

CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Boscawen Municipal Complex

June 21, 2022
Minutes

Present: Alan Hardy, Chair, Henry Carrier; Jeff Abbe, Norm LaPierre, Aurel Mihai, and Betsey McNaughten

Absent: Lyman Cousens, Mark Kaplan and Matt Burdick

Guests: Charlie Niebling

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

- Open by Chair at 7:02 pm.
- Roll call done by O'Brien.
- Accountant's Report 05.17.22 & 06.21.22: A motion to approve the Accountant's Report as presented was made by LaPierre, seconded by Abbe and passed by a unanimous vote.
- Review Minutes 04.19.22 & 05.17.22: Several misspelled names were in the April and May Minutes. Betsey McNaughten is the correct spelling of her name. LCIP property field visit, the first name is wrong. April Minutes, her name is wrong there as well. It is correct in the May Minutes. O'Brien noted that on line 103 of the April 19, 2022 Minutes Betsy Millard's name is spelled incorrectly. The correct spelling is Millard. Hardy noted that on line 136 Monroe should be Munro. Niebling noted that Coffman should be Kaufmann. Hardy noted that Eric should be with a 'k'. All spellings should be correct. A **motion** to approve the Minutes as amended was made by Mihai, seconded by LaPierre and passed by a unanimous vote.

Hardy asked if anyone was aware of Minor Dredge and Fill topic. Normally they see an application. He asked Niebling if he was aware of anything regarding a Dredge and Fill. They will pass over that one when they get to it.

Old Business

- Town Forest Discussion Items – Abbe gave an overview. Abbe was contacted by Tim Fleury, County Extension Forester. They are having an invasives workshops at NH Forests and they will do an afternoon session at Weir Town Forest showcasing the Weir Farmstead. He thought they would like to be part of that. There may be up to 30 people. They will arrive at the Town Forest around 1:30 on August 19th. If there was any opposition or thoughts on that, he'd like to hear. He's hoping they will have good representation from the Conservation Commission. O'Brien was concerned about overflow parking. Abbe said they will open the gate and allow parking for the overflow. Hardy noted that in order for their insurance to kick in, they have to say it is an event that the town authorizes. He feels this would be good PR for the Town Forest. A **motion** to support the event and allowing the use of the facility was made by Abbe, seconded by LaPierre and passed by a unanimous vote. O'Brien reaffirmed it would be on August 19th from 1 to 3:30 pm.

Abbe also wanted to schedule mowing with John Fife soon. Then they will do another mowing in the Fall including the 5-acre field. They would like to have it done before the August 19th date. He reported the ticks are unbelievable. He waters the chestnut trees once a week. The gypsy moths are in the Weir Town Forest as well in the area of the chestnut trees. The white pines are

almost bare. Niebling spoke regarding the gypsy moths. Abbe reported that the Boscawen Village Town Forest signs are installed except a few of the Private Property signs. The QR code seems to be working well. The visits are down in numbers, but the tick numbers are way up.

Abbe asked if copies of their walk of the Jones and Gilmore lots were sent to the owners. O'Brien wasn't sure. Abbe wanted the land owners to be notified and asked if they forward a copy to Tom Gilmore and Mrs. Jones.

Abbe noticed in the April Minutes, he was given permission to get a couple of Carry In/Carry Out sign for Walker Pond and both Town Forests. He'd like to stick to the same system as they have had with routed signs. Hardy would like to keep that consistent look. Abbe will order 3 of those signs. Mihai asked if they would like to do more than one in the Walker Pond area. Order 4 total and put one at the pump house. Hardy agreed. He believes a kiosk will be placed at Walker Pond. He thinks they may want to put out some game type cameras there. Abbe mentioned that Mihai, Niebling and himself walked on May 14th to the back side of the Barnard lot. Niebling spoke about future logging. With a good cone crop in the Fall of 2023, that would be the time to do some logging. They found the northwest corner of the Barnard lot. They walked the north boundary of the Barnard Lot and found all the blazing. He recommends they all walk the Barnard lot as it is extremely wild and quiet. A lot of wildlife in the marsh area. Mihai asked what was the next step regarding harvesting the wood. Niebling answered that they would want to revisit the temporary right of way with the abutting land owner who has verbally agreed to temporary access and would like to codify that in writing. In the fall maybe they go out and mark the sale and tally the sale so they know the volume, the value and quality of timber that has been marked. If it is over \$25,000 gross revenue they should probably bid it as it is public property being sold to a private entity. If it is less than that he could recommend some contractor's that he has worked with and feel comfortable with that are local and they can decide who to hire. Then it is a matter of setting up the sale and determining the time of year to do it. That's a year and a half away. Mid to late Fall 2023. He thinks they should review management plans at least every other year as things change over time. He noted that there is no pine pulp market in Central NH and some are still chipping if there is still a market for the chips. He says it's not a bad thing to leave slash or tops in the woods as it ads nutrients to the site. A lot of the nutrients are in the trees, not in the soil. Hardy asked Niebling if they should move towards an understanding between them and the abutter as they are looking for each other's help. Niebling thought an access agreement in writing sooner than later would be beneficial. Hardy explained that they couldn't do a deeded right of way once the property is in Conservation's hands. Commission and guests discussed the crossing of lots between Conservation and privately owned property.

Discussion regarding gravel pits in town by O'Brien and Hardy. Abbe stated he has been to the Pointowski pit across from the chicken farm. It is similar to the product coming out of McKerley's; round rock, sand, construction material. LaPierre asked how long it had been since they used the pit near Salisbury. O'Brien said in 2021 they didn't file an intent to excavate, and they didn't have one 2020. She said that according to drone footage it has pretty much reclaimed itself. The energy committee had a potential solar farm for that location, but then it faded out. She hasn't heard anything else. LaPierre discussed past responsibilities of the Conservation Commission regarding gravel pits. Hardy said they are now utilizing engineers to do reports on a regular basis. If they see something that they think Conservation should be interested in, they will let us know.

Abbe wanted to thank Aurel Mihai and Mabel Niebling for the blazing of the trails in the Town Forest.

O'Brien let the Commission know that on July 22nd the Parks and Recreation committee will be out doing a walk. She didn't know if anyone wanted to do one at the new town forest. They are looking for more field trip ideas. Abbe said he planted 4 hills of pumpkins at the community garden for the kids. O'Brien said they are trying to get the Parks and Recreation kids more involved in the town.

Abbe reports that the chestnut trees are doing well in the town forest.

He will get the carry in/carry out signs made.

- Walker Pond – Hardy is working with counsel so they can get the dam purchased and the challenge is that they have no legal description. It shows on surveys, but it's a picture. When they go to purchase it for \$1.00 they have to come up with a description. He will go out with Dean Hollins. He hasn't been out from the Webster side. Maybe they can come up with a description. They did the additional step to allow Conservation to own property in another town and that's been approved by town meeting. McNaughten asked if they owned the land. Hardy said yes. Her knowledge with deeds with Fish and Game is that they talk about structures, not meets and bounds. Hardy stated that all they have is a boundary plan when they purchased the property. McNaughten went to the Dam Bureau and looked through the file for the dam and she has historical information. She passed around information/pictures from 1934 and she didn't know if they would like to keep it in the file for Walker Pond. O'Brien will scan it and send it out to everyone.

- Meeting Times/Employees on Conservation Commission – O'Brien discussed. A lot of committees and commissions are switching to an earlier time. AGCom just switched from 7 to 6:30 pm. She didn't know if they wanted to do that. Abbe liked 7 pm so didn't LaPierre. McNaughten said 6:30 pm. Hardy said that if staff members were tied to a meeting, the later they start, you end up staying at work too many times. That was one of the other reasons to look at it. O'Brien said they could discuss this next week. Hardy asked her to send out an email to those that aren't here and get some feedback. O'Brien also asked the commission how they felt about town employees being a volunteer on the commission. There is no stipulation that says a town employee cannot be on a board unless it's controversial. Would they allow an employee to be on the commission if they were a town citizen? Abbe doesn't care one way or another. Hardy asked if the scenario is an employee that is not a resident. O'Brien said no, they have to be a resident. Is anyone opposed? Hardy asked where the question came from. O'Brien said it was from a smaller subcommittee suggestion. Hardy thought if someone came forward and were interested, they would have a conversation with that person. O'Brien asked if it was in the by-laws/rules and procedures, would they have to remove it from the by laws before they allowed an employee to volunteer. Abbe asked what the disadvantage would be to have an employee on a committee. Hardy asked what she would report back? O'Brien she doesn't need to report it, she just wanted to be sure if she received an application she wouldn't have to deny it because they were a town employee.

New Business

- Permit by Notification Minor Dredge Fill – no action.
- Bench Sponsorship-O'Brien – Phelps and O'Brien went to the Board about having benches out front for beautification. Her thought was that they haven't done anything for Tom Gilmore's retirement from Chairmanship and she was wondering if they would like to sponsor a bench for out front in his honor. They are \$1,650, which includes engraving and concrete slab and installation. They can decide where to put the bench. Hardy asked where the funds would come from if they went forward. O'Brien wasn't sure. Commission fund possibly. Naughten asked what it was made from. O'Brien said granite. That was the cheapest bench. Swenson Granite

told them \$1,800 and then \$18.00 per letter for the engraving and that didn't include installation. Hardy asked where \$1,650 came from. O'Brien reported Laconia Monument. Abbe said these are a lot more vandal and theft proof. O'Brien said this price is per bench. They have had money donated. Their goal is 10 benches. This one would be the 5th one. Abbe thinks it would be great to do a tribute to Gilmore. O'Brien said they can put up to 50 characters. Hardy asked about possibly matching the donation totals. That way they would be getting outside participation. Hardy wanted to continue the discussion to next month.

- NH Association of Conservation Commissions -They had correspondence from them regarding donations. He doesn't know if they ever contributed to any organization like that. There is no history for them.

- Invasive Plant Work Shop – see above discussion.

- Capital Improvement Plan – Hardy discussed. To his knowledge Conservation, because of the unique structure that they have to raise money, haven't asked the town for anything other than their operating budget. Is there anything in a capital nature that they should be looking for? The CIP is a document of the Planning Board, which is required to have Impact Fees. It's a 6 year rolling document. Typically you see dump trucks, cruisers, fire trucks. O'Brien asked if they could put Walker Pond maintenance because you will have to take the pump house down. Mihai said that is a project. O'Brien thought that if they could put 'removal' in there and ask for \$5,000 a year until they get enough to remove it. She asked if that could be put into CIP. LaPierre doesn't believe they would use the CIP. He doesn't see the advantage to them. Hardy explained that the only thing he can see that they would be doing that it would possibly apply to would be the removal of the pump house. Mihai said that was an improvement to the town. Hardy explained that you cannot do maintenance with CIP funds. O'Brien asked if they would put money away to be able to do a new boat launch or removal of the building. Hardy said CIP doesn't turn into an expenditure. When the department head goes to pitch the CIP there is resistance automatically. He explained further. O'Brien said department heads meet July 19th and CIP is in August. Mihai said the feasibility study for the hydrant may be an item for CIP. Abbe said EJ Prescott could give you a quote on that. O'Brien asked if she got the quotes, would the commission be amenable to approve Alan to spend out the money for that specific purpose. Hardy explained that in the last few years they haven't asked for much of an operating budget. If it were an incremental expense or under \$5,000 they would ask for their operating budget to be amended. Hardy asked what she was asking for. O'Brien said she needed a form that the Chair needs to complete if they agree to do \$5,000 for the next 3 years which would cover the live tap study and removal of the building. Mihai asked if they asked for \$5,000 for 3 years and the quote comes back more than that, what happens. O'Brien explained. O'Brien said the Land Use Change Tax goes into Conservation Funds. Hardy said it is solely for Conservation. Niebling asked about the Town Forest Fund. O'Brien stated that the Forest Fund is down to \$19,000. Niebling noted that if they do a harvest, there would be funds available to do some work at the Walker Pond. He thought they could let this go for a year and develop a master plan. Perhaps in 2023 they could designate Walker Pond as a town forest. Niebling said there are grants available too. There are some through Habitat. O'Brien wanted to know if they didn't want to do CIP. She sees it as a savings opportunity. They do not have any Land Use Change Taxes coming in, they have not had many Intent to Cuts. She sees this as a savings tactic to build back up their funds. They have municipal buildings on CIP, they could put Pump House on there. Mihai said it would make them look greedy as they have funds in their accounts. Hardy noted that at the last town meeting, they approved a lot of things that had been put off for a long time. That bill doesn't come due until October. That's when they get to see what that spending looks like. He personally would be conservative in asking for Capital Funds. They do have some of their own funds. O'Brien stated that if they are going to designate

Walker Pond as Town Forest, they would need to decide soon. Hardy asked what the downside of doing that would be. Niebling thought that designation of Town Forest is more of a formality in his mind. Mihai asked what it would take to put it on the Warrant Article list to make Walker Pond a Town Forest. Hardy explained. It's a formality.

A **motion** to investigate designating the Walker Pond property as a Town Forest was made by Carrier, seconded by ??, and passed by a unanimous vote.

Non-Public: none.

A **motion** to adjourn was made by Abbe, seconded by LaPierre, passed by a unanimous vote.

• Next Meeting: • July 19, 2022

*Respectfully submitted,
Rose Fife, Recording Secretary*