

CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Boscawen Municipal Complex
March 15, 2022
Minutes

Present: Alan Hardy, Chair, Henry Carrier; Jeff Abbe, Aurel Mihai, Lyman Cousens

Absent: Norman LaPierre, Mark Kaplan and Matt Burdick

Staff Present: Kearsten O'Brien, Deputy Planning and Community Development Director,

Regular Business:

- Open by Chair @ 7:02 pm
- Roll Call by Chair
- Accountant's Report – The Commission reviewed the financial reports given them for the Forest Fund, the Conservation Fund, and the Town Line Item Budget. Cousens asked if they were expecting some revenue. O'Brien noted that at Thursday night's Select Board meeting they will be voting on \$6,300 coming their way from Land Use Change Tax. There is other new development in town that they will also receive Land Use Change Tax from. Two new gravel pits are looking to expand their site plans so they will receive Land Use Change Tax for that. There are also a few new developments. Possibly 4-5 new Land Use change Tax revenues for this year. Cousens was wondering when they could make another investment. A **motion** to approve the financial as submitted was made by Cousens, seconded by and passed by a unanimous vote.
- Review Minutes of 2.15.22 – A **motion** to approve the Minutes as submitted was made by Cousens. Cousens also wanted it noted that the two alternates are voting members and should be voting. Chairman Hardy concurred. Abbe seconded the motion. Motion passed by a unanimous vote.

Chair Hardy chose to take the agenda out of order.

New Business:

- Excavation Permit Review Map 49 Lot 6 Sub-lot 2 – Tim Bernier spoke regarding Excavation Permit Review Map 49 Lot 6 Sub-lot 2. This is the GMI pit. He gave an overview of the map. He showed where the previously approved pit was and where the active pit is located. They are taking the permitted purple area out and the blue area is the new area they are looking into. He explained the topography of the land. McKerley's about the GMI property. GMI didn't think that being so close to the neighbors was fair to them. They left a tree line buffer. They are looking for approval to use an area that wasn't previously permitted. This is a minor expansion of the previous pit. Abbe asked about the hole they currently are working in and what is the extent of the pit. The paperwork shows reclamation work with 30-40 foot banks. Where is that area? Bernier explained. Abbe asked what the limits of excavation area. Bernier showed on the map. Bernier showed where the neighbor's house was located. Hardy asked if the Commission had any concerns with the presentation. None noted. A **motion** to recommend approval to the Planning Board was made by Carrier, seconded by Abbe and passed by a unanimous vote.
- Moose Plate & Using the Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credit – O'Brien will be attending a course called Moose Plates 101 on April 1st. She wanted to see if there was any grants that the Conservation Commission could possibly apply for that might benefit the Town Forest

or Walker Pond. If anyone else wants to attend, let her know. It's virtual and free.

- Conservation Rules and Procedure – O'Brien wanted to bring her concerns forward as they just updated the rules and procedures. She is concerned that the Conservation Commission is the only board or committee that the ex-officio is a non-voting member. This is of concern because if the commission or board were ever to get low on members they may not be able to obtain a quorum. If that were to happen the ex-officio could fill it. Hardy said if they do not have enough members or alternates for a meeting date they would have to move the meeting to a time when they are available. O'Brien also said that Gilmore was previously signing the checks, which then transferred over to Hardy, as the new chair. If Hardy was unavailable they do not have a back up to sign those checks as well. She thought perhaps the Vice Chair could be available and approved to do so if Hardy was unavailable. That person would have to get squared away with the finance department. Hardy asked if they would have to make an amendment to say Chair and in the absence Vice Chair. Not two signatures. O'Brien said she is not proposing that 2 people need to sign, just that if the Chair is not available the Vice Chair can sign. Hardy said they should amend it and send it out and approve it at the next meeting.

Old Business:

- Town Forest Discussion Items - BTF Final Inventory Report and Management Plan-Niebling. Niebling asked if they had seen the management plan. Niebling wanted to discuss the management recommendations. It has been 5 years since they have done it. Page 9 through Page 13 outlines it. He gives a macro view of what they are hoping to achieve over many decades. Page 12 takes the nearest term recommended practices and outlines them in chronological order. This is about the Weir Road Town Forest. By way of reminder, in the fall of 2017 they conducted a timber harvest in stand 2 of the town forest and only on the portion on the east side of the old land fill and the main access road in. That was group selection, strip cuts and individual selection. They should go in there with a brush saw to knock back hard wood or it will crowd the pine. In 2019 they did patch cuts on Dagody Hill. Those are starting to regenerate to hardwood. That was mostly oak and soft maple. The next activity should be in the mostly hemlock stand – the LeBlanc lot. The markets aren't there right now to have this stand harvested. He reviewed the area they wanted to keep for an ecological reserve. Stand 6 & 7– single tree and group selection is on the west side of Weir Road heading towards Concord. You cannot access anything on the west side of Weir road without using the truck road they built. He's not sure what their thoughts are on accessing it there. That's a significant decision as to whether they want to do any management in that portion of the Town Forest. He'd like to bring to their attention on the far western side, he did not inventory that because there was no way to access that portion of the lot, which was the case up until a year ago until Horizon Holdings, an abutter, made an access road and constructed a 40 acre field. It's something to see. They cut it, stumped it, graded it and seeded it. Its sandy ground and flat. He found a very old stand of pine that is in serious decline, meaning that there's a lot of standing dead pine. It's a densely stocked stand and no evidence of harvesting. But to harvest they would have to have access permission from the abutter. There is a mix of oak, pine, hemlock. It needs to be regenerated. He suggests that when the weather is nice, that they take a walk out there. He wouldn't do any harvesting until they had a good cone year. Cousens asked why they had problems with cones. Niebling said pine takes a lot of energy to produce seeds. Pine puts out a crop every 2-4 years. Cousens asked if it was perhaps climate change. Niebling said it could be. If the tree gets stressed it predisposes it to insects, etc. Niebling asked if the Commission would like to reach out to the abutter or if they would like to work with him or reach out to him themselves. Abbe proposes that Niebling has the report with him and continue the conversation with the abutter. Niebling thought they could build a

landing on their side of the property. They would only need to use the road and negotiate a right of way and restoration of the road to the preexisting condition and possibly some payment for use. The owner is John Coughman who lives in New Jersey. Niebling noted the abutting property owners and where their parcel was located near this piece. He thought that they could designate it as a permanent natural area. There are beautiful old trees. There is also neat old thick hemlock stands on the Helmsworth Lot and the Armstrong Lot that they might to leave alone. It would be difficult to get to. He thought before the leaves and black flies come out they could take a walk out there this year. Abbe asked when he would like to speak with Mr. Coughman. Niebling said the next month or two. Hardy asked if he would speak with John or Eric. Niebling thought he'd like to speak to the land owner, not the care taker of the property. Hardy thought perhaps speaking with Eric would be beneficial. He'd like someone on the commission to join him. Hardy feels comfortable letting Niebling take the lead with discussions. He is willing to go along if Niebling would like. He suggested they look at the way the Army Corp of Engineers did the management in the flood control that you entry through Salisbury/Webster that goes out to the Blackwater Dam. It's a good idea to revisit the management plan from time to time. Niebling will get ahold of the abutter and let the Commission know how it went.

Hardy spoke with Dean Hollins about whether they should extend the emergency lane declaration that the Board did on Chadwick Hill and take it out to the second boat launch which will give them the ability to care with that strip. Abbe – from the pump house out? Hardy said yes, but it's sketchy for the town to manage Class IV. They do have a reason to go as far as the boat launch. But going past that there doesn't seem to be any reason to be in there. To maintain it without the emergency road declaration would not be good. O'Brien reported that the Walker Pond Facebook page has 128 members. Niebling felt it was a good thing, but they need to manage it thoughtfully. Hardy will talk with Hollins about approaching the Select Board about extending that emergency lane declaration. Niebling felt that the town, by its acquisition, is creating more use of the roadway. Abbe didn't think it would take 8-10 truckloads of gravel to fix. Niebling thought it would need drainage as well. O'Brien asked if they would like to get quotes for demo as she wasn't sure if Dean would be doing that himself. Cousens thought they should meet down at the pump house and invite Dean Hollins and Mr. Fisher. O'Brien said Mr. Sanborn won't be here until May. Hardy thought May would be good. They can do the May meeting at the Walker Pond. She'd like to invite Chief Kenney as well so he can give them some input on the dry hydrant. Abbe – the boat launch to Mr. Fisher's barn is in pretty good shape. People seem to use that for a turn around. Hardy thought Dean Hollins likes to do hammer heads, but he thinks it may be too wet. Abbe thought they could do a roundabout there. Hardy thought they could do some signs up there asking people to respect the private property. May meeting will be held at Walker Pond.

- Walker Pond Potential Survey Questions – O'Brien reported that she made some changes to the survey. She reviewed all that she had done. Row Boats allowed. 6 hp limit. Abbe said the 6 hp limit came from what Niebling reported to him as a State Statute. Hardy would like to know the Statute that it is referring to. Carrier said a Great Pond of over 10 acres or more, might be the area. Hardy would like the RSA number for it. Cousens suggested Fish and Game as they might know. Hardy thought having the 6 hp limit was a good thing. O'Brien said he changed up the survey to have the parking separate so they can get a true answer on who people feel the parking is over there. And then the cleanliness of the overall pond itself but changing it to the land surrounding. She followed up with whether they would like to see a designated parking area. She also put a box for people to submit any other ideas. She'd like a motion to move forward so she can post it to the

Facebook page. A **motion** to allow O'Brien to post the survey to the Facebook page and on the town website was made by Carrier, seconded by Mihai and passed by a unanimous vote.

Cousens asked if they needed another motion to have Mihai made a regular member and Carrier to be an alternate member. A **motion** to make Mihai a regular member and Carrier an alternate member was made by Cousens, seconded by ?? and passed by a unanimous vote.

A **motion** to adjourn at 8:25 pm was made by Cousens, seconded by XXX, and passed by a unanimous vote.

Next Meeting:

- April 19, 2022

*Respectfully submitted,
Rose Fife, Recording Secretary*