added). She also collects site data including water nitrates, pH, temperature, conductivity, total dissolved solids, ammonia and phosphate levels. In another class (classes are semester-based), she raises trout and takes water data on the Sugar River for suitable tank habitats for the hatchlings.

Ms. Tamula would engage 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders for the Stevens Brook program.

Dragonflies are collected once during the semester. Data collection for the trout is collected 3-4 times during the semester, mainly for temperature and ammonia levels.

Ms. Tamula's classes are semester classes. At this time, she believed the environmental class (dragonfly collection) will be in the fall (1<sup>st</sup> of Sept. through 3<sup>rd</sup> week of January). Spring semester runs from 4<sup>th</sup> week of January through mid-June. She wasn't sure what would be scheduled for the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester as the schedules are currently under construction.

Mr. Dickerman felt the next step would be to get together with Dawn Dextrase. More coordination can take place closer to the fall. Ms. Tamula said the environmental course is a “fairly open course” so she can bring in “outside partnerships”.

Dragonfly data goes to Dartmouth. Trout information goes to the state.

Any site Ms. Tamula agrees to monitor must have bus access and be close enough to the school to fit the transport and sampling into an 80-minute window. Site must have some muddy/sandy bottom areas for the dragonflies. Water testing can be done anywhere. Watershed size is not relevant.

Ms. Tamula has not yet been to the Stevens Brook site yet and was unable to answer any site-specific questions. She said she would be able to visit the site after school is out for the summer.

It was agreed to keep the conversation going and to coordinate more in the fall.

### **Wetlands Permit Application - East Street Culvert Replacement**

Scott Sweet, director of public works, presented the application for a wetlands permit for the replacement of the East Street culvert (between Baker and Broad Streets). He said in recent years there have been flooding incidents and people reporting water in their basements. He wants to do this culvert project ahead of the sidewalk project that is scheduled for this street as part of the TAP grant project. He needs the Commission’s signature on the application to move the project along.

The four abutters of the culvert have signed permanent easements. The present 36-inch culvert will be replaced with a 42-inch culvert. There will be erosion control and stabilization (riprap) on both ends of the culvert. There will be a dissipation pool on the outlet end for aquatic creatures. There will be pre-cast headwalls. The sidewalk will extend the inlet a little bit so the sidewalk can go over the top of it (which can’t be done right now). There will be a guardrail along that part of the sidewalk. Land disturbance (dredging and filling) area will be approximately 1230 SF including inlet and outlet ends.

The project has already been put out to bid (for a design-build type project), a contractor has been selected, and the project should be completed this summer.

The culvert crosses East Street close to the Baker Street intersection. It empties in a big bog area opposite the Baker Street intersection. The bog area eventually empties on Pleasant Street near the Canvas Shoppe. Mr. Sweet said they are hoping to dredge the entire bog because it needs it. He said there is much work to be done in the Tyler Brook corridor.

The Commission had no further questions. Mr. Dickerman signed the application.

### **Natural Resources Inventory – Jeff Littleton**

Mr. Dickerman had invited Mr. Littleton to the meeting to talk about the parcel-based assessment that is recommended in the Natural Resources Inventory (NRI).

(Mr. Dickerman asked if the small bit of land at the junction of the Sugar and Connecticut Rivers could be a floodplain forest. Mr. Littleton said it may – he would have to look at it. Typically, there is floodplain where streams flow into the Connecticut because of the water backup that occurs in the spring. Silver maple, Sycamore, ostrich fern and stinging nettles are typical species in this ecosystem.)

Mr. Littleton proceeded to talk about the parcel-based GIS assessment model. He distributed a map to the Commissioners to show what the end-product would look like. The model answers a series of questions for each and every parcel. The outcome would help the Commission prioritize where to put funding (presumably for easements or fee simple acquisitions). It helps with grant applications as well. Questions asked by the model include parcel size, site assets (defined by the Commission) e.g. wetlands, wildlife habitat, soils and so on. Each answer assigns a value – the values are added up to give the parcel a complete value. The values are then ranked and a map drawn accordingly.

(Kim Gogan arrived at the meeting at this point.)

Once the questions are designed, the actual assessment doesn't take very long (perhaps a couple of weeks). The end product includes the map and a small report. Mr. Littleton estimated the cost would be \$1500 - \$2000.

**Motion:** To authorize the expenditure of up to \$2500 for the parcel-based mapping project with Jeff Littleton.

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

**Vote:** Unanimous in favor

Mr. Littleton will confirm his estimate and email it to Mr. Dickerman.

## II. Review of Minutes of Preceding Meeting(s)

### a. April 17, 2018

*The grant would assist ~~is~~ in improving local housing regulations.* (page 4)

**Motion:** To accept the minutes of April 17<sup>th</sup> as amended

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

**Vote:** Mr. Wood abstained, all others voted in favor

## III. Finance Report

*"Donation to CMA for environmental education field trip."* The Commission noted that the CMA should be changed to CMS.

## IV. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

## V. Old Business

### a. Stevens Brook

- i. **Access** – Mr. Dickerman said a letter went out to the owners of the parcels on which the easement is located. There has been no response as yet. Mr. Dickerman met with Ms. Merrill and Rick Wahrlich (who works for Todd

Osgood) to open a line of communication about the Commission's vision for the easement area on Mr. Osgood's land.

- ii. **Expansion** – NHACC sent materials to help the Commission learn how to approach landowners for easements. Barbara Richter has offered to come and do a presentation on the subject to the Commission.
- iii. **Annual monitoring** – It is time to do the annual monitoring walk of the easement. Mr. Dickerman and Mr. Wood have usually done it themselves. Mr. Dickerman invited others to participate. It was decided to do it on May 28<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 AM.

b. **Natural Resources Inventory** – Jeff Littleton (see above)

c. **Rail Trail Oversight** – Mr. Dickerman said the Council will be discussing the Commission's request to relinquish their oversight of the rail trail at their meeting on May 23<sup>rd</sup>.

(Ms. Skowronski left the meeting at this point.)

d. **Forest Management Plan Update** – no update yet.

e. **Clean-Up Day Activities** – Mr. Dickerman said there were 11 bags of trash and a lot of tires removed from the boat launch on cleanup day. The following Saturday, Mr. Dickerman and company cleaned the trash from easement area #2 on Main Street. They also picked up trash behind the Tractor Supply store. Mr. Dickerman said he hopes the cleanups will occur every year. Mr. Dickerman will touch base with Mark Brislin about collaborating with the Parks and Recreation Commission to pick up trash on the rail trail.

## VI. New Business

### a. Wetlands Permit Application

i. **East Street Culvert Replacement** (see above)

## VII. Communications

a. Letter of request for more information received regarding the project at 492 Washington Street (McCutcheon Project)

b. Request for donation received from the Connecticut River Conservancy (CRC)

**Motion:** To donate \$50 in the name of the city Conservation Commission to the Connecticut River Conservancy

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

**Vote:** Unanimous in favor

It was suggested that the Commission contact the CRC and invite them to do a public presentation about what the CRD does – perhaps in the fall.

Mr. Dickerman would like to support the CRC Source-to-Sea cleanup efforts in the fall. He has contacted Kelly Stettner (Black River Action Team) about doing a cleanup

program for the Sugar River. He learned from Scott Sweet that a team from Eversource did some cleaning along the Sugar River last year. Mr. Dickerman asked the Commission if this is something the Commission should get involved in. Mr. Wood said that since most of the Sugar River is in Claremont we should. He said we should also find out what other communities (at least Newport) are doing for the river and coordinate efforts. The commission will need to determine which section(s) of the river on which to focus. Ms. Gogan suggested looking at the tributary that runs by Walmart. These could be good opportunities to engage the public in the Commission's mission.

Mr. Dickerman will contact Eversource about the cleanup activities.

VIII. **Other Business**

June 16<sup>th</sup> is the CRC's river celebration at the Retreat Farm in Brattleboro, VT.

Preregistration is requested – the cost is \$15 per person. <https://www.ctriver.org/news-events/annual-meeting/> for more information.

Mr. Wood said he had received a complaint about:

- ATV use on the rail trail between Pleasant Street and Broad Street;
- Bad smelling water between Chestnut Street and the bridge;
- Erosion issues
- Leaning trees.

Mr. Wood said he had seen evidence of brush fires at the top of the bank behind the Marion Philips and a huge brush pile in an area adjacent to the trail.

IX. **Future Agenda Items**

X. **Adjournment**

**Motion:** To adjourn the meeting

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

**Vote:** Unanimous in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 7:37.

**Respectfully submitted,**

*de Forest Bearse*