

Town of Newport, NH
Newport Conservation Commission
Minutes of April 21, 2021
6:30 PM

Board of Selectmen's Room/Municipal Building
15 Sunapee Street/Newport, NH

Remote Access: Zoom.com - Meeting ID: 868 9019 2961 Passcode: 242482
+1(929) 205 6099 US (audio only, long-distance fees apply)

MEMBERS PRESENT: *Via Zoom:* Clifford Richer, Linda Dennis and Ken Dennis *in BOS Room:* Barry Connell, BOS Representative

MEMBERS ABSENT: none

STAFF PRESENT: Christina Donovan, Planning and Zoning Administrator; Todd Cartier, Public Works Director

VIDEOGRAPHER: John Lunn, Executive Director NCTV

CALL TO ORDER: Zoning Administrator Christina Donovan opened the Conservation Commission meeting at 6:30 p.m. and read aloud the official announcement stating the Conservation Commission was meeting in accordance with the Governor's Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04. She stated that because members were meeting electronically all votes would be roll call votes. Ms. Donovan then handed the meeting over to Mr. Barry Connell. The Commissioners recited the Pledge of Allegiance followed by a roll call of those present.

MINUTES: March 17, 2021

On a motion by Mr. Richer, seconded by Mrs. Dennis; *the Commission voted by roll call to approve the minutes of the March 17, 2021 meeting as presented. The motion passed 4-0-0.*

AGENDA REVIEW: Add: election of officers (Connell)

Mr. Connell stated the first order of business would be to elect a fulltime Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Conservation Commission. He asked for nominations from the Commissioners. When asked if he would be willing to Chair the Commission he stated yes. On a motion by Mr. Dennis, seconded by Mr. Richer; *the Commission unanimously voted by roll call to elect Mr. Barry Connell as Chairman of the Conservation Commission. The motion passed 4-0-0.*

Chairman Connell asked for nominations for Vice Chairman of the Conservation Commission. Mr. Dennis nominated Mrs. Linda Dennis as Vice Chairman. When asked if she would be willing to act as Vice Chairman, she stated yes. On a motion by Mr. Richer, seconded by Chairman Connell; *the Commission unanimously voted by roll call to elect Mrs. Linda Dennis as Vice Chairman of the Conservation Commission. The motion passed 4-0-0.*

Chairman Connell thanked the Board for their nomination and election. Vice Chairman Dennis thanked Mr. Connell for accepting the position of Chairman of the Conservation Commission.

NEW BUSINESS:

Gilman Pond Forestry Updates-Todd Cartier

Chairman Connell introduced Mr. Todd Cartier and asked him for an update on the Gilman Pond Forestry Project.

Mr. Cartier addressed the Commissioners and gave a synopsis of what was happening at the Gilman Pond easement.

1. Timber sales:

Unit One was just completed. Unit Two will be completed in the summer, fall or winter of 2021. He had done a walk through on the land for Unit One. Meadowsend Timberlands Limited had done an excellent job. There were no messes, stream crosses were nice, tidy and clean. The total revenue from the sale will be about \$21,000 with a timber tax of 10% coming off. The total should be about \$18,000-19,000.

2. What to do with the proceeds of the sale:

To put the funds back into the Gilman Property; potentially are:

- a) 2-3 Road Gates @\$2,000 each for the material; Town could match it and provide labor
- b) Invasive plant control (active management of property) initial cost not more than \$2,000
- c) Follow up invasive plant control not to exceed \$1,500 per year
- d) Boundary maintenance (blaze property lines) \$3,000. Do every 10 years.
- e) Boundary sign. Estimated \$500.
- f) Kiosk with map and trails.
- g) Interpretive panels. Approximately \$3,000

The total is approximately **\$10,500** (depending on how many gates they do).

Mr. Cartier said that the subject of the trails needed to be a bigger discussion. The Commissioners agreed, saying there should be no access to the water.

When asked, Mr. Richer gave an explanation of the marking of the boundary lines. He said that good "boundary line paint" will last for 20+ years. If the first time they are marked it is done by a knowledgeable individual, it could be done by department employees every 10-15 years. Mr. Cartier agreed, saying that they annually do a walkabout to check the land. He gave a suggestion of how the boundary could be maintained. Mr. Richer stated he would be more than happy to advise the PWD on the marking of the boundaries.

He stated that the invasive plant control would have to be done very carefully in order to not infringe upon the water. Reason: it is the source of water for the Town of Newport. Everything else in Mr. Cartier's presentation was good.

Mr. Cartier stated he believed a boundary of 250 feet around the body of water would be sufficient. The Conservation Commissioners and Mr. Cartier had to discuss it; his first priority was to protect the water. Mr. Richer asked if there were hunters that went on the property. Mr. Cartier believed there were. There was a discussion on the use of the land and the protection of the water supply.

Mr. Cartier said he did not know if Unity has a Conservation Commission as well (the land is located in Unity). He stated that maybe Newport could collaborate with them. The Commissioners agreed. Chairman Connell asked Ms. Donovan to find out if Unity has a Conservation Commission.

Mr. Cartier informed the Commission of the formation of a Source Water Protection Plan (locally and with the State of NH). Part of it is to form a committee. They would like to see participants from Unity be a part of it. There were none so far. Chairman Connell asked to have a representative from the Conservation Commission. He was informed that Mr. Dennis is a member of the committee.

Mr. Dennis spoke about the trails that Mr. Cartier mentioned. He believed they should be limited to the skidder roads and some designated areas; they should start small. Others agreed with the suggestion. Mr. Cartier stated the employees had begun to use the skidder roads; they were a good trail and kept them away from the water. They discussed the process to make the trails in the future.

Mr. Cartier suggested reaching out to other communities for information; Manchester water works and Hanover. He explained they had undergone the steps to open the land to the public. Ms. Donovan offered to contact the communities for information.

Chairman Connell asked when the Source Water Protection Plan committee would begin. Mr. Cartier stated it was developing. Mr. Tom Lambert, Town Water and Sewer Superintendent is working with the state engineers and recruiting people. They have Mr. Ken Dennis's name.

The Commissioners thanked Mr. Cartier for the update on the Gilman Pond property. Mrs. Dennis asked if Town Manager Rieseberg and BOS were in approval. Chairman Connell said yes, saying that the Town had already purchased some materials for the trail system (kiosk). There was a general discussion on the Gilman Pond property and future trails.

Town Green (Common) Arborist Report-Linda and Ken Dennis

(Recap):Mr. Dennis informed the Commissioners he and an arborist had inspected the trees on the Common. Mr. Gwyn W. Gallagher had evaluated all the trees on the Common over the course of 2 ½ hours, noting which ones needed to be replaced, trimmed (pruned) and cut. Unfortunately Mr. Dennis did not have a written copy of the arborist's assessment. Only some types of trees are appropriate as replacement trees for the Common due to the conditions there.

Chairman Connell stated he'd like to see the report. Mr. Dennis agreed, but stated there would probably be a fee with the written assessment. Mr. Dennis gave the arborist's qualifications and stated he worked with several surrounding communities. Mr. and Mrs. Dennis had contact information for the arborist and will follow through with him as the Commission requests. There was continued discussion among the Commissioners on the Common and its trees.

Mr. Dennis gave a synopsis of Mr. Gallagher's written report to the Commissioners (report is in the Commissioners packets). Mr. Gallagher's Management Program listed the trees needing to be removed, pruned, cabled and given root zone injections. At the time of the meeting, Mr. Dennis did not have a report with the costs to be incurred. When they are available they will be sent via email to Commissioners and also placed in the Conservation Commission files. Chairman Connell stated they needed the financials because the work needed to be done.

When asked, Mr. Dennis stated Newport Departments could do the felling and stumping of the trees in-house to save money. They needed all deadwood trimmed out of the trees and fertilized (annually). Mrs. Dennis stated she had asked for a list of good replacement trees (It is forthcoming and will be sent to Commissioners and put on file). Chairman Connell said that Town Manager Rieseberg would like to see the recommended list of replacement trees. Mrs. Dennis agreed, but stated they first needed to get the trees removed and the area cleaned up before replanting. There would be time to acquire them while it was being done.

Chairman Connell asked for the next steps in completing the replacement project. Mr. Dennis said:

1. Cemetery Department and/or Public Works Department remove trees
2. Get a quote on the tree replacement. He questioned taking down five trees and only replacing two.

Chairman Connell said that the next step would be to get the replacement costs and who will do it.

Chairman Connell asked if Mr. Gallagher would do the pruning. He was told yes.

Chairman Connell said they needed an itemized quote to know the cost of removing the six trees.

He then listed the rest of the items that would tentatively be done:

Pruning 30 trees

Cabling 2 trees

Removing 6 trees

Total: **\$9,750.00**

Root zone injections in the fall for 30 trees \$2,445

Total investment: **\$12,195.00.**

Mr. Dennis clarified that the report detailed not only the Common's trees but also the trees down the center aisle on Main Street, on the Little Common and the County Parking Lot. The information is more than just the Common for the trimming and fertilization. There was a general discussion on previous and future maintenance of the trees in the downtown area. Mr. Dennis will keep the Commissioners updated. Chairman Connell asked if he could bring it up at the next BOS meeting. The Commissioners said yes.

There was a brief discussion on the financial aspect of the project by the Commissioners. Chairman Connell thanked Mr. and Mrs. Dennis for all their hard work on this project.

Mr. Richer stated he was in favor of everything in the report. It contained many things that are very important and needed for the care of the trees.

New Conservation Commission Initiatives-Barry Connell

Chairman Connell said he wanted people to see the Commission as a working group, one that is doing things for the Town. Working with the Public Works Department and Todd Cartier was a positive step and gave the Commission visibility. The report and management program for the Town trees (Common and Main Street) was also a positive step that shows that the Commission is doing things for the improvement of Newport. People need to know that this initiative is coming from the Conservation Commission. He feels that they haven't been mentioned by the BOS unless there is a legal problem.

Chairman Connell addressed the Commissioners and stated the Town is putting out a monthly newsletter. He would like to see a section used to inform people of things done by the Conservation Commission as well as educational and informative items from the Commission. The Commission needed volunteers, additional people. The newsletter was one way to let people know what they are doing. The Commissioners discussed items they might add, Mrs. Dennis volunteered to work with Ms. Donovan. Mr. John Lunn addressed Chairman Connell and stated the newsletter would be quarterly. It would be a great place for the Conservation Commission to participate. It will be sent hard copy to every resident and will probably be online as well. Chairman Connell thanked him and stated that maybe representatives of the Commission could go on NCTV and talk about the Town Common initiative.

ADMINISTRATION:

Mail

Chairman Connell stated he would like to table the item to the May 2021 meeting. ***The Commissioners agreed.***

Mr. Walker-Tags and Stakes

Ms. Donovan informed the Commissioners she had been in touch with Mr. Steve Walker, Conservation Stewardship Specialist; Office of Energy and Planning (OEP). She will be getting new tags for the Conservation properties. She did not have any stakes coming. In discussion, Mr. Dennis said that years ago the Public Works Department (Highway) was supposed to split a bundle with the Conservation Commission. He will talk to Mr. Cartier about them this week.

Monitoring Reports

There was a general discussion on the monitoring of Newport's four Conservation Easements. Ms. Donovan was going with Mrs. Dennis to monitor some easements to gain an understanding of the process and the work that the Commissioners do. Chairman Connell stated he would like to attend one as well.

There was a discussion on the days that Chairman Connell would be able to go into the field to monitor an easement with Mrs. Dennis. Ms. Donovan offered to assist with electronic filing of reports to the state.

The following monitoring responsibilities had been assigned on October 28, 2020:

Barton Easement: Mr. Richer and Mr. Dennis

Johnson Easement: Mr. Richer and Mr. Dennis

Yeomans Easement: Mrs. Dennis and Mr. Dennis (Ms. Donovan)

Wells Easement: Mrs. Dennis and Mr. Dennis (Ms. Donovan)

Potential New Member(s)

Ms. Donovan informed the Commissioners of her search to acquire new members. The Commissioners and Ms. Donovan brainstormed as to the different groups in Town that might have potential members. She would plan on approaching the School Board. The Conservation Commissioners were in favor of her reaching out to any groups she was able to.

On a motion by Mr. Richer, seconded by Mr. Dennis; ***the Commission voted unanimously by roll call vote to adjourn at 7:18 p.m.***

Respectfully submitted,

Maura Stetson

Scribe

Approved: May XX, 2021