

Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes
May 11, 2011--5:00-7:00 PM

Members present: R Hogue (acting chair), J Reeve, A Morris, R Bleyler, M Mayor, D McIlroy, J Trummel (recording). Staff: V. Smith

Others present: Matt Purcell (Dartmouth College), Ellen Arnold (Dartmouth College) and Russell Rohloff (Pathways Consulting)

Site Visit: The Conservation Commission visited the site of the proposed softball stadium off Summer Street on May 9, 2010 prior to the project discussion scheduled for this meeting.

Biodiversity Subcommittee: (discussion moved up as J Reeve needed to leave early)

- a) There is an invasive presentation Garlic Mustard at 3:30 pm on 5/18/11 3:30 at the Howe library sponsored by the commission. Members are encouraged to attend.
- b) There is a presentation entitled Absorb the Storm: How to Create a Rain Garden on Saturday, June 11, 2011 at the Black Community Center co-sponsored by the commission, the Hanover garden club and the Lake Champlain sea grant program.

Current Business:

1. Dartmouth College softball field relocation presentation by Matt Purcell (Dartmouth College), Ellen Arnold (Dartmouth College) and Russell Rohloff (Pathways Consulting) Dartmouth needs a new softball field location as they desire to move the present field from Sachem to an on campus location. They would like to relocate the field to the present athletic fields (Chase fields) behind the Hanover Coop foodstore (Town Assessors' Map 34 Lot 102). However, this project will encroach on wetlands buffer zones, both 0-25 and 25-75 foot zones.

The dimensions of the field are documented on a site map included with the presentation. The size of the field is approximately 218 ft from homeplate to the center field wall and around 200 ft to the foul poles.

Storm water will drain through the surface (field turf surface) to a collection system underneath the field. Chase Field 3 (field hockey field) will use same storm water collection system. Water is collected in a collection tank and used to wet the fields. Overflow goes into the present system which drains the entire athletic field complex and should not increase peak run-off.

A rest room facility is needed due to distance nearest facility (Burnham) and will drain to existing sanitary infrastructure. The stadium will seat about 400 spectators (avg attendees now 58).

M Mayor asked about the radio tower removal—this will be staged and designed to control any potential lead paint contamination. J Reeve asked about construction access to the site. The approach will be from the road at the back of the site (detailed on the map) and occur between 9 am and 2 pm The plan is to start in September, 2011. R Hogue asked about the walkway around the outfield fence and how it will be finished. It will be seeded and mowed

and the college does not anticipate an erosion problem—do not anticipate. D McIlroy recommended seeding it to rough (not lawn) and not be fertilized. D Mcilroy had one concern—that this is an unusually large intrusion into 25 foot wetland buffer zone and that this not set a precedent for other projects which may have similar issues. This area is only nominally a wetland. At this point, due to prior field development, the remaining wetland is basically a residual drainage ditch.

A question was raised about the height of the outfield fence due to proximity to the Appalachian trail. The outfield fence will be 6 ft (NCAA regulations). D McIlroy wants to ensure that the conservation commission make it known we are approving this specific wetland intrusion because this is not really a wetland anymore.

R Hogue made a motion recommending that the zoning board approve this application with the following considerations: *The Commission notes that this project proposes an usually large incursion into the 25' foot setback, coming within 7 feet of the wetland itself and that the Commission would not normally support a project with this much impact to that setback. However, in this case, the wetlands at Chase Field are relics of decades of alteration so the intrusion in the 25 foot setback of this residual drainage ditch can be supported by the Commission as proposed by the College.*

The Commission noted that there will be some improvement to the wetland as presumably the grass area outside the field will not be fertilized and so there will be less fertilizer run off into the wetland. The Commission hopes that the area outside the fence will be managed as a "rough" rather than a meticulously cared for lawn. They also hope that the first inundation of the field when the turf material floats will be managed so that turf material does not enter the wetland.

M Mayor seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

2. Hayes property in Etna

J Reeves met with Adair Mulligan about plans for Hayes property (Nan and Allen King Sanctuary). She made it clear that this is to be a natural area/bird sanctuary, not a playground. Elmer Brown will stake the property where he plans to place native plantings. Invasives will be removed by volunteers. Access for installation of the sanctuary improvements is behind firehouse now but the parking lot will be located behind Etna Library.

A discussion ensued about a celebration date for the opening. It potentially could be tied into 250th Etna celebration. No decision was made at this will be added to the agenda for the June meeting. Fern Myers, daughter of Nan and Alan King, is happy with proceedings at the site (A Morris). V Smith stated that we need to figure out the trail from top of hill to the wetland—this needs some blazes. She will visit with D McIlroy. A neighbor's son is looking for an eagle scout project but it was felt that this trail project is probably too small.

J Reeves was excused.

3. Indian Ridge conservation easement

The commission voted in the past to give it to Lebanon but they are reluctant to take it as it is poorly worded and of limited value. The Boston Lot easement is controlled by the Forest Society but they do not want Indian Ridge easement due to poor wording. One possibility would be to abandon the easement as no one wants it. The commission may ask Ellen Arnold (Dartmouth College) to make it more restrictive but this was felt to be unlikely. It was felt that Lebanon may want it in the future so no further decision was made at this time.

4. Balch Hill management plan

The Commission in conjunction with the Council and Dartmouth College have hired Ben Hudson to help update the management plan. Ben is considering invasives and deer browsing as part of the overall plan. M Mayor states there is a hung up oak on Hemlock trail however the trail may have been rerouted. If not, we should flag the trail to reroute it.

Administrative business.

1. Commission officers—the commission needs a new vice chair as J Reeves has resigned this post. R Hogue is very busy but might commit to interim position. Duties mostly include filling in when chair not available. Need to occasionally sign some permits/applications. R Hogue will decide by next meeting. Elections were tabled to the next meeting.

Subcommittee Reports:

1. Open Space (A Morris)

Town meeting approved acquisition of Storrs/Bent property conservation easement. We have 50 days to raise \$53,000 (July 1). Julia Griffin asked Mrs. Byrne (Byrne Foundation) for a \$25,000 matching grant. We need to draft letter to potential donors. Other ways to raise money were discussed. We should post a sign at the field. Ask for money at the Etna village celebration? Tim Bent and Betsy Storrs help? We need to merge our contributor list. Send Vicki names of potential donors. Are there other potential corporate donors? On Tuesday May 17, we will meet from 10 am -3 pm to send out letters to donors. We should consider developing a donor brochure. Thanks to V Smith for all the hard work in getting this going.

2. Trails (McIlroy) Some work has been done on Indian Ridge. Moose Mtn spring flowers are out. R Bleyler noted down trees on old highway 38. June 5 is national trails day. Conservation council volunteers will connect Mink brook west to Mink brook east trails. We have established a former list of trail adopters. We should get t-shirts or hats for trail adopters. Mountain bikes at Rinker Steele are damaging the trails per Vicki.

Approval of minutes of April 13 were reviewed. Motion by R Bleyler, second M ayor--unanimously approved.

\$655 remains in the operating budget for the fiscal year, though there are many programs where it can be used, including the Wilmot appraisal.

A motion was made by M Mayor to adjourn, seconded by A Morris--unanimously approved.