

The Claremont City Council held a meeting on Monday, September 26, 2016, at the top of Whitcomb Lane.

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Lovett at 5:00 p.m.

Members of the Council present were:

Ward I Councilor Carolyn Towle (Late)  
Ward II Councilor Scott Pope  
At-Large Councilor Keith Raymond (Late)  
Assistant Mayor Victor Bergeron  
Mayor Charlene Lovett  
At-Large Councilor Allen Damren (Late)  
Ward III Councilor Nicholas Koloski  
At-Large Councilor John Simonds (Late)

Absent:

At-Large Councilor Bruce Temple

Also present:

Guy Santagate, City Manager

## **NEW BUSINESS**

Dennis McKinney, New England Forestry Consultants, talked about the proposed logging at Arrowhead according to a contract implemented by the City for the Forest Management Plan. The contract for sale of this timber was prepared in 2013.

At 5:02 p.m. Ms. Towle arrived.

Mr. McKinney anticipates the transport route will be down Apple, and Whitcomb. Historically, this is the route that has been used. The trail network in this forest is old logging roads.

At 5:04 p.m. Mr. Simonds arrived.

Mr. McKinney anticipates generating saw logs, round wood pulp and chips. This requires big trucks in a small space. They have made 2,000 truck runs without incident, except on Whitewater Brook Road where there was a lawn issue and that was taken care of. The loggers are well trained. The equipment involved is expensive and takes a lot of skill to operate.

Mr. McKinney said this is an extractive process, not landscaping. It happens very quickly. It's a 20-year harvest cycle.

At 5:07 p.m. Mr. Damren arrived.

Mr. McKinney said this is a thinning of trees. This is a mature stand.

Larry Brodeur, Ward 2, is concerned the roads will get worse. He wants to know what will be done to fix them.

Mr. McKinney said the work will be timed for when the roads are frozen.

Scott Sweet, Public Works Director, said paving for these roads is already in the CIP (Capital Improvements Plan), but there are no funds to do it at this time.

Marie Lozito, Ward 1, asked if fixing the roads is part of a 10-year plan.

Mr. Sweet said it depends on the budget. The plan would be to do these roads in the next year or two.

Everett Williams, Ward 2, said most road damage happens during the winter. He asked why should taxpayer funds be used to pay for the roads. Also, his idea is that the logging trucks would go through Arrowhead Recreation Area. His third item was that drag lines will become paths for erosion. He asked about using brush to help stop the erosion.

Mr. McKinney said erosion on this site is already occurring. There are no water bars on the trails.

At 5:10 Mr. Raymond arrived.

Mr. McKinney said the proper way to address this is to put cross drainage in to allow the drainage to go off into the woods. As for using brush, that can be done, but would affect hiking and ATV users. Brush is hard to walk on. As for transportation and road damage, he stands on his record with thousands of trips being done safely.

Mr. Williams said regarding taxpayer funds, the roads are atrocious and will become worse. He said there needs to be a provision in the contract that what damage is done, the contractor will repair.

Mr. McKinney said the City requires a road bond.

Mr. McKinney said regarding skidding to the Arrowhead parking lot, there would be a tremendous economic impact. Costs will grow exponentially. Also, the process will carve a skid road across the site and will reduce revenue and the process may become non-viable. He estimated it is a mile from the southernmost site to Arrowhead. Also, that would put the operation in an area that is fairly congested with the school.

Mr. Williams said the currently proposed process will go by the schools.

Ms. Towle said she has gone through the area; she asked about the colored ribbons. She said the corner from Ridge to Orchard is very narrow and there is a huge catch basin there. She is concerned for safety.

Mr. McKinney said they don't use flags. They paint an "X" for a saw log and a horizontal stripe to not cut. Pink flags indicate the boundary line.

Pat Leahy, Ward 2, is concerned about runoff. There is damage on Whitcomb Lane from previous runoff.

Mr. McKinley asked if the abutting property had been totally cleared. Mr. Leahy said yes. Mr. McKinley said this will be a partial harvest; there will still be an organic floor. This is not the same runoff dynamics. Not all of this harvest area runs into the same drainage area.

Ernest Montenegro, Ward 1, talked about the travesty done at Moody Park and he doesn't want the same problem here.

Mr. McKinney said his contract is to implement the plan created by the City.

Mr. Montenegro said the forest helps filter the air temperature.

Meg Hurley, Ward 2, said there needs to be a discussion about the tree removal and global warming. She said the topsoil is thin and the trees are needed to keep the topsoil in place.

Bill Dexter, Ward 2, said he heard that this is not about the money, but it's about the good of the forest. He asked about damage to 3-4 roads which will exceed the \$47,000 revenue. He suggested dragging the timber to Arrowhead where the area is already torn up. He said there is another landing at Chestnut Street.

Mr. Santagate said people have asked him if you don't cut, do you leave the diseased trees up. He said this is not about the money, but about making a healthier forest.

Mr. McKinney said this is forest land and wildlife will recreate the scenic and economic values. He said people build homes out of wood and use lots of paper. This area was previously used by sawmills. Forest products are integral to this area. If you do nothing, this will become an old growth forest.

Mr. Santagate said this is not about the money. The money from previous timber harvests was put back into the area the timber came from. This project was sold on making a healthier forest. Moody Park is showing signs of regenerating. The Forestry Plan goes back to 2008 and the Plan was advertised.

Mr. McKinney said a forest is similar to a garden. If you tend it, you get a better harvest. This crop (trees) takes a lifetime to grow. He reminded everyone that paper products come from wood.

Marty Davis, Ward 2, said contributing to the wood industry is irrelevant. If there are dangerous or diseased trees, take them out. Generally, he is in favor of the Forestry Plan, if it is out of view. He doesn't think it should apply to this area; he called it a park. He said this is not a forest. He thinks that if the logging does not have a significant impact on future growth that it should be left alone. He thinks this should go to Council for this area.

Mr. McKinney said there is no particular disease in this area. Old trees will come down on their own. As for erosion, he will leave the area in good shape. ATVs will cause more erosion if the area is not maintained. Hazard trees are an expense and will not generate revenue.

Mr. Davis said if there are dangerous trees, they should be taken out individually.

Mr. McKinney said the last time he "got to the altar," and the plug was pulled, he had expended thousands of dollars in time.

Mr. Davis doesn't think there is a need to move forward with this. He thinks there should have been this type of meeting in the beginning.

Mr. McKinney said he has met with the Conservation Commission annually or more often.

Mr. Davis thinks these discussions need to be heavily publicized.

Donna McNeal, Ward 2, said at the corner of Ridge there have been some really close calls and she thinks that will be an issue.

Mr. Davis asked what the next step is after today.

Mr. McKinney said he is not comfortable going ahead without the City's approval. He won't proceed without clear direction from the City.

Mike McCrory, City Planner, said the RFP (Request for Proposal) from 2013 could be reissued.

Mr. McKinney asked for the reissue to be done with guidance from the Council, Conservation Commission and Parks and Recreation.

Mr. Santagate said if Mr. McKinney doesn't think the forest will be healthier, why do it. If it makes the forest healthier, he would support it.

Mr. McKinney said he has practiced forestry for 42 years. He thinks it is noble to manage the forests for a wide array of benefits. Typically you harvest mature/in-decline trees. He said the

Rice Reservoir was clear cut because the wood was blowing over. Now, you have a lot of young wood and turkeys in the area.

Mr. Williams said that if this goes forward, cars would be parked in the road to prevent trucks from getting through.

Dianne Harlow, Conservation Commission Chair, said Mr. McKinney is doing something that is already in the Forestry Plan. She said the Conservation Commission will need to discuss this and will invite the neighborhood.

Mayor Lovett said the Plan has to be looked at. She wants to be clear why it would be a good idea to move forward with this.

Mr. McKinney said this would be an extractive process, not landscaping. There are benefits to leaving the debris.

Dan Truesdell, Ward 2, acknowledged that if the trucks drive over someone's lawn, it will be fixed. He asked at what point the forest became a "crop."

Mr. McKinney referred to the Forestry Management Plan. There is a 10-year prioritized list of activities that are to occur. The Plan was approved.

Joan Davies, Ward 2, wants to know which roads will be used. She lives on Whitcomb and Orchard.

Mr. Koloski agreed they should proceed if it is beneficial for the forest. He wants to know the burn rating in old growth forests that are in residential areas.

Mr. McKinney said he has worked as a forester since 1974. NH forest fires are not a significant risk in this area. The forest will do fine without us. Society demands lumber and paper. Management of the forest is done for our benefit, not the forest.

Mr. Truesdell asked if the estimated revenue of \$47,000 covers the road repairs.

Mr. Sweet said it was estimated it would cost \$200,000 to repair these roads.

Mr. Truesdell asked why subsidize the forest industry.

Mr. Sweet said to repair the roads as they are now will cost about \$200,000.

Mr. Pope talked about the issue of state funding being reduced every year.

Ed Malhoit asked who would fix the runoff issues.

A resident asked who was against this project and several residents raised their hands.

**ADJOURNMENT**

At 6:15 p.m., the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dorée M. Russell  
Clerk to the Council