



**CONSERVATION COMMISSION
MEETING**

Wednesday, June 15, 2016 6:00 PM
City Hall, Council Chambers, Claremont, NH

**MINUTES
Approved 7/21/2016**

- I. **Roll Call**
Present: Dianne Harlow, Steve Wood, Gary Dickerman, Kim Gogan (arrived at 6:12), Eileen Skowronski
Absent: Nick Koloski

- II. **Review of Minutes of Preceding Meeting(s)**
 - a. **May 24, 2016**
Motion: To accept the minutes as written.
Made by: Mr. Dickerman **Second:** Mr. Wood
Vote: Unanimous in favor

- III. **Finance Report**
There was no financial report.

- IV. **Public Comment**
There were no public comments.

- V. **Old Business**
 - a. **Friends of Moody Park – update**
This item was tabled to the next meeting.

 - b. **Bobby Woodman Sign**
This item was tabled to the next meeting.

 - c. **Rail Trail R.O.W. monumentation – Plan field trip**
The purpose of the field trip is to confirm (or locate) monumentation of the rail trail right-of-way. Mr. Wood suggested they focus their initial efforts on the curve of the trail where the old rail bed diverges from running parallel to Washington Street and then over the bridge. He said this is the only area (that he is aware of) where there have been questions about the right-of-way. He said he was not aware of any other issues heading east (toward Home Depot).

(Ms. Gogan arrives.)

The Commission chose June 24th at 4: 30 PM for the site work. A rain date was set for June 27th at 4:30PM.

d. Conservation Plan – Rough draft corrections/discussion

The Commission reviewed the draft conservation plan and made changes as they agreed were necessary.

e. Chipping brush at Moody – Update

Mrs. Harlow said she had visited the Park shortly after the Commission discussed this and the brush was all gone. She expressed deep appreciation to the Parks and Recreation department grounds and maintenance crew for removing it.

Mr. Wood said there are a couple of other piles at the edge of the mowed area at the top of the Park. He said it could be dispersed into the “wild area” where it can be left to decompose or it could be put through a chipper and spread (as opposed to removing it from the Park entirely). Mr. Wood thought it might be handled as a large volunteer effort (perhaps with High School students) at the same time that the Commission addresses other issues in the Park. The Commissioners agreed.

VI. New Business

a. Wildflower site preparation and pollinator planting for Moody Park – cost estimate

Ms. Skowronski read a brief article from the latest issue of *National Wildlife* magazine illustrating the relevance of creating pollinator gardens.

The Commission received an estimate of the cost from *Forest Savers LLC* for *Wildflower Site Preparation and Pollinator Planting in Moody Park*:

Initial Site Preparation:

\$2800

Second Site Preparation & Wildflower Planting:

\$1200 (if seeds are provided by the City)

\$2025 (if *Forest Savers* provides the seeds)

Ms. Gogan challenged the cost and time line of the project and asked if there might be a less expensive alternative.

The Commission was uncomfortable with the urgency of the proposal – they would have to make a decision at this meeting to move forward with the project or else the pollinator garden would not happen for three years instead of two.

Mr. Dickerman asked the Commission to consider putting the garden in the mowed area to the right of the road (in front of the area being proposed by *Forest Savers*). It would be considerably less expensive to put the garden there (although it is understood that it would not preserve the view). Additionally, the garden could be completed in a much shorter time frame. The *Forest Savers* plan would preserve the

view and be highly visible from the road to the top of the Park, but would require a minimum of two years to complete.

Mr. Dickerman expressed concern about possible runoff from the proposed (*Forest Savers*) garden causing damage to the new trail that passes nearby.

It was agreed that Mr. Brislin be invited to the next meeting of the Commission to discuss the garden ideas.

The steep bank at the Visitor Center Park was also suggested as a possible site for another garden.

Ms. Gogan asked the Commission to clarify the goal of this garden – is it to soften the aesthetic impact of the recent logging activities (and if so, will this accomplish that)? Or is it the goal to create a pollinator garden because it's a good and relevant idea.

b. Forest Management Plan

Mr. Dickerman reported that at the last City Council meeting one of the Councilors stated that, given the public's reaction to the logging operations on City property and the objections to where the logs will be coming out during the Arrowhead cut, the Conservation Commission should look at the existing Forest Management Plan to see if the Commission would like to change anything or make any recommendations.

Ms. Gogan asked if this (negative reactions to the logging) is a matter of providing the right public education as opposed to changing the document. She felt that people knew there would be logging, but perhaps weren't fully informed as to the benefits of it. Once the negative rumors started, the positive ecological benefits of the cut were lost. They also may not have been prepared for what to expect following the logging operation. They might not have been so horrified if they had known what to expect.

Mr. Dickerman said there is now an expectation of shock and dismay following these last two cuts. He said getting in front of this third cut is a good idea.

Mrs. Harlow said there had been at least two public forums when the Plan was first completed to let people know what to expect. Very few people attended. Then the Dole reservoir was basically clear-cut, which Mrs. Harlow found was a bit of a shock.

Ms. Gogan said that if people didn't attend the public forum, then the message didn't get out.

Mr. Dickerman said that the forum that was held in 2008 was well attended – the room at the Tech Center (where it was held) was full. However, the Plan has taken a long time to implement and that forum was a long time ago. It is time to do it again.

Ms. Gogan suggested that the Commission explore other ways to get the message out.

Mr. Dickerman pointed out that public education is one of the goals in the new Conservation Plan making this the opportune time to start.

Mr. Wood said there is always frustration in trying to reach everyone. However, he was pleasantly surprised by the turn-out for the “after-cut” tour the Commission did at the Park. It served as an opportunity for people to get their questions answered and understand what had taken place.

Mr. Dickerman said the Council is sponsoring a site walk of the Arrowhead cut area. The date has not yet been set.

Ms. Gogan asked for clarification of the Council’s expectations for the Commission in this matter. If they are asking for changes, what is the purpose of those changes? What is the goal? Mrs. Harlow asked for clarification also. Mr. Dickerman said he wasn’t clear on what Council expected. He said he would try to get more specifics.

Mr. Wood said the 2008 Plan calls for re-evaluation and updating in 2018 (10-year anniversary). He advised waiting until then to do any updating or re-evaluating.

Rebecca MacKenzie said she was uninformed about the Moody Park logging operation and had not attended the walk afterward, but visited the Park after hearing rumors and was “horrified” by what she saw. She said she has looked at the Arrowhead logging plan and was concerned about what it will look like afterwards. Ms. MacKenzie said that the environment has changed since 2008 when the Plan was written and that the cutting of trees results in the loss of carbon sequestering. She felt this should be taken into account in the Plan now. She also expressed concern for the loss of wildlife habitat that results from clear cutting. She said she would like to see a site walk or some type of computer modeling done before the cutting occurs to get an understanding of how much cutting would be done. Ms. MacKenzie urged postponing further logging until the Plan could be updated and public concerns taken into account.

Ms. Gogan asked if there could be more work done with the loggers to get a better understanding of what they are doing and to instill in them the understanding that they will be logging in places that will be visited by a lot of people soon after the logging is completed; they are logging in a park that is a high priority in the town; talk about some more “mindful practices”; encourage them to alter some of their practices to alter the aesthetics of the end product. She said she, too, was dismayed at the way in which Moody Park was logged. She said logging in the White Mountain National Park is very different because the loggers there know that they are logging in a highly visible location. The end results are far different.

Mr. Dickerman said that perhaps that would be best discussed with Dennis.

Mrs. Harlow said the logger is chosen through a bid process. Ms. Gogan said perhaps the criteria for selecting the logger should include familiarity with the practices that will leave the land in a more aesthetically pleasing state.

VII. **Communications**

a. **Electronics disposal day**

Saturday, June 25th, there will be a pet food drive and e-waste recycle day to benefit the Sullivan County Humane Society at the *Runnings* store on Washington Street.

VIII. **Other Business**

There was no other business to discuss.

IX. **Adjournment**

The next meeting of the Commission will be on Thursday, July 21st at 6:00 PM in Council Chambers.

Motion: To adjourn the meeting.

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

Vote: Unanimous in favor

Respectfully submitted,
deForest Bearse