

CONSERVATION COMMISSION
March 14, 2012 at 5:00 PM
TOWN HALL, 41 SOUTH MAIN STREET

In attendance:

Members: Ed Chamberlain (Chair), Shelley Gilbert, Michael Mayor (Planning Board Liaison), Doug McIlroy, Athos Rassias (Selectmen's Representative), Alan Saucier.

Alternates: Jim Kennedy, John Trummel (both voting today).

Staff: Jonathan Edwards, Vicki Smith

Others: See Attendance Sheet

1. CURRENT BUSINESS

- a. Baum property—Tim McNamara (Dartmouth Real Estate Office) needs official HCC signature for application to NH wetlands bureau. Support for this project was discussed and approved at the last meeting. E. Chamberlain put forth motion to sign minimum impact expedited application, seconded by S. Gilbert and unanimously approved without further discussion.

2. RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP

- a. Deer damage at Balch Hill—Discussion about control of local deer population. First item concerned feasibility of the HCC making a request for DOE permits to NH Fish and Game for special doe deer hunting in management area G because of forest damage on town of Hanover property especially Balch hill. J. Kennedy felt it was unlikely that state would do this only for a small area such as Hanover and would have to do it for the entire management area. D. McIlroy stated serious grazing damage on Trescott Rd. V. Smith mentioned that this year there was a limited hunt on water company property but was basically unsuccessful. A. Saucier asked when does could be hunted. J. Kennedy stated there were no doe days last year in our area except for junior permits. J. Kennedy made case that HCC request special hunt permit for the Hanover area from NH Fish and Game. There was a case on Long Island (Lake Winnepesaukee region) which had a special hunt for heavy deer infestation. E. Chamberlain stated only 3 bucks were taken on water co. property this year. The continued deer damage is a financial problem for the Trescott Water Co. J. Edwards made case for warning local populace if a special hunt occurred. V. Smith said this would be made explicit if hunting on Balch Hill were to occur. The discussion was brought back to the present question at hand: should HCC request increased doe hunting in this area from Fish and Game? J. Kennedy again felt this was unlikely to be allowed on a regional basis. The general consensus of the commission was that while not

desirable, a local Hanover deer hunt could take place. It could be allowed on Balch Hill but the commission was somewhat leery about this as it is very close to local houses. A. Saucier expressed concern that there may be significant popular discontent with a hunt on Balch Hill. E. Chamberlain requested that J. Kennedy draft a limited hunting plan to present to Fish and Game and he agreed to do this. V. Smith stated Oak Hill already has hunting. A. Saucier suggested that if a hunt were to occur, the meat should be donated to charity.

- b. Trail signage—D. McIlroy discussed the recent UVTA trails forum about trail signs and the trails committee also discussed signage at the last meeting. V. Smith pointed out that a summary handout from the trails committee meeting had been made and handed out. The specific points were then discussed as follows:
 1. Sign clutter. It should be avoided.
 2. Sign location. Signs at trailheads might need to include parking info. Marking trail intersections is helpful with directional signs.
 3. Distances and destinations. This was felt to be useful information to include at trailheads and intersections. It was pointed out that trail difficulty symbols might be useful but this should be defined by UVTA, not just the town of Hanover.
 4. Trail name(s). These should be distinctive and be related to place if possible. One question--should town trails be numbered and this indicated on signs? This will need discussion at the next trails committee meeting.
 5. Branding. This is contentious. The conservancy likes branding (helps with fund raising and public awareness). When branding occurs, it should be at bottom of sign and unobtrusive. Possibly including a url might be more informative. Problem with trail branding was discussed in detail. Consensus is that logos should be on entrances only but should be inclusive of those involved and small in size.
 6. Color. Color should be brown with white lettering. Town now uses blue. Blue is easier to see but brown will probably take over in the upper valley and seems to be favored by many organizations.
 7. Material and content. Routed wooden signs were preferred. At the UVTA trails forum—some liked kiosks at trailheads and some did not. This was not supported much by the trails committee. “You are here” signs were not favored by trails committee but may be necessary in complex areas. Mounting posts are now metal but we may want to change this (fiberglass?). There may be a cost/work issue involved. This needs to be discussed with the DPW. The use of QR codes on signs was deferred for now.
- c. Balch Hill Management—E. Chamberlain pointed out that the BH management committee is in the process of updating the management plan but this is not ready for HCC discussion. There is the need for HCC permission to relocate the Grasse Rd trail at a swale which is getting damaged. Also, the trail is steep at the top and eroding which needs a solution. Permission was given to the trails committee to deal with this problem. The next meeting of the BH management committee is

on March 28 at 8:30 am at the Black Center. Work days for local residents have been scheduled for the first Wed of each month which may be helpful if trail work needs to be done. Sign design needs to be finalized by the trails committee.

- d. Hydric soil workshop—J. Edwards stated that Joe Homer (USDA soil scientist) would be happy to give a soils workshop for the HCC possibly with other conservation commissions from adjoining towns. This could be an afternoon or evening or a Saturday. We will try to set one up for Friday afternoon in May possibly at Trumbull Hall in Etna. Adjoining towns' conservation commissions will be invited.
- e. Corylis Americana (hazelnut) purchase—approval was given to buy and put these in the nursery to eventually use at Rinker Steele. Cost for 50 plants is \$54.

3. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

A brief discussion of the difference between alternate and full commission members ensued. Alternates cannot be office holders and only vote if full members are missing. It was noted that Al Flory has resigned.

4. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Biodiversity Committee—A. Saucier noted that they are trying to get the Valley News to start an educational series about invasive plants. There was nothing pressing for commission action at this time.

Open Space Committee—did not meet but E. Chamberlain went to a town staff meeting where the Friends of Hanover Crew project (Wilson's landing) was discussed. The project will now involve only one larger boat storage shed which will not be placed in the wetland setbacks. The HCC chairman also needs to sign-off on any work performed on Wilson's landing as state in Town Ordinance #20.

Trails Committee—already discussed—see above signage discussion.

Trescott Board—has not met.

- 5. MINUTES:** The minutes of February 8 were approved. The motion was made by S. Gilbert, and seconded by J. Trummel and unanimously approved except for M. Mayor who abstained as he was not present at the Feb. meeting.

6. OTHER BUSINESS

V. Smith pointed out a conference on land protection entitled Saving Special Places which is scheduled in Weare, NH on Saturday, April 14. The League of Women Voters is sponsoring a lecture series on healthy landscapes which begins with Lawns Without Chemicals on Wednesday, March 28 at the Howe Library.

There was a brief update on the Girl Brook restoration in Pine Park.

- 7. ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting adjourned at 7:15 PM. The motion was made by M. Mayor, seconded by S. Gilbert and unanimously approved.

Respectfully Submitted,

John Trummel, alternate commissioner.