



**CONSERVATION COMMISSION
WORK SESSION**

Tuesday, June 6, 2017 6:00 PM
Visitor Center, 14 North Street, Claremont, NH

**MINUTES
Approved 7/13/2017**

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

I. Roll Call

Present: Gary Dickerman, Eileen Skowronski, Scott Magnuson, Steve Wood

Absent: Dianne Harlow, Nick Koloski, Kim Gogan

I. Stevens Brook Conservation Easement

A. Vote to authorize expenditure of funds to purchase easement boundary markers

Motion: To authorize expenditure of \$279.00 (to include initial setup and shipping) for purchase of 100 3 3/4" diameter, 0.012-gauge aluminum signs from Voss Signs for marking the boundaries of the Stevens Brook conservation easement. The design of the signs shall match as closely as possible to that of the image shown in Attachment B of the Stevens Brook conservation easement document.

Made by: Mr. Magnuson **Second:** Mr. Wood

Vote: unanimous in favor

Motion: To authorize expenditure of up to \$100 for the purchase of hardwood grade stakes and nails.

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

Vote: unanimous in favor

B. Prohibited activity signs

The Department of Fish and Game offers free prohibited activity signs, but to get them, the land must be open to hunting. Since the Stevens Brook easement prohibits hunting, it appears we won't be able to take advantage of the offer. deForest will look into purchasing signs instead.

II. Prioritize goals & objectives of:

A. Conservation Plan

Goal #1: Educate the public about the conservation commission – who we are and what we do

Mr. Dickerman suggested creating 5-minute videos that would present information about the Steven Brook easement, pollinator gardens, and the rail trail. These videos could be a regular feature on CCTV and be linked from the Conservation Commission web page.

Objective #4 (social media) would entail a Facebook account or use of the "What's Up Claremont" account.

Ms. Skowronski suggested links to the various presentations at the Montshire Museum on pollinator gardens, pesticides, and meadows be added to the website.

Objective #3 (“did you know”) could be regular articles in the eTicker or a brochure about invasive species in Claremont. The eTicker articles could comment on seasonal changes to draw the public’s attention to the natural environment around them.

A video tour of each of the ecologically significant areas was also suggested. More detailed maps of each area and a more in-depth inventory of their features would be helpful.

Ms. Skowronski asked to create a script for a feature on the before and after of logging.

Goal #2: Encourage individual landowners to be good stewards of their own properties.

Mr. Magnuson suggested researching all possible regulations and sources of information regarding various aspects of stewardship – USDA, County Extension, NHACC, etc. What information does the commission want to distribute and how should it be distributed? He suggested handing out information at public gatherings such as the farmers market, the chili cook-off and the alumni parade. He also suggested putting together talks that can be presented to civic organizations in the City on topics such as pesticide use, dealing with water runoff and water gardens.

Goal #3: Continue to revisit the recommendations for and protection of the critically significant areas that were set forth by the natural resource inventory.

Mr. Dickerman said we need more detailed maps or aerial photos to describe the significant areas. Maps with layers would be especially helpful. He suggested educating the public about these areas through video tours and commission-sponsored walks through them.

Mr. Wood said he would like to see the Commission create an inventory of all undeveloped land in the City with an eye toward directing possible development away from them.

Goal #4: Encourage public involvement in the stewardship of the city’s parks and other natural open spaces.

Ms. Skowronski and Mrs. Harlow met with Mark Brislin at Parks & Recreation to discuss public involvement. Ms. Skowronski said they had been given the “go-ahead” to create the pollinator garden in the traffic island in the intersection of Broad and Chestnut Streets. It would be nice to put signs in the garden once it’s complete that tell about pollinator gardens and that this one was sponsored by the Commission.

Goal #5: Support implementation of the current forest management plan.

Mr. Wood offered the following (words in italics)

Recommendation: The Commission will continue to be kept informed on the implementation of the Forest Management Plan.

Action Step: Schedule regular (annual?) meetings with consultant for updates on status of forest growth and recommended management activities.

Objective #1: Insure the Forest Management Plan is being followed with conservation in mind.

Action Step: Review and update the existing Forest Management Plan

Objective #2: Offer suggestions for best practices that focus on conservation.

Action Steps:

- Review Best Management Practices for Forestry: Protecting New Hampshire's Water Quality publication by UNH Cooperative Extension (also see Goal #4)
- Conduct public tours of city-owned forest lands and hold public hearing sessions to gather input on management of these properties (also see Goal #4)

Goal #6: This goal had been assigned to Mrs. Harlow, who was not in attendance at this meeting.

Goal #7: Acting as stewards, support the improvement of recreational access at Ashley Ferry boat launch.

Mr. Dickerman said the current access is in poor condition with muck on the ramp, Japanese Knotweed spreading through the area, and the road/parking area in bad shape. He said it is very frustrating to get the state to do anything at all, let alone in a timely manner. He suggested establishing a "go-to person" at Fish and Game to work on these issues; create a plan for a car top boat launch; work with the river clean-up groups; create a knotweed eradication plan; and send a message to the state that this is a valuable resource to the City that is underutilized because of its poor condition.

II. **Communications**

III. **Other Business**

Mr. Dickerman suggested asking Crystal Simond's youth group to plant trees and shrubs at Arrowhead to cover the damage done by the last logging operation and to re-establish a vegetative screening for the storage area. The commissioners agreed that this was a good idea.

IV. **Adjournment**

Motion: To adjourn the meeting

Made by: Mr. Magnuson **Second:** Mr. Wood

Vote: Unanimous in favor

The meeting adjourned at 8:23 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

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