

DEERFIELD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes – December 14, 2015

Members Present: Erick Berglund, Deb Campelia, Wes Golomb, Kate Hartnett, Dave Linden
Absent: Serita Frey, Jim Deely
Visitors: Alan Perkins, Jeanne Menard

The meeting was **called to order at 7:10 PM** by Interim Chair, Kate Hartnett.

Dowst-Cate Logging: Alan Perkins presented a slide show to inform members of the effects of the recent timber harvest on the trails at Dowst-Cate Town Forest. Impacts included slash and rock carried onto the trails at points where the skidders crossed the trails and it was apparent that in other areas skidders had traveled along the trails themselves. He also surmised that blazed trees had apparently been removed. In comparison, Mr. Perkins pointed to a recent private logging operation at Great Brook which resulted in far less debris being left behind. Mr. Perkins suggested that the Forestry Committee be alerted to the situation and that better arrangements be made prior to future harvests.

It was determined that **cleanup would primarily consist of hand/rake removal of slash and rocks**. Both Kate Hartnett and Erick Berglund suggested that this would be an **excellent opportunity to draw on the volunteer energy of the Trails Committee**. With the cooperation of the weather, the removal could be done while the ground was still bare. **Dave Linden will call Jim Deely to ask for his assistance** and to let him know that Mr. Perkins is available

Kate Hartnett also **suggested that the trails be re-blazed** but was informed by Mr. Perkins that there were lengthy stretches along the trails that were without trees. **Cairns and signs were both suggested as alternatives to blazing**. Ms. Hartnett recommended **removal of the slash while the trails were still accessible** and that blazing could be done at a later date. **Flagging could be used for the winter** to re-establish the treadway sufficiently to find the trail. Mr. Perkins reported that both **bridges were finished and that the parking lot was in good shape**. It was decided that Jim Deely should be contacted and asked to call Mr. Perkins about getting the flagging up before snowfall. That should be a priority!

Northern Pass: DCC invited Ms. Menard to attend the meeting to clarify communications regarding the Northern Pass project. After making inquiries of the Town at the request of the DCC, Ms. Menard has learned that **there is a Northern Pass Project point person who could provide additional assistance** to the Town/DCC. Kate Hartnett noted that it took repeated inquiries to acquire this information which was not known by the DCC, the BOS or the Town Administrator. Ms. Menard will forward the name to the Clerk who will **send an introductory email with DCC contact information** which will include instructions to copy Ms. Menard on correspondence with the representative.

In response to a **DCC inquiry regarding the nature of correspondence from the Society for the Protection of NH Forests (SPNHF) mentioned in the minutes of the BOS**, Ms. Menard informed the members that the **Town received two letters**. The first offered SPNHF's expertise to the Town relative to the NPT project, and the second letter informed the Town that SPNHF had filed suit against NPT relative to land ownership issues. As a result of discussion at its November meeting (See 11/9/15 Minutes), the **DCC sent a letter to the Chair of the NH Site Evaluation Committee** siting the complexity of the impacts in Deerfield and the volunteer nature of the commission, stating further that the **Deerfield Conservation Commission strongly objects to the process of notification used**, the onerous documentation provided, and the inadequate timeline for response afforded by the standard permitting process. The BOS, the Deerfield Planning Board, NHACC, NHDES, Jeanne Menard-(BOS Northern Pass Liaison) and the Forum were copied on the correspondence. **Ms. Hartnett will also email a copy of the letter to Susan Schibanoff of the Bury the Northern Pass organization as an FYI.** <http://burynorthernpass.blogspot.com/>

In a discussion of **recent information received from the Lamprey River Advisory Committee (LRAC)**. Ms. Hartnett noted that in October Deerfield had received a copy of the NPT Wetland application contained on a USB drive; however Deerfield-specific data had been difficult to access from the information provided. Lacking data, necessary expertise, resources, and time, DCC could not effectively anticipate or evaluate the potential impacts expected to be sustained along the 7.5 miles of corridor to be covered by the proposed Northern Pass project. **The LRAC has since copied the DCC and the Planning Board on letters dated 9 Nov 2015 and post marked 17 Nov 2015 that it had submitted in**

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response to the Northern Pass *Wetland, Shoreland, and Alteration of Terrain* permit applications which were subject to LRAC review by virtue of the NPT project being within the quarter mile corridor of the Lamprey River.

As noted in its response letter, LRAC performed a field investigation as part of its Wetland Application review in the vicinity of the crossings at both Mountain Rd. and Church Street in Deerfield. These areas had previously been reviewed by LRAC after PSNH/Eversource projects in 2013 and 2014. At the Mountain Rd. site LRAC noted preventable slope deterioration and erosion. The Church Street site suffered severe vehicular breaching of all apparent wetland areas either due to impacts sustained during the earlier projects or due to uncontrolled access to the area after completion of the projects. LRAC's recommendation is for the Northern Pass project to engage an independent inspection agent at NPT's expense to ensure that BMP's are being used and, in the case of the impacts at the Church Street sites, that gates be installed to prevent unwarranted secondary access. LRAC also questions NPT's selection of a heretofore undisturbed access point for the Northern Pass Project.

Kate Hartnett reported that she has spoken with Nik Coates of the NH Association of Conservation Commissions (NHACC) to encourage his leadership in uniting Conservation Commissions so they could act collectively in their efforts to negotiate the complexities of the NPT process. Mr. Coates was able to offer some suggestions to be considered going forward, including the idea of having NHDES Wetlands staff review impacts along the entire corridor to ensure consistent evaluation. .

Erick Berglund asked for input regarding DCC filing as an Intervenor which would empower the DCC and afford it a presence in the NPT process. Jeanne Menard noted that the Town was to have filed for Intervenor status, and that she strongly favored DCC filing as well. Mr. Berglund suggested exploring the possibility of multiple Conservation Commissions filing as a group. Wes Golomb expressed concerns about the time and work potentially involved after filing. Ms. Menard offered to provide information regarding the amount of commitment it would entail. Ms. Menard also noted that DCC has a voice that needs to be heard and provides a unique perspective; that by filing now, DCC would be positioned to intervene if a situation arose in the future. Ms. Menard suggested that Susan Schibanoff be asked about what resources Conservation Commissions from other towns could provide. Mr. Berglund suggested the possibility of LRAC co-intervening with the DCC and that perhaps contact could be made with Tod Piskovitz, its Project Review Subcommittee Chair. Wes Golomb will call or email the LRAC to: confirm that Deerfield no longer has a representative on the LRAC; ask if they would have an interest in co-intervening with the DCC; and extend an invitation to the DCC January meeting. Deb Campelia asked if future meetings could be more focused on a specific topic. In response, DCC will set aside ½ hour for Jeanne Menard at the January meeting.

Easement Monitoring: Deb Campelia presented the results of the Bear-Paw easement monitoring performed at the Lindsay-Flanders Conservation Area and Linden properties by her, Frank Mitchell and Alan Perkins in early November. The discarded tires mentioned in last year's report have not yet been removed and will require the use of an ATV to extract them. The monitors observed two cut trees, and removed discarded tent poles and beer cans during the visit. There was also evidence of ATV activity originating from or traveling through... a gap in the stone wall boundary of an abutting property. Removal of the old tires and placement of conservation markers at the point of apparent ATV access were recommended. Ms. Campelia will attempt to facilitate the tire removal and will ask Herb McKinney to tag the boundaries which are not plainly marked as conservation land. Kate Hartnett suggested future placement of rocks/boulders to plug the gap in the stone wall. Abutters may be enlisted in the future to observe and report unauthorized activity on the property. Ms. Campelia will forward a copy of the monitoring report to Jeanne Menard whose family donated the easement.

Solar-Up: Wes Golomb reported that a total of 63 systems were confirmed in Deerfield and Candia with a combined total of 508.16 kW. Deerfield alone has 33 confirmed systems totaling 251 kW. Although not currently being assessed, Mr. Golomb noted that the BOS supports NOT taxing solar installations in the future. There is a petitioned warrant article being prepared for the March ballot to that effect.

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Freese Town Forest – Signage: The topic of possibly confusing signage at Freese Town Forest mentioned at the October meeting has once again come to the attention of the DCC. In an email to DCC, volunteer Bear Paw **easement monitors at Freese Town Forest questioned the lack of clarity on Safety Zones and hunting areas resulting from the current signage posted at the entrance to the easement.** The signs were placed by DCC and NH Fish & Game staff as a pilot when the new publically available signs were being tested,. A map of the area defining the safety zone and hunting allowed areas was presented for review along with a copy of the pertinent RSA's regulating the discharge of firearms. **Members were asked to independently view the signs currently posted at the entrance and Dave Linden will provide photographs** when the matter is taken up again at the January meeting.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes from the **October and November meetings were both approved by the members** present with one abstention by Dave Linden who had not been present at the referenced meetings.

Finance: Erick Berglund reported a **balance in the conservation fund at the end of October of \$240,201.43** which included **interest in the amount of \$30.49 and \$1,327.00 representing DCC's 50% portion of Land Use Change Tax** revenue collected in the 3rd Quarter 2015. The balance for November was not yet available. Mr. Berglund also reported that the **DCC's proposed budget had been accepted by both the BOS and the MBC.**

Sestercentennial: Erick Berglund presented a **flyer from the Town of Dunbarton's Sestercentennial celebration** in which they lead a hike covering the *13 wonders of Dunbarton*. Mr. Berglund noted that several New Hampshire towns had recently celebrated 250 years of history including Dunbarton, Weare and Concord, and it was **suggested that the members research and report back in January on what fun activities other towns included in their celebration programs and propose suggestions for similar events for fun in Deerfield.**

Phragmites: Kate Hartnett reported that **no action has been taken** with respect to the invasive plant, Phragmites, growing in the wetland on private land on Route 43 since the site visit in October. **Control measures could not begin until August or September of 2016,** after DES approval and permitting, and finding a funding mix to support the removal.

Correspondence/Announcements: DCC has received the following:

Goodridge 201-31 (13 Baker Ave) Wetlands and Non-Site Specific Permit – Dredge & Fill Application – NHDES File #2015-01470 and NHDES Approval

Trout Unlimited/Graykin 406-13 (Lamprey River – Old Coffeetown Rd) Wetlands and Non-Site Specific Permit – NHDES File #2015-02105 Response to Request for Additional Information and Permit Approval

Interim Chair Kate Hartnett **adjourned the meeting at 9:15 PM.**

The Next Meeting is Scheduled for Monday, January 11th, 2016
(Please check the website for scheduling changes)
townofdeerfieldnh.com

The draft minutes were prepared and submitted by Judy Marshall. Final revisions to these minutes will be contained in the minutes of the following meeting, after approval by the Deerfield Conservation Commission