

**CONSERVATION COMMISSION**  
**June 11, 2014 at 7:00 PM**  
**TOWN HALL, 41 SOUTH MAIN STREET**

In attendance:

**Members:** Ed Chamberlain (Chair), Peter Christie (Selectmen's Representative), Michael Mayor (Planning Board Liaison), Doug McIlroy

**Alternates:** Jim Kennedy, John Trummel

**Staff:** Vicki Smith

**Others:** Rosi Kerr, Peter Shumway, Barbara McIlroy, Patrick Nyson, Danielle Jacobson (student), Andrea Bilaroli (student), Caroline Dalquist (chaperone)

Convened at 7:05PM Students (2) arrive with chaperone at 7:27PM

**1. APPROVAL of MINUTES:** The minutes of May 14, 2014 were approved as amended. In favor: All

**2. CURRENT BUSINESS**

- Wilson's Landing Management Plan. Kennedy pointed to Smith's notes that had been distributed. The June 9<sup>th</sup> meeting at Wilson's Landing was a good meeting, well attended by community and Commission members. The Open Space Committee will work on some ideas to discuss with the public on July 9 at the site. The plan is to develop topics introduced during the visit including recreation, maintenance, etc. There is a need to identify responsible individuals to pursue the project goals. A volunteer has offered to help build the boardwalk. Notes were corrected by chair to add the word "accessible" to the handicapped descriptor. It was suggested to incorporate the note from Carol Weingeist. A discussion followed about the addition of a walk-way and a gazebo to the south of the parking lot. These site visit notes were moved for adoption into the minutes by chair, seconded by McIlroy, approved unanimously. Chair has emphasized the importance of further efforts to follow up on the tasks identified for the Landing. Gravel is metastasizing with loss of grassy surfaces due to winter plowing. Portable sanitary facilities are planned to be maintained. The need exists for a town "Parks person" to be designated. Public Works commitment was recognized as valuable. Peter Christie was asked to look at the accommodation of cars, even recognizing the purview of the State along Lyme Road. Signage was considered an eyesore. Organic farm parking is relatively unregulated. Cooperative Day Care may be moving, with some opportunity to accommodate vehicles not currently available. Mike Evans, Hanover Police Department, is clear about protecting the bike shoulder from cars intruding in their right-of-way. N.B.: There is little or no cell phone reception on the Landing, unlike Lyme Road. Flood-plain rules may prevent improvements like a board-walk. Details were requested to be available prior to the July 9. How should the meeting be noticed? One suggestion included an unobtrusive sign posted in the locale.

- Pine Park Association (PPA) Representative: The chair attended the last meeting of the Pine Park Association with Rob Chapman and five board members including the outgoing chair of the Association. Infrequent meetings make management of the challenges difficult. They were encouraged to meet monthly to improve that situation. Funds are being raised for the bridge and public works is providing equipment and labor. The PPA is seeking ways to more actively involve the management of the Golf Course in dealing with maintenance challenges. Staff points out that drainage patterns are the most immediate source of water related damage to the stream banks. Up-gradient water detention would help the situation. The Planning Board has a hearing on the site plan for the ravine erosion remediation scheduled for July 1.

- Structures on conservation easement land: Kiosk for Greensboro Ridge, Bat House, Organic Farm.

Kiosk at Greensboro Ridge: Staff clarified the locus of concern, suggesting a typical public information kiosk, allowed by easement to support non-commercial recreational uses. Size is limited by the terms of the easement. Motion to approve by Trummel, seconded by Chamberlain. Approved unanimously.

Bat House: Rosi Kerr from Dartmouth was present to answer questions. Chair suggests no evident conflict exists. Kerr indicates ongoing coordination with Fish and Game, including vaccination against white nose syndrome and then return to the wild in their original home territory. The proposal is detailed in her presentation. Staff and chair agree easement conditions have been met by the details presented. Educational and conservation focus of the program was emphasized. Staff is in support of the program. The trail is remote from the research quonset. Motion to support by Kennedy, second by McIlroy. Unanimous approval.

### **3. RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP**

- Policy to guide the use of herbicides on town lands. A discussion inspired by need, recognizing the conflict between manual and mechanical vs. chemical control methods. A policy is sought for application to conservation land. In practice, these methods are reserved as “last resort” methods. What constitutes “good practice herbicidal applications” on conserved lands? Should they be used on exotic invasive plants only, or native plants like poison ivy? Issues regarding volunteer involvement aside, goals statements are needed, with policies in place to achieve those goals. There is the importance to promote biodiversity in native plants; invasive plants should not find conservation lands a shelter for their seed banks. Mechanical vs chemical control is pertinent, with the intent of minimizing chemical exposures and minimizing (controlling) mechanical disturbance. Treatment of invasives needs to be sensitive to long-term control, as suggested by B. McIlroy and her draft policy document. When contracted out beyond the means of volunteers the least expensive method may be the least desirable. Monitoring outcomes is recommended to fine-tune the processes used. Refinements to the policy are needed, followed by sharing with DPW and Wm. Desch. Possibly through the Select Board and then conveyed through them to Peter Kulbacki et al. Poison Ivy may need to be dealt with as a special case. Staff will write up goals, with B. McIlroy working to provide particulars. DC is drafting campus policy regarding invasives. Julia Griffith has a copy of the exchanges between parties involved. There are legalities

involved as drafted by NH at a state level. Chair is reluctant to involve the Commission as a principal in establishing best practices for these ends. CC should refer to the [invasive.org](http://invasive.org) and [vtinvasives.org](http://vtinvasives.org) web site guidelines that are currently available. Christie will petition the Trescott Corp. to put the issue on their agenda shortly.

- Timber harvest at Marshall Brook. Forester's report available with activities conducted. He will be directed to proceed after meeting with the Open Space Committee to clarify goals and methods.
- Management plans for Hayes, Town Forest (See Forest Savers LLC memo of June 7) A stewardship committee is being convened to address the specifics at Hayes. There will be a meeting tomorrow that will develop more definite plans. Jim Kennedy will be unavailable.

The Town Forest plan is outdated. Jeff Smith, consulting forester will be asked to estimate the cost of such a plan. Cost and the limited Commission budget are a concern.

#### **4. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS**

- Michael Mayor is the June Minutes Taker
- Alan Saucier is the July Minutes Taker
- John Trummel is the August Minutes Taker

#### **5. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Open Space Committee (Ed, 5 Minutes) The minutes were distributed, touching on the bat enclosure, kiosk, Marshall Brook, South Esker trail head meeting with neighbors, to get a "go" on the plan for trail head improvements. Mink Brook trail head plan has been modified by Liberty Utilities plans for the area. In exchange for its use as a lay down area during the conduit construction project, the necessary clearing for the parking will be done by Liberty Utilities. This may mean that funds may be redirected to other projects. During the conduit project, pedestrian access will be from Brook Road parking and thence down to the Brook south of the sub-station. This is not convenient or outstandingly safe but necessary and temporary. There is a need to form a Hayes Farm management committee. The first meeting will take place tomorrow morning at Etna Library.

Trails Committee (Doug, 5 Minutes) Indirect collaboration with Rec Board and Conservancy have mounted "the trails challenge" that merits participants a T shirt as recognition. South Esker Dana Trail head needs better visibility. Girl Brook bridge was off its moorings, but is now restored. Finally; Upper Mink Brook Trail on Moose Mountain Road is being evaluated for cleaning up and made safer. Chair notes that Monday's trail meeting included Storrs Farm conservation, but Moose Mountain Ridge trail is high on the priority list for projects. A map has been prepared for Trails Committee purposes. Note was made of a 200 acre property that is listed for sale and is significant due to its contiguity with the Ridge trail.

Biodiversity Committee (Jim/Alan/Barbara, 5 Minutes) Garlic mustard problem areas are being handled by local volunteers. The Valley News has covered garlic mustard as a threat to forest health. Effective outreach and control measures are being taken, including those done by Willy Black and others. An interesting social experiment involving garlic mustard harvest is on-going. Educational programs are vital and considered effective. The Garden Club visited Kari Asmus' successful efforts to control invasives at her house. Her success is documented in a handout that was distributed.

Trescott Board There was no report, but the Commission would like to meet with the Trescott Board to learn more about their invasive removal strategies, successes and failures.

The Commission has been invited to meet with the Board on Monday, June 23 at 3:30 at the Town Offices.

**6. OTHER BUSINESS:** In planning for an educational event for the Fall jointly with the Commission, the Balch Hill Stewardship Committee is enthusiastic about the topic: managing the deer herd. A Cornell Plantation staff member may be available to participate. County and State rules about hunting, with ongoing research about the dynamics of same, are being pursued there. A project regarding deer management was cited.

Balch Hill draft brochure sought by the chair.

Adjourned at 9:07PM

Respectfully Submitted  
Michael Mayor, Taker of the Minutes

**NEXT MEETING: July 9, 2014 at 5:00 PM, Wilson's Landing**