

Town of Newport, NH
Newport Conservation Commission
May 18, 2022 6:30 PM
Board of Selectmen's Room/Municipal Building
15 Sunapee Street/Newport, NH

MEMBERS PRESENT: Donald Schagen, Guenter Hubert, Lawrence Schissel, Linda Dennis, Vice Chairman,

MEMBERS ABSENT: Ken Dennis, Chairman; Barry Connell, BOS Representative

STAFF PRESENT: Christina Donovan, Zoning and Planning Administrator

VIDEOGRAPHER: Alex Zander and John Lunn, NCTV

CALL TO ORDER:

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

AGENDA REVIEW: Acting Chairman Schagen addressed the Commissioners and Ms. Donovan and asked if they had any additions, corrections or deletions they would like to make to the agenda. The agenda was accepted as presented.

MINUTES: March 16, 2022; April 20, 2022

March 16, 2022

On a motion by Mr. Hubert, seconded by Mrs. Dennis; *the Commission approved the minutes of March 16, 2022 as presented. The motion passed 3-0-1 (Schissel abstained).*

April 20, 2022

On a motion by Dr. Schissel, seconded by Mr. Hubert; *the Commission approved the minutes of April 20, 2022 as presented. The motion passed 3-0-1 (Dennis abstained).*

NEW BUSINESS:

Natural Resources Index (NRI)

Guest Speaker on April 20, 2022 was Jeff Littleton-Moosewood Ecological (for full presentation go to: www.nctv-nh.org).

Acting Chairman Schagen stated he was in favor of the Town developing a Natural Resources Index (also known as Inventory). He asked for a discussion on whether the Conservation Commission should move forward; if so how. He polled the members:

- ❖ Acting Chairman Schagen stated the RSA that governs the Conservation Commission requires a NRI (we currently are not in compliance). The Master Plan relies heavily on the Conservation Commission's decisions and input. The Zoning Board could make conditions to their approvals with information from the proposed NRI
- ❖ Mr. Hubert was in favor of developing a NRI. It is good for the Town as a whole, for the BOS and to know what the natural resources are and if there are any substandard areas in Newport that need improvement/protection.
- ❖ Dr. Schissel stated a NRI would identify areas that need to be protected that are not protected now.
- ❖ Mrs. Dennis stated she believed it was a Town budget item. The Conservation Commission should not pay for any of it.

Ms. Donovan stressed the importance of developing a NRI. She believed the Town could set aside money to develop a NRI for the Town of Newport. The 2012 Master Plan is being redone in 2022. The Conservation Commission and a NRI are noted in the Master Plan so much that she has been asked to remove the conservation sections because they are out of the purview of the Planning Board to change.

Now would be a great time to develop a NRI to be incorporated into the 2022 Master Plan. When asked, Ms. Donovan stated she believed the Planning Board would back anyone going to the BOS requesting money for a NRI. In discussion it was stated the estimated time expected to complete redoing the Master Plan is 6-12 months.

Acting Chairman Schagen explained to new commissioner Dr. Schissel that the Commission had planned to request \$2500 from the Town as a budget line item. It had not been put forward (the Town Manager and BOS Representative had not backed it). There was a general discussion on the Master Plan, costs by UVLSRPC consultants, possible grant money, TOPAZ (Planning and Zoning) budget money, work done by different volunteer board members and the responsibility of the Town to put together (financially) the Master Plan. The Commissioners and Ms. Donovan then had a lengthy discussion on reinstating a budget line item for the Conservation Commission as well as using an Unanticipated Fund Request to the BOS for the NRI.

Dr. Schissel gave his thoughts on the procedure necessary. Dr. Schissel then made a motion *that the Conservation Commission move forward on having a Natural Resource Inventory (NRI) prepared by a professional*. It was seconded by Mr. Hubert. *The motion passed 3-0-1 (Dennis abstained)*.

Mrs. Dennis asked if the Commission would get three consults estimates. Acting Chairman Schagen explained that Dr. Schissel was trying to secure the idea that the Conservation Commission would want to pursue a NRI.

Dr. Schissel then made a motion *to make a request to the Selectboard for monies up to \$12,000 for the cost of developing a NRI*. It was seconded by Mr. Hubert. In discussion Dr. Schissel stated the request was up to/not to exceed \$12,000. It was something to start with. He asked the Commissioners if they were in agreement with the monetary amount. There was a discussion concerning the type of NRI that could be made with the specified \$12,000. The Commissioners discussed contacting consultants and having a special NRI meeting. Ms. Donovan offered to contact surrounding town Conservation Commissions, their NRI and the cost. She would bring the information to the Commission. Acting Chairman Schagen also suggested the NH Association of Conservation Commission website for information. Dr. Schissel withdrew his motion pending additional information. Mr. Hubert withdrew his second.

Acting Chairman Schagen asked if the Commissioners wanted a special meeting to invite Mr. Littleton to answer questions. An email query was discussed. Dr. Schissel agreed to contact Mr. Littleton with the Commissions' questions. Dr. Schissel will send information to the Commissioners when he receives it.

There was a lengthy discussion concerning the Master Plan and the need of the Conservation Commission to review and revamp the conservation sections for the 2022 Master Plan. The Planning Board had had a presentation by the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission (UVLSRPC). Acting Chairman Schagen asked if the Conservation Commission should also have a presentation by the UVLSRPC. Ms. Donovan stated if the Conservation Commission met with a representative from UVLSRPC the bill would go to her office and her budget; the Commission would not be charged.

Acting Chairman Schagen recapped their discussion:

- Dr. Schissel will contact Mr. Littleton for information on a NRI (that will help the Commission develop a budget).
- The Commissioners will begin to review the conservation sections of the Master Plan.
- The consensus of the Commission is to hold off on any guest speaker from UVLSRPC.

Conservation Commission owned land

Town tax maps denoted as Conservation land were reviewed and the properties and the Town Ordinance Conservation lands discussed. Mrs. Dennis stated that the land monitored was LCIP (Land Conservation Investment Program) land: Wells, Barton, Yeomans and Johnson. Ms. Donovan informed the Commissioners that she has access to Town legal counsel for her Boards. That would include the

Conservation Commission. If in the future they want to ask specific questions, she will make one available to the members.

Gilman Pond-oversight

Ms. Donovan said she believed there is more forestry work being done at Gilman Pond. The Conservation Commission should be given an update of it as well as the invasive species eradication program they are conducting. Ms. Donovan was told that the Conservation Commission was reimbursed for the Gilman Pond portion of the Forestry Management Program they paid for. The Commissioners had a general discussion on the Gilman Pond easement.

Easement monitoring

Acting Chairman Schagen and Dr. Schissel have begun easement monitoring. They began with the Wells easement. The Commissioners discussed all the LCIP easements. Acting Chairman Schagen believed a surveyor needed to be hired to define some boundary lines.

Acting Chairman Schagen was informed of the invitation by Mr. Gerry Hagebusch for the Commission to visit and walk through the Yeomans easement. He will be given contact information for Mr. Hagebusch.

Rules of Procedure


Ms. Donovan and Commissioners discussed the Rules of Procedure (ROP). The agenda item has been carried over for months waiting to be acted on. The Commissioners will review the ROP before the next meeting; if there are no changes to be made, they will sign and date (a signature page will be added to the Rules of Procedure) a copy for the Conservation Commission Town file. They will note 'amended on June xx 2022'. Copies will also be given to each Commissioner for their personal files. On a motion by Dr. Schissel, seconded by Mr. Hubert; ***the Commission tabled the Rules of Procedure action item to the June 15, 2022 meeting.*** There was a discussion on the Rules of Procedures. ***The motion passed 4-0-0.***

Ms. Donovan and Acting Chairman Schagen discussed the use of the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests (for the Wells and Yeomans easements) and the Office of Energy and Planning (OEP) that required annual reports on all four easements.

ADMINISTRATION: none

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

Respectfully submitted,



Maura Stetson, Scribe

Approved: June 15, 2022

The next meeting of the Conservation Commission will be held on June 15, 2022 at 6:30 pm in the Board of Selectman Room.

See page four (4).

ACTION ITEMS FOR JUNE 15, 2022:

- 1) approve and sign the Rules of Procedure
- 2) update on forestry work (cutting and invasive species) at Gilman Pond
- 3) NRI work by Commissioners continued:
 - i) Price of NRI
 - ii) Major focuses for Newport NRI
 - iii) Professional consultant to perform NRI
 - iv) Needs in Newport Master Plan concerning NRI
 - v) Dr. Schissel: report for the Commission on or before June 15, 2022.
- 4) Ms. Donovan: bring copies of the Forest Management Agreement and four deeds
- 5) Write up proposals to the BOS for:
 - a) Unanticipated Fund Request (NRI)
 - b) Budget Line item request (CC)-have Christina keep in her file to include with her next budget