



**CONSERVATION COMMISSION
MEETING**

Thursday, August 17, 2017 6:00 PM
City Hall, Council Chambers, Claremont, NH

**MINUTES
Approved 9/21/2017**

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 late)

Absent: Nick Koloski

II. Review of Minutes of Preceding Meeting(s)

a. June 15, 2017 (Meeting)

Motion: To approve as presented

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

Vote: Unanimous in favor

b. June 27, 2017 (Site Visit – Lafayette Street)

Correction: Change “long-are” to “long-arm”

Motion: To accept as corrected

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

Vote: Unanimous in favor

c. July 13, 2017 (Work Session)

Motion: To accept as presented

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

Vote: Unanimous in favor

III. Finance Report –

The Commission reviewed the latest finance report and noted expenditures. All seemed to be in order.

IV. Public Comment

V. Old Business (Kim Gogan arrives 6:04 PM)

A. Proposed Pond Dredging - 104 Lafayette Street

Mr. Dickerman said the Commission probably should not comment on this project (ahead of an application from Mr. Cross), because the project is more

complex than originally thought. City Planner Mike McCrory's letter to DES summarizes some of the City's concerns:

Property Reference: Tax Map 106, Lots 19 & 31; Tax Map 107, Lot 100; Tax Map 118, Lot 103

Good Afternoon,

After speaking with deForest Bearse and Nancy Merrill, I understand Tim Cross intends to develop the subject properties. It is my understanding the development proposal is a Recreational Vehicle Park with up to 200 individual campsites (preliminary number, subject to change). At this time, Mr. Cross is proposing dredging an unnamed pond on the property. This dredging operation will impact a pond that is approximately 2 acres and may remove approximately 20,000 cu. yd. of dredged material, which may be spread-out in upland areas on the property.

Possible impacts to the Floodplain, Floodway, and Streambank Overlay Districts would need to be addressed to the City's satisfaction. Placement of dredged material within these mapped overlay districts is regulated by the Zoning Ordinance. Location and amount of fill from the dredging operation would need to be shown on a plan to indicate compliance with the Zoning Ordinance.

We have requested a written proposal from Mr. Cross with a property layout and conceptual grading plan. Based on the above information and lacking any permit application materials I am not able to advocate for or against any aspect of the project. I would also recommend against any agent for the City, either a group or an individual, advocating for or against this project without further information.

Maps are attached for referenced. Please let me know if you have any further questions.

*Michael McCrory, CFM
City Planner, Planning and Development Department
City of Claremont
14 North Street
Claremont, NH 03743
(603) 504-0347
(603) 542-7033 fax
www.claremontnh.com*

Mr. Wood stated that this property is located in an area identified as ecologically significant in the Natural Resources Inventory (ESA 11 – Sugar River Downtown). The effect of the dredging on wildlife habitat is not clear as yet.

B. Bobby Woodman Trail – Broad Street garden plan

Mrs. Harlow presented her plan for creating a raised bed perennial flower garden at the entrance to the Bobby Woodman trail behind the Community Center. The garden will be “L” – shaped measuring 3 ft x 12 ft and 3 ft x 16 ft. Mrs. Harlow proposed constructing the bed from landscaping timbers and spikes as a less expensive alternative to pressure-treated lumber. She estimated needing approximately 20 bags of soil to fill the beds. She is donating all of the plants. She plans to add some annuals in the spring. She would like to plant the garden in September.

Mrs. Harlow's cost break-down was as follows:

218 ft of landscape timbers \$119.56
Potting Soil \$289.40
Nails \$79.74

It was suggested that Mrs. Harlow look into getting a truck load of loam and mixing in some potting soil instead of using straight potting soil. Or perhaps check with DPW to see if they have soil to contribute.

Mrs. Harlow asked if the Commission would be willing to pay for half of the cost of the garden; she will donate the remainder.

It was assumed that both Mrs. Harlow and the Commission would oversee the long-term maintenance of the finished garden.

Motion: To approve this idea at a maximum of \$250

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

Vote: unanimous in favor

C. Pollinator Garden Update (E. Skowronski)

Ms. Skowronski and Mrs. Harlow are still working out the details of this garden. Cost estimates: Plants \$80; Soil \$40. Ms. Skowronski has already purchased the plants and will need reimbursement.

Motion: To expend \$120 for a pollinator garden project at Broad & Chestnut

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

Vote: Unanimous in favor

D. T-shirts (E. Skowronski)

This item was moved to later in the meeting.

E. Stevens Brook

- i. **Prohibited Activities Sign** – The prohibited activities signs have been received. The posts and mountings are now needed.
- ii. **Survey** – The survey should be near completion. The Commission will need to schedule a time for posting the prohibited activity signs.

F. Trash at Stevens Brook – The trash that had been dumped over the bank from the Speedway property has been removed by the owners of the Speedway. A letter from the Commission to the Speedway owners was drafted and sent thanking them for removing the trash and expressing the Commission's hope that it won't happen again.

G. Rail Trail

- i. **Master Plan** - The Commission scheduled a work session for August 22nd at 6PM at the Visitor Center to discuss this item.
- ii. **Hazard Trees** – Lee Stevens gave DPW a quote of \$1500 to remove a clump of pine trees near the trail on Washington Street. Mr. Dickerman questioned if the trees are actually in the right-of-way and wondered if the old survey of the trail might help to answer that question. He also asked if the landowner or the party holding the ROW is responsible for the trees. He said he would talk to both Scott Sweet and Nancy Merrill and would seek a legal opinion. Mr. Dickerman asked if the City owns the trail outright or if it is only a ROW.

Mr. Dickerman also said he received an estimate of \$500 to remove the hazard trees on the section of the trail that the Commission walked on May 18th.

H. Ashley Ferry Landing – Update

The dredging of the boat launch and regrading of the parking area have been completed.

Mr. Dickerman has been corresponding with Garrett Graaskamp at Fish and Game regarding upgrades to the boat launch:

August 4, 2017

Hello Garret- On behalf of the Claremont Conservation Commission I want thank you for the work done earlier this week at the Ashley Ferry Landing boat launch site. We are considering some potential upgrades for that site which include lighting, picnic tables, chemi-toilet, resurfacing the parking lot, and adding a separate canoe/kayak launch. We fully understand Fish & Game's budget woes and would try to seek other funding sources, if need be. My question to you is about process. Can you recommend someone who could help us with a design/plan? Do we need the Department's approval to even begin the process? What other resources would you recommend? Thank you for your consideration of this matter and I look forward to your response.

*Gary Dickerman
Chairman
Claremont Conservation Commission*

On Friday, August 4, 2017 11:28 AM, "Graaskamp, Garret"

<Garret.Graaskamp@wildlife.nh.gov> wrote:

Hi Gary: I appreciate the offer and enthusiasm of the City and your Commission in particular to enhance the recreational experience at the Ashley Ferry boat launch. Before I can comment I need to confer with our federal grant administrator and the nexus with federal

requirements and site use limitations under the grant that supports boat access at Ashley Ferry. There are several people on vacation so this will take time into next week.

One question that is likely to be asked, is how often on a summer weekend or holiday does the parking lot fill up to capacity? Does the City monitor that condition on a regular basis?

I will be in touch, but feel free to reach out to me as you see fit.

Sincerely,

Garret Graaskamp, P.G., Coordinator; NHFG-SPBAP

From: Gary Dickerman [<mailto:gdman411@gmail.com>]

Sent: Friday, August 04, 2017 8:39 AM

To: Graaskamp, Garret

Subject: Claremont Boat Launch

And also, Michele Tremblay:

August 9, 2017

Dear Mr. Dickerman,

This sounds like a wonderful project. Have you contacted Garret Graaskamp at NH Fish and Game to see if he might provide technical assistance? He has visited with other groups that wish to create or update sites and has been exceedingly helpful.

Unless the project is or was originally Fish and Game's, I do not believe that you need their approval but you will likely need to check with the Shoreland and Wetlands permitting programs at NH Department of Environmental Services.

If Garret is not available, you may wish to look into the National Park Service's program at <https://www.nps.gov/orgs/rtca/index.htm>. They have helped many groups that I know and provided excellent technical assistance. I know of no other funding programs but perhaps give the New England Grassroots Environment Fund a call to see how this might fit in with their community program: <https://grassrootsfund.org/>. This may be a long shot but you might want to check on the Moose Plate Grants program from the State Conservation Committee: <http://www.agriculture.nh.gov/divisions/scc/index.htm>

May I offer two suggestions? One is to think about a Clivus or other composting toilet vs. a chemical toilet. The other is to perhaps forgo lighting the area, which can be disruptive to fish and other wildlife as well as the macroinvertebrates that are near the bottom of the food chain.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like to talk through other ideas.

Sincerely,

Michele L. Tremblay, naturesource communications

August 11, 2017 – additional communication from Garrett Graaskamp

Good Morning Gary:

In light of your generous offer to enhance the facilities at the NHFG's Ashley Ferry ramp, I checked the easement between the City and NHFG covering the site, and secondly our responsibilities under the Federal grant (Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program via the Dingell-Johnson Act) that funds the Statewide Public Boat Access Program to see what might be possible. The City would need pre-approval from NHFG for any improvements the City would sponsor at the site.

The key issue at play regarding our federal boat access grant is avoiding conflicts that would adversely affect the primary objective of the site as a public boat launch. The DJ Act requires that we not authorize activities or infrastructure that would be likely to cause conflicts with the primary objective or to increase costs to maintain the opportunity. We have found that picnic tables and associated activities negatively impact the objective.

***The Ashley Ferry BA is approaching the end of its useful life** and will be considered for refurbishment in the next few years. The upgrades you mentioned, and perhaps others, can be on the table for consideration. Infrastructure that reduces long-term annual maintenance and enforcement costs are prioritized more highly. I would be willing to sit down with you and other City representatives to discuss what might be possible and how it would be funded.*

Thank you again for your enthusiasm and support.

Sincerely,

Garret Graaskamp, P.G.

Coordinator

NHFG-SPBAP

The Commission discussed the State's request for data on usage of the boat ramp. It is believed that the data will not be truly useful, because so many people have given up on using the launch that it will appear no one actually uses it. Mr. Dickerman said he will try monitoring it anyway, just to see what current usage levels are.

It was agreed to continue pursuing the project, following up on the information provided by Ms. Tremblay, and to learn the process State's process for addressing outdated facilities.

I. T-shirts (E. Skowronski)

Ms. Skowronski distributed the Commission's new t-shirts. Thanks to Eileen for seeing this project through.

VI. New Business

There was no new business.

VII. Communications

A. NHDES - Letter of Compliance: 356 Windsor Road

VIII. **Other Business**

IX. **Future Agenda Items**

X. **Adjournment**

Motion: To adjourn the meeting

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

Vote: Unanimous in favor

The meeting adjourned at 7:02 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

de Forest Bearse