

CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Boscawen Municipal Complex

September 15, 2020 @ 7:00 pm

Present: Thomas Gilmore, Chair, Jeffrey Abbe, Lyman Cousens, Mark Kaplan and Henry Carrier, Ed Cherian Jr.

Absent: Brendon Jackson, Norman LaPierre

Staff Present: Kellee Jo Easler, Planning & Community Development Director, and Rose Fife, Recording Secretary

Guest: none

Due to the Covid-19/Corona Virus crisis and in accordance with Governor Sununu's Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, the Board was authorized to meet electronically. The Town of Boscawen utilized the GoToMeeting platform.

Regular Business:

- Open by Chair – 7:03 pm

- Roll call • Review and Acceptance of the minutes of September 2020 meeting minutes. Abbe wanted an amendment to line 158. The word important should be importance. A **motion** to approve the Minutes with amendments as noted was made by Abbe and seconded by Carrier. Roll call vote: AYE: Abbe, Cousens, Kaplan, Cherian, Carrier, Gilmore. Motion passed by a unanimous vote.

- Accountant's Report – They have spent no money this past month. The Forest Fund has \$28,540.50. The Conservation Capital Budget has \$217,623.07 in it.

Gilmore reported that Jeremy Turner from Meadowsend Timberlands has purchased the property formerly owned by Mr. Olson on North Water Street. Forester Niebling reported that the new owners were interested in a Conservation easement. Meadowsend Timberlands has purchased the property and they do want to have it in Conservation Easement in about 5 years. The Commission will need to find money to purchase the easement. Cherian knows Jeremy Turner and his company. They are good land stewards and good land managers. They are familiar with working with Conservation Commissions. Kaplan asked if the money he is referring to is for the easement or for stewardship of the land. Gilmore explained that normally funds are required for stewardship of the land. But if the Conservation Commission does it, there is no charge. There is a payment fee to buy the conservation easement as that is of value.

Old Business:

- Natural Resource Update – Abbe and Kaplan reported. Kaplan attended the Planning Board meeting. The board seemed happy to receive the report. They agreed to have further conversations regarding the recommendations on October 6. Are there certain issues that the Commission would like to take a stand on or advocate for? Kaplan thinks some items need to show up on the town warrant if the Planning Board takes on their recommendations. Kaplan has a document of recommendations he

would like to screen share with the rest of the commission. Gilmore would like to postpone sharing that to the end of the meeting.

- Discussion Items Town Forest: Abbe reported. There have been some trees blown down across the trail. All of those have been removed in the 5 different locations. Weed whacking has been done around the foundations. They need John Fife to mow sometime in October around the homestead area and the 5 acre field. The old landfill hasn't grown much. He would like to get the new field mowed to the edges. New trail maps are posted on both the Concord and Boscawen sides in the kiosk. There is a logbook on the Concord side as well. Both mailboxes have new log books.

Naming the new town forest: There is a list of naming conventions. There are several good name suggestions. Gilmore thought Abbe should pick out 3 or 4 and send it around in an email and then introduce those 3 or 4 to the school. Abbe thought they would narrow it down to 5 names for the children to choose from.

Abbe texted Warren Colby today from GMI regarding the trail head and he hasn't heard back from him. He contacts him about every 2 to 3 weeks for an update.

The naming suggestions: After much discussion the following names were chosen:

1. Queen's Way Forest
2. Knowlton Hill Forest
3. Boscawen Village Forest

Easler and Cherian felt that they shouldn't give the Boscawen Elementary School children more than 3 names to choose from. Easler will check to see if those names should go to Kim Kenney or Barbara at the elementary school. She will report back to the commission after she checks into it.

Cousens felt that they should not just send them the names, but also an explanation as to what the significance of the name is. Abbe will come up with an explanation of the significance of those 3 names. He asked who it will get sent to. Cherian asked to have it sent to Easler who will coordinate with Boscawen Elementary School. Abbe will take care of that tomorrow.

Conservation Commission Easement monitoring. They can do limited monitoring this year. They need to interview the owners. Cousens was asked to set up a meeting with Mrs. Lola Jones. Gilmore would join him. He will get the paperwork together. He asked Kellee to find the red books and he will stop by to pick them up at the office. He has the forms in there. If anyone wants to interview Gilmore or he can interview himself regarding his easement. They have no official need to do anything with Alan Hardy's easement. It back borders Gilmore's easement.

Cherian asked Easler about the encroachments issues discussed last month. Easler said Web Stout will be doing the surveying this fall and Charlie Niebling will be doing that with him. It will be late fall before they get anything back from Web Stout.

Gilmore asked Kaplan to screen share his list of suggestions he has. Kaplan would like to get a sense as to what the Commission wants to advocate for.

First on his list was 'Protect the high value aquifers'. Gilmore is not sure what they can make for suggestions on this.

'Structure setbacks from wetlands'. Easler gave a short history of the wetland setbacks. A few years ago it was a 100 foot setbacks. They had a wetland scientist look at that and it was found that it was too large of a setback. The recommendation that the Planning Board set a 25 foot setback from wetlands. Kaplan asked how it would be handled if Central NH Planning comes back with a 75 foot setback. How do they make sense of that? Easler referred him to the Planning Board to see if they would like to change that number. Gilmore feels that 25 feet is enough of a setback from the wetlands. Kaplan said maybe he needs to touch base with Central NH Planning before the October meeting.

Kaplan thought that they may want to let the Planning Commission know what the Conservation Commission's next step would be as far as looking at land they want to target as conservation. Is this in the purview of the Planning Board? Cherian reported that it is not except if they want to encourage them to put something into the Master Plan to protect infiltration and aquifers. It can be highlighted in the Master Plan. Kaplan feels it should be part of their process.

'Riparian and Wetland Buffers in the Zoning Ordinance'. Gilmore feels this is covered by the second one on the list. Easler noted that they don't do much with wetlands as it's mostly managed by the State of NH. She's not familiar with this. Cherian asked if what they are getting at is that under the shoreline protection act it is a larger buffer but they have development and farming, etc. that are within that setback. Is he looking at targeting those lands? Kaplan thought they may, or should, look at that given what came up in the NRI. Given that the land along the Merrimack River at least is critical land. Are there enough buffers there? Cherian explained that there was a historic attempt to make that part of the Merrimack as a Wild and Scenic River. That didn't go well. It's worth noting that some kind of protection for the Merrimack has been considered and rejected in the past. Easler reported that it was rejected and met with angry property owners. Kaplan asked if that was due to it cutting into farmable land. Gilmore reported that the problem was that it would take 150 feet from the river and it would have gotten rid of prime farm land. The farmers are regulated and do a good job of keeping the proper material away from flowing into the river so that shouldn't be a problem. He is on the Upper Merrimack River and they do sampling all the time and the river has no issues with drainage. Cherian thought that it is good to have a discussion but be sure all are heard. Easler thought they should bring John Keagan in from AgCom as he was involved with that. Cherian thought that maybe an open house to allow people some input would be more welcoming. They may get a better response. Kaplan asked who was responsible for monitoring that. The state? Cherian reported that there is a local advisory committee and each town gets 1 or 2 members appointed by DES and they do a sampling yearly.

Abbe will be out of town Friday and will be back the following Friday.

A **motion** to adjourn was made by Cousens and seconded by Abbe. Roll call vote. AYE: Gilmore, Abbe, Cousens, Kaplan, Cherian and Carrier. Motion passed by a unanimous vote.

Next Meeting: • October 20, 2020.

*Respectfully submitted,
Rose Fife, Recording Secretary*

ACTIONS from August 18, 2020
Conservation Commission Meeting

Easler:

1. Check to see who at Boscawen Elementary School will get the names for the new Town Forest for the children to choose from.
2. Get Red Books for Gilmore.

Abbe:

1. Contact John Fife regarding Mowing at the Weir Road Forest.
2. Come up with explanations of the significance of the names being sent to the Elementary School for choosing of the name of the new Town Forest.

Cousens:

1. Set up meeting with Lola Jones.

Kaplan:

1. Touch base with Central NH Planning before the October 2020 meeting.