

Town of Newport, NH
Newport Conservation Commission
June 15, 2022 6:30 PM
Board of Selectmen's Room/Municipal Building
15 Sunapee Street/Newport, NH
Remote access:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85668203147?pwd=eFN4cE5sQnhIdjg2SzN4NmhhWFBrdz09>

MEMBERS PRESENT: Barry Connell, BOS Representative and Chairman; Donald Schagen, Vice Chairman; Guenter Hubert, Linda Dennis, and Ken Dennis, *via Zoom*: Lawrence Schissel

MEMBERS ABSENT: none

STAFF PRESENT: Christina Donovan, Zoning and Planning Administrator

VIDEOGRAPHER: Alex Zander, NCTV

CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Dennis called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Chairman Dennis then took a roll call of the Commissioners in attendance.

AGENDA REVIEW: ADD: Election of new Chair and Vice Chair (K. Dennis)

Chairman Dennis stated elections have been held in July (per Rules of Procedure). In discussion, it was stated that this election could be a one-time vote, or the Commissioners could amend the Rules of Procedure to coincide with the June Conservation Commission meeting. Mr. Connell, on a Point of Order, asked if the Commission voted on the minutes. He was told yes; it was the next item on the agenda. Mrs. Dennis addressed the Chair and asked that he explain his reason for voting in June (he will be off the Commission). Mr. Connell made a motion *that the Board vote to hold election of new officers at the June 15, 2022 Conservation Commission meeting*. Chairman Dennis explained he will not be able to attend meetings regularly. He would like to sit as an alternate when he is able to attend. Chairman Dennis called for a second to the motion. It was seconded by Mrs. Dennis. Dr. Schissel made an amendment that the Rules of Procedure reflect the change in month for future elections. There was a discussion on Roberts Rules of Order versus Town Board voting between Dr. Schissel and Mr. Connell. Mr. Connell stated it could be for just the one year. Mr. Schagen asked if there was a member that was interested in being Chairman; he was not. Mr. Connell stated he has been Chairman before and was willing to take it over again. Dr. Schissel made an amendment to the motion. It then read: *that the Commission vote for Chairman and Vice Chairman at the June 15, 2022 Conservation Commission meeting*. There being a Commissioner attending the meeting via zoom, all votes were held by roll call vote. *The motion passed by roll call vote 7-0-0.*

BOARD ORGANIZATION: Chairman Ken Dennis asked for a nomination for the position of Chairman. Mrs. Dennis made a motion *to elect Mr. Barry Connell to the position of Chairman*. It was seconded by Mr. Hubert. There were no other nominations. Chairman Ken Dennis called for a roll call vote. *The motion passed by roll call 6-0-1 (Connell abstained).*

Chairman Connell took over the meeting.

Chairman Connell asked for a nomination for the position of Vice Chairman. Mr. Dennis made a motion *to elect Mr. Don Schagen to the position of Vice Chairman*. It was seconded by Chairman Connell. There were no other nominations. Chairman Connell called for a vote. *The motion passed by roll call 6-0-1 (Schagen abstained).*

MINUTES: May 18, 2022

May 18, 2022

On a motion by Mr. Dennis, seconded by Mr. Hubert; *the Commission approved the minutes of May 18, 2022 as presented. The motion passed by roll call vote 6-0-1 (Connell abstained).*

NEW BUSINESS:

Rules of Procedure-Review (for full presentation go to: www.nctv-nh.org).

Chairman Connell and the Commissioners reviewed each Article of the Rules of Procedure. The following changes were made:

ARTICLE VI Membership

B) Alternate Member

The Board of Selectmen may appoint alternate members to the Commission. Alternate members of the Commission **may** join the regular members in **all** meetings,

C) Attendance

When a member does not attend **three** consecutive meetings with **non**-notified absences, **the absences shall be reviewed.**

ARTICLE VIII Special Committees

The Commission members discussed that:

DES Wetlands Bureau Applications will be assigned to two Commission members to initially assess the application (field work).

Ms. Donovan was asked if the Conservation Commission reviewed applications from applicants going to the Planning Board. She told the Commissioners that the Commission was the review of the applications. After they have reviewed the applications and heard the case, the case goes to the Planning Board with the Conservation Commission's recommendations. She stated the Planning Board has been very upset with her if the Conservation Commission did not hear the case first.

The Wetlands Application Committee will be made on a case by case situation. The revised Article a) will read:

- a. DES Wetlands Bureau Applications The Commission, as a continuing responsibility, shall review all wetland applications submitted to NH DES by residents. Each application is assign to a Commission members **to** initially ~~assesses~~ the application for impact and performs a site inspection. **A quorum of the** Commission members, ~~including alternate members~~ are responsible to review and sign applications and/or to sign a request for an extension of review time.

Ms. Donovan will follow through with having the Commissioners sign the legal conservation documents in the future.

DES Wetlands Bureau Applications and Open Space both were regular responsibilities of the commission, not a special committee. Special Committee c) Could be Master Plan, not all members would have to sit on it.

ARTICLE IX Meetings and Hearings

A. Regular meetings

Regular meetings of the Commission shall be held on the third **Wednesday** of each month at 6:30 PM unless otherwise posted. An additional meeting, if the workload warrants, may be called **at the discretion of the Commission.** The Chair reserves the right to call, cancel or postpone any meeting. At least one meeting should be held each month.

D. Quorum for all meetings

The Commission will conduct and transact business only when a quorum is present. A quorum shall be at least a majority (51%) of the total active voting members.

G. Financial Reports

Dr. Schissel, for point of discussion, stated he understood that there hasn't been a treasurer's report delivered to the meeting. He stated they needed to hold the Town to providing what it says in the Rules of Procedure, "...treasurer's report provided by the Town..." (He asked if there should be a designated treasurer).... "of Newport Finance Director's office on a quarterly basis and delivered to the Chair on the following months: A,B, C, D."

In discussion, Dr. Schissel stated he understood that the quarterly report has not been given. The Commissioners agreed with him. Mr. Connell thanked Dr. Schissel for bringing it up. He will ask about it at the Monday, June 20, 2022 BOS meeting. He will ask the Finance Director to prepare a report and submit it to him (Connell). Chairman Connell will bring it to the July 20, 2022 Conservation Commission meeting. After discussion on the Financial Reports, the Commission discussed membership dues to the state organization.

Dr. Schissel asked if the Commissioners had gotten the email from Moose Ecological concerning the NRI. Some hadn't.

Dr. Schissel left the meeting at 7:27 p.m.

Mrs. Dennis stated that in May the Commission had discussed getting a budget through the Selectboard. It had been too late for the 2022-2023 fiscal year. The Commission wanted to start the process early for the 2023-2024 fiscal year. Chairman Connell asked what the Commissioners wanted to see as a line item. There was a discussion on Commissioners thoughts, how other towns support their Commissions, etc. Ms. Donovan will look into different ways area towns support their commissions. Chairman Connell requested the Commissioners compile the information and he would bring it to the Selectboard. Commission funds are expressly designated for purchase of conservation properties or easements. Newport is using it for an (Commission) operating budget. Chairman Connell said he will present its use to the Selectboard. There was a discussion on land that the Commission could acquire if it had funds. Chairman Connell stated the Commission needed to establish a priority list to accomplish. The commissioners will establish it at the July 20, 2022 meeting. Chairman Connell directed Ms. Donovan to put Priority List on the July 20, 2022 agenda. The Commission stated that the Town is spending a lot of money cutting down and planting trees on the Common. The Commissioners want to see that the trees continue to get the care they need (fertilizing and pruning). If the money was not in the Town funds to continue the work, the Commission could be the backup (a line item from the Town would assure they had the money to spend).

Conservation Commission Sections of Master Plan

Ms. Donovan addressed Chairman Connell and explained she has been taking out all the Conservation related pages from the Master Plan for the Planning Board. 29 pages of the first 45 pages deal with Conservation. Ms. Donovan requested they defer addressing the Master Plan because the Commissioners did not have the complete set of pages to review.

ADMINISTRATION:

NH Towns: Conservation Commission Budgets

Discussed above.

Natural Resources Inventory NRI

Chairman Connell said he believed the NRI was an important thing to do. He informed the members they would be asked a couple of questions by the BOS:

- 1) How much will it cost (the Town)?

- 2) What will we (the Town) get out of it (NRI)?
- 3) Why do we need to do this?

Chairman Connell said the Commission needed to be ready to explain the reasons. He did not want it to be shoved aside because of money. Mr. Schagen stated that the Commission had had Mr. Jeff Littleton come to give them a presentation. Mr. Littleton had done the NRI for the City of Claremont. He had listed good reasons for developing an NRI. The budget for a NRI could run from \$8,000 up to \$72,000; depending on how extensive the Town wants and what they are looking for. In an email he had stated a: \$6-8,000 a very basic one
\$10-12,000 more dynamic

The Town could start with the most basic and build on it (do in Phases). Money budgeted to the Commission could go towards upgrades to the NRI.

Chairman Connell recommended explaining what an NRI was and how it will benefit the Town. He recommended asking for \$8,000 for a basic NRI and state that the Commission would add on to it. He said that Sunapee is spending \$12,000 on their NRI. They are having the Upper Valley (UVLSRPC) do it. Ms. Donovan stated she believed Sunapee has an NRI and is upgrading theirs. There was a discussion on the information Newport would get from an \$8,000 NRI. It was agreed that the NRI would be bid out. Mrs. Dennis said that a comprehensive approach to conservation is the goal of a NRI. She questioned whether people in the community will want conservation planning. There was a detailed discussion on conservation in Newport.

Ms. Donovan said that the UVLSRPC gave an estimate to help Newport redo their Master Plan. The quote was \$38,000; \$70/hr. The Planning Board decided not to use them at all.

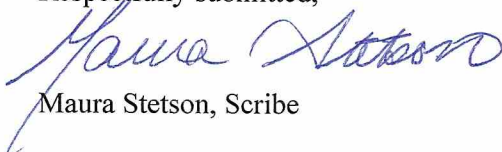
Mr. Schagen read aloud RSA 36-A for Conservation Commissions. He read that one item they (Commission) are responsible for is to keep a Natural Resource Index of their city or town. An established NRI affects every town land use board (Planning and Zoning) in making their decisions. Mr. Connell said he would bring up the NRI on June 20, 2022. He will give an overview and say it is through the Conservation Commission but will have a widespread effect on the Town. He will have much more information to follow. Money will not be discussed. Ms. Donovan stated that every town needed specific building blocks:

- 1 CIP
- 2 Hazard Mitigation Plan
- 3 Master Plan
- 4 NRI
- 5 Rules of Procedures for Planning and Zoning Boards

Ms. Donovan said the NRI is one building block that Newport pretends is not needed. She has a \$2,000 line item for consulting fees. She wanted to give what is left in the line item to the Conservation Commission to go toward an NRI. Ms. Donovan was asked to consult with Finance Director Brown about having excess money from her line item for consulting fees be dedicated to the Conservation Commission's fund for an NRI at the end of the fiscal year. If the answer was no, Mr. Connell will bring it up. Ms. Donovan will work on the transaction of the \$2,000.

On a motion by Mr. Dennis, seconded by Mr. Schagen; *the Commissioners voted unanimously to adjourn at 8:33 p.m.*

Respectfully submitted,



Maura Stetson, Scribe

Approved: July 20, 2022