



**CONSERVATION COMMISSION
MEETING**

Thursday, July 19, 2018 6:00 PM
City Hall, Council Chambers, Claremont, NH

**MINUTES
Approved 8/16/2018**

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, Scott Magnuson, Kim Gogan, Eileen Skowronski

Absent: Cortney Nichols

II. Review of Minutes of Preceding Meeting(s)

a. June 19, 2018

Motion: To accept as presented

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

Vote: Unanimous in favor

III. Finance Report – None

IV. Public Comment - None

V. Old Business

a. Water Testing at Stevens Brook

Still under discussion is what records does the Commission want to create and who would keep them. No decisions were made. (The DES River Monitoring Program may be a source of assistance for water quality testing materials.)

b. Sugar River Clean-up

Mr. Wood said he surveyed three locations on the river in Claremont:

1. At the back of the skateboard park.
2. The retention pond next to the former Rite-Aid building – the pond looks like pea soup – should it look like that? It is unclear if the pond is functioning properly. Mr. Dickerman said he would ask DPW Director, Scott Sweet about it.
3. Near the parking area at the end of the Bobby Woodman Trail – this area had more trash than the others, consisting of mostly plastic waste with some aluminum cans (and a shopping cart).

On the whole, these areas are not in bad shape. A small group of volunteers could handle the trash removal fairly easily.

Mr. Dickerman said he would look behind McDonalds. Ms. Skowronski said she had looked behind Ramuntos. There was no trash, but the geology there is very interesting. Mr. Magnuson said he looked along the bank near the Citizen Street bridge. He didn't see anything.

It was agreed to focus on the stretch of river between Home Depot and the bridge. Plans for clean-up will be finalized in August with the clean-up to take place in September.

c. Conservation Plan Update

The Commission discussed updating the Plan. Goal #6 could now be removed as the Commission no longer oversees the Rail Trail.

Mr. Dickerman felt the Commission should focus on:

GOAL # 1

EDUCATE THE PUBLIC ABOUT THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION – WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO.

RECOMMENDATION: Continue to explore avenues for keeping the public informed.

Objective 1: Investigate signage at supported projects

Objective 2: Share information about current and ongoing projects

Objective 3: Make available "did you know ..." information pertaining to natural resources conservation issues, etc.

Objective 4: Explore the use of social media, example: What's Up Claremont

Objective 5: Explore the creation and circulation of a monthly Conservation Newsletter

Objective 6: Explore working with existing networks and publications

RECOMMENDATION: promote community education and outreach regarding Claremont's biodiversity and the importance of long-term protection strategies

The need for a Facebook page was discussed as a good way to engage the public – Ms. Gogan and Mr. Magnuson will get it up and running if Ms. Nichols is unable to.

Everyone shared various ideas of what can go on the Facebook page.

It was agreed that everyone should study the Conservation Plan and be ready to discuss it again at the next meeting.

d. 2018 Goals – Work Plan/Time Line

**CONSERVATION COMMISSION
GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR 2018**

1. Permanent access to Stevens Brook easement

There has been no response from landowners to Nancy Merrill's outreach. It is agreed to wait until the plans for the North and Main intersection reconstruction are finalized. It appears that Todd Osgood is still hoping to develop the North Street side of his property.

Mr. Dickerman urged the Commission to consider moving forward with the development of a loop trail that is not dependent on a particular point of access. After a bit of discussion, the Commission agreed to have Mr. Dickerman contact Lew Shelley to schedule the next step.

2. *Research funding for Stevens Brook expenses - ?*

This apparently referred to finding funding for the trail development program through SCS.

3. Continue with ideas on public education and outreach

4. Identifying a rating system to rank land parcels – then work with landowners for easements on key parcels within the ecologically significant areas

5. Learning about mapping systems - ?

6. Closure on the rail trail saga –

7. Master Plan implementation

e. Pollinator Gardens –

1. Update

2. Reimbursement Request

Ms. Skowronski said some of the plants in the Broad/Chestnut Street garden did not survive the winter and she had bought additional ones to replace them with. This purchase exceeded the budget for this project by \$70.38.

Motion: To reimburse Ms. Skowronski for the \$70.38 additional expense incurred for the pollinator garden.

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

Vote: Unanimous in favor

VI. New Business

a. Barbara Richter, NHACC

Ms. Richter gave a comprehensive presentation on landowner outreach for land conservation. Key points:

- Land protection has become more pro-active which allows for more focus on critical areas;
- It is recommended that the Commission work with the local land trust;
- Helpful resources can be found on the Upper Valley Land Trust and the Society for the Protection of NH Forests websites;

- Be willing to use a variety of options;
- Get to know the landowners through commission-sponsored activities;
- The Wildlife Action Plan (WAP) website provides additional details about natural resources in Claremont;
- Be creative and patient in your outreach – this is a long process;
- Focus on what is unique about Claremont and what the Commission wants preserved for future generations;
- Create the big picture and develop a strategic plan to implement it;
- Maps are a good way to get people excited about natural resources;
- Get familiar with the WAP and NH Grant websites;
- NHACC can do a presentation on the WAP;
- Realize that there are costs involved and that most of them will have to be born by the landowner, though there can sometimes be assistance from outside sources;
- Land protection is a long-term commitment;
- Confirm property boundaries and ownership of land that is of interest;
- Once the Commission has done the groundwork, it is best to hand the project off to the professional for completion;
- The groundwork consists of connecting with the landowners, developing relationships with them and providing them with all pertinent information;
- Work on getting the city to know who the Conservation Commission is and what you do – the more outreach you can do, the better;
- Protected open space generally provides more tax revenue to the City than developed land does.

The Commission thanked Ms. Richter for her excellent presentation.

b. Stevens Brook Easement – Main Street Section

1. Address Pine Trees?

There are several pine trees growing in the section of the easement between Main Street and the river. Should they be removed to prevent them from causing damage in the future? Mr. Dickerman will be meeting with Lionel Chute next Monday to view the area and decide about the pine trees.

VII. Communications

- Shoreland Permit by Notification: NH Rt 11 & 103 and Bowen Street** – for reconfiguration of the Washington Street/Bowen Street intersection. Some of the construction activities will be near the bank of the river.
- Town and City* magazine**

VIII. Other Business

Mr. Dickerman said there is a citizen preparing a complaint about the mowing of the wet meadow in front of the new Ford dealership on Charlestown Road. Wet meadows can be mowed but such activities must not disturb the roots of the vegetation. The mowing is

causing ditching, hence the complaint. The complaint will be submitted to DES. Mr. Dickerman will take photos of the damage to the meadow and submit them to DES on behalf of the Commission.

IX. Future Agenda Items

Ms. Gogan said the students that attended the Sargent day camp will be coming to the August meeting to give a short presentation on their experiences.

The next meeting will be on August 16, 2018.

X. Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn the meeting

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

Vote: Unanimous in favor

The meeting adjourned at 8:02 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

de Forest Bearse