

DEERFIELD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes – May 11, 2015

Members Present: Erick Berglund, Deb Campelia, Serita Frey, Wes Golomb, Kate Hartnett, Dave Linden
Members Absent: Jim Deely
Visitors: Emily Lord, Dick Snow

Chair Serita Frey **called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM followed by introductions.**

Serita Frey welcomed **Emily Lord, the Program Manager for the New Hampshire Association of Conservation Commissions (NHACC).** Ms. Lord was following up with the DCC at the suggestion of Nik Coates, NHACC's Executive Director, about **a fall workshop highlighting DCC's creation of a permanent conservation easement on Deerfield's seven Town Forests and Conservation Areas.** There is specific interest in explaining the need for this additional layer of protection, and the process of creating the 2014 Easement Deed between the Town of Deerfield and Bear-Paw Regional Greenways.

Ms. Lord **hopes to add the workshop to the series of workshops recently presented by NHACC,** which included opportunities for skills development and outdoor skills training, such as *Wetlands Identification, Wetlands Permitting, Learning to Live with Beavers,* and *Vernal Pools.* Future offerings will include grant writing and field-based wetland workshops. See also <http://www.nhacc.org/education/>. Ms. Lord expressed a particular **need for promoting an understanding of forestry and forest management with an emphasis on town forests, placing easements on them and how the easements work.** Serita Frey suggested that the proposed fall seminar could include a tour of one of Deerfield's town forests. If the Commission agrees to move ahead on the idea, Ms. Lord noted that the next step would be the planning phase consisting of the **selection of a point person to coordinate with Ms. Lord, a program outline and a list of presenters. Coordination of the event and outreach would be provided by NHACC.**

Citing the expressed needs of other commissions, it was recommended that **the presentation should focus on town forests in general and more specifically on how conservation commissions could go about communicating the process to their towns, including ways of getting the town's buy-in and approval on the proposal.** It was also suggested that Bear-Paw Regional Greenways could give its perspective on the easement process and **include information on land trusts.** The workshop would be announced in NHACC's e-newsletter which also provides legislative announcements and news from other conservation commissions. Ms. Lord reported that NHACC now has a Facebook page.

Workshops typically draw **between 12 and 30 participants** and are usually held on Friday afternoons for outdoor workshops, and Saturday mornings for the more kid-friendly and family oriented venues. There is a suggested donation to defray any expenses since NHACC has no grant funding for the events. Ms. Lord explained that **NHACC has a goal of developing a certification training course,** especially for new commissioners, which would include a multitude of conservation and state regulatory topics. NHACC also **anticipates revision of its handbook for conservation commissions** which needs updating.

Erick Berglund felt that the undertaking would provide encouragement to other towns and Serita Frey noted that the **two to three hour endeavor could consist of an informal class on specific topics and an afternoon walk in the woods.** It would be an opportunity for DCC to share its five years of experience in protecting Deerfield's Town Forests, including the three years devoted to creating the easement deed. Kate Hartnett felt that this would be a great educational opportunity and noted **that a post-workshop summary/outline of the key points would be of value.** NHACC also receives feedback from the participants.

Chair Frey thanked Ms. Lord for her interest and agreed to **respond to the invitation in the next few weeks,** after further discussion with the members.

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Dick Snow, Member, Candia Conservation Commission, Director on the Board of the *Lamprey River Watershed Association*, (LRWA) and Chairman of the *Lamprey River Advisory Committee*, (LRAC) was present both to observe and to **inform the DCC of the existence of New Hampshire RSA 483:8-a which in part states that, in relation to local river management advisory committees**, and more specifically the *Lamprey River Advisory Committee* (LRAC), “*Municipal officials, boards, and agencies shall inform such committees of actions which they are considering in managing and regulating activities within designated river corridors*. Mr. Snow was alerted to the fact that the **DCC at its April 13th meeting, voted to approve a DES wetlands permit application for expedited review; however it had not complied with the mandatory reporting requirement to inform the LRAC of its action and the proposed activity impacting the Lamprey River.**

Serita Frey will contact Joel DeStasio to determine if *Trout Unlimited* will be fulfilling the reporting requirement as part of the application process. Kate Hartnett suggested informing Deerfield’s Town Clerk as well. The **DCC was unaware of this requirement** and Erick Berglund inquired about the **specifics of the notification process**, suggesting that the **LRAC convey this information to the commissions (“...municipal officials, boards, and agencies..”) required to report. For the text of the referenced RSA, please see <http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/rsa/html/L/483/483-8-a.htm>.**

Mr. Snow also mentioned that **Deerfield no longer had a representative on the LRAC, which is also statutorily required.** Wes Golomb, who had previously served in this capacity along with Harriet Cady, will consider re-appointment. **Mr. Snow offered to supply the appropriate paperwork to Mr. Golomb and complimented the DCC on its work.**

Finance: Erick Berglund reported the **February 28th ending balance in the Conservation Fund was 207,643.73** reflecting interest in the amount of \$23.48 and reimbursement from the Forestry Commission of \$5225.00 for the Moreno forest management plans. After the addition of interest in the amount of \$26.45, the **balance at the end of March was \$207,670.18.** Mr. Berglund also reported that the final revenue from the **Dowst-Cate/Weiss timber harvest was \$27,360.45.** The revenues from the timber cuts are dedicated to forestry activities unless their use is changed by vote of the Town. It was suggested that the DCC have a conversation with the Forestry Commission on the use of the funds.

Approval of Minutes: The **minutes of the March 12th meeting** were approved with **one revision to the first paragraph as follows:**

| The first is on **the Lamprey River Griffin Brook (which flows into the Little Suncook River in Deerfield)** on property owned by Lawrence and Melissa **Graykin, Map 406 Lot 13, Old Coffeetown and Blake’s Hill Roads.**
| The second is on **Griffin Brook (which flows into the Little Suncook River in Deerfield) the Lamprey River** on property owned by **Allen Barton, Map 205 Lot 2, Griffin Rd**

The clerk has also verified the accuracy of the **flowage of Griffin Brook into the Little Suncook River** based on the information contained in the *Trout Unlimited* wetlands application.

Election of Officers for 2015/2016: The members **voted unanimously to retain the current slate of officers;** Serita Frey, Chair and Erick Berglund, Treasurer.

Town Forest Protection: Serita Frey will contact Dan Kern of Bear-Paw Regional Greenways and request an estimate for a survey to be conducted on the **Edythe H. Boisvert Town Forest, Map 404 Lot 2.**

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Land Conservation: Erick Berglund, who is currently on the land protection committee for Bear-Paw Regional Greenways, reported that there is interest in activity in the area of the Lamprey River headwaters. Kate Hartnett also informed the members that she has had a **preliminary conversation with a landowner who may have an interest in placing a conservation easement on a portion of a small parcel.**

Phragmites: On April 16th, Serita Frey and Kate Hartnett met for the second time with the owner of the property on Mountain View Rd. regarding the large stand of Phragmites which has invaded a wetland on the parcel. On Thursday, May 7th, Kate Hartnett met with Douglas Cygan, *Invasive Species Coordinator for the NH Dept. of Agriculture, Markets & Food - Division of Plant Industry* at the site on Mountain View Rd. Although the property owner was not in attendance, **Deerfield Road Agent, Mark Young and Assistant Road Agent, Carl Oehler from the Deerfield Highway Department were present.** Mr. Young was extremely interested in gaining an understanding of the *Japanese Knotweed* growing on Deerfield roadsides. A strategy of not mowing those areas where the knotweed exists will be employed to control its spread. Mr. Young hopes to have **two highway employees certified in the application of invasive pesticides.**

Ms. Hartnett informed the members that there are **three categories of invasives;** (A) *Species such as Japanese Knotweed and Phragmites*, (B) *Shrubs such as Bittersweet, Autumn Olive and Buckthorn*, and (C) *Small species not yet well established.* Species with less distribution are easier to address. Please see the **NH Fish and Game model for Deerfield** at <http://search.nh.gov/wildlife-search.htm?q=invasive+model+deerfield&cmd=Search!> Ms. Hartnett also speculated that there might be **potential for collaboration between the Highway Department and the DCC** if invasives are found on Town conservation land.

Controlling invasives on private land will require strategies to **encourage residents to come forward when invasives are first discovered, are small, and less costly to eradicate.** This is an opportunity to educate private land owners who are **unaware or uncertain about what to do.** Others may be **financially incapable of taking action;** however it is **not likely that there would be support for Town budgetary funding** since this would entail the use of public funds for private purposes. In the past, the *Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)* has provided financial assistance to owners of land conserved under its programs such as the *Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program.* **Dick Snow recommended taking a regional approach,** utilizing the resources of organizations such as the LRAC to which **educational program grants might be available.**

Kate Hartnett, in making **inquiries about the process and costs of mitigation,** recently spoke with Lenny Lord of the Rockingham County Conservation District (RCCD). **RCCD is licensed to work on Phragmites in wetlands** and although they can treat patches of less than a half-acre, they prefer working on a quarter of an acre or less. Serita Frey will **keep the topic on the agenda** with the objective of **approaching this issue from an educational and financial standpoint as well as exploring ways to encourage landowners to report.**

Fall Workshop: Serita Frey asked the members for their **thoughts on hosting the fall workshop,** noting that a minimal outlay in effort by the members would be of service to other towns. **Kate Hartnett volunteered to collaborate with Serita Frey on an outline, Deb Campelia committed to attend and Erick Berglund would both attend and assist with the outline.** Chair Frey will inquire whether the event will be open to landowners or just to conservation commission members. The topic will be **included in the meeting agenda for June.**

Regulated Wetlands: The DCC has received a *Wetlands Minimum Impact Forestry Notification* for work in Deerfield, Tax Map 424 Lots 26 and 27. The owner of the parcels is the Town of Deerfield and the location of the timber cut is Brown Road (Transfer Station property). It was noted that this was not conservation land.

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BOS Update: Serita Frey, Kate Hartnett and Erick Berglund attended the May 4th meeting of the Select Board to update them on the following:

- Town Forest plans and status of the recent harvest
- The new Trails Club: Confirmed appointments of three members to the Committee
- Phragmites: Attempts to control and meeting with Road Agent, Mark Young
- Solar-Up Program (See Wes Golomb's report below)
- Northern Pass Project solicitation letter
- Quarterly meetings: BOS was encouraged to resume quarterly meetings with DCC

Jeanne Menard also updated the BOS on the Northern Pass Project; a member of the BOS asked that the DCC take care not to blur the lines between itself and the Northern Pass Advisory Committee.

Solar Up New Hampshire: Wes Golomb requested and **received the approval of the BOS on an application for the Solar Up New Hampshire program.** <http://solarupnh.com/>. The following is copied from the program's website:

- *Solar Up New Hampshire is a partnership between the Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission, SmartPower, the New Hampshire Sustainable Energy Association, New England Grassroots Environment Fund, and Hillsborough County Area Renewable Energy Initiative (HAREI) with generous support from the John Merck Fund.*

The program is designed to help accelerate the growth of residential and commercial solar across our region using a proven model – Solarize. The program consists of these elements:

- *Community leadership*
- *Local volunteers*
- *Pre-selected, competitively chosen solar installer*
- *Tiered pricing, so the price goes down the more people sign up*
- *A clear end date for a solarize campaign that lasts 16-20 weeks long*

Solar Up New Hampshire planning team will work with be selecting pilot communities to participate in our campaign and will provide the tools and resources they need to help residents learn about solar and how they will benefit.

Deerfield has been accepted into the program along with the Town of Candia, and is slated for the second round to take place from September through December. The program “tool kit” for participants provides **expedited permitting along with provisions for financial and technical assistance.** There are currently six towns in the program, whose representatives, along with the Southern NH Planning Commission, will **review bids from photovoltaic (PV) suppliers.** Mr. Golomb noted that there is a concern **that state budget cuts may reduce the funds available for incentives;** however, the **federal tax credit is still available through next year.**

Kate Hartnett noted that **renewables were the third step after addressing energy efficiencies, and updates to lighting and refrigeration.** Mr. Golomb cited the **need for energy audits** and Serita Frey stated that the **site visits could provide an opening for conversation on the topic.** There is a plan to involve high school students in **identifying homes facing 15 degrees of solar south** using Google maps, and to follow up with letters to the owners. A side benefit will be the collection of good data. There was additional discussion on **community scale solar** (group net-metering; see <http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/rsa/html/XXXIV/362-A/362-A-9.htm> for the RSA) wherein a site is chosen for collection of solar energy which is then fed back to the grid for utilization by the Town. The **landfill and fairgrounds were observed to be promising sites.**

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Also mentioned was **the passage of C-PACE (Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy)** a financial policy that allows commercial property owners to finance qualifying energy efficiency and clean energy improvements on their properties through an additional assessment on the property tax bill. See also:

http://gencourt.state.nh.us/house/committees/committee_websites/scitechenergy/Documents/2015/NH%20C-PACE.pdf

Northern Pass Project: Erick Berglund reported that **the environmental impact statement is due in the June/July timeframe. A meeting to be held at the Easton, NH Town Hall to learn about the SEC process** is scheduled for June 7th. Jeanne Menard may invite members of the BOS along with Senators and Representatives. Specific information can be found at:

http://burynorthernpass.blogspot.com/2015/05/opposition-info-meeting-june-7-2015_3.html

Trails Committee: Dave Linden reported on the **pot-luck supper held by the Trails Club on April 14th**. The speaker was Kat Deely who shared her expertise on the topic of trail maintenance which Mr. Linden found to be both interesting and informative. There were approximately 25 attendees.

Easement Monitoring: Deb Campelia has **completed the annual monitoring of the Merrill (Kay Williams) property and the LCHIP Curry easement**. Ms. Campelia reported that Frank Mitchell, who led the walk on the Merrill property, expressed **concern about the posting of “No Trespassing” signs on Map 405 Lot 98** which abuts the Merrill property. The parcel was formerly owned by Susan Yeaton and was tax deeded to the Town in 1980. The issue will be discussed at the June meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 PM

The Next Meeting is Scheduled for Monday, June 8th

(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