

**Hanover Conservation Commission
Wilson's Landing Management Planning
9 June 2014**

Present:

Joaquin and Charlotta Villarreal, Carol Weingeist, John and Alice Creagh, Tillie the dog, Amy and Jeff Good, Hugh Mellert, Judy Reeve, Doug McIlroy, Jim Kennedy, Ed Chamberlain, Vicki Smith

Jim Kennedy explained that this session was for information gathering. The Commission would like the Landing to be user friendly for appropriate uses. The Commission would like to promote the Landing as a place to visit. Signage will help change its character so that people do not get the impression that it is just a boat launch.

At the session planned for July 9 at 5 PM at Wilson's Landing, some designs for improving Wilson's Landing will be reviewed and discussed.

Recommendations and issues to consider:

Define the boat trailer and car parking areas.

Traffic calming needed on the access road.

Dust is a problem.

Should swimming remain a discouraged activity?

A kiosk, picnic tables, benches, boardwalk and screened gazebo are desirable.

Signs reminding folks about carry in/carry out policy are needed, especially for animal waste; pedestrian safety signs and a new entrance sign should also be considered.

Check to see if the regatta schedule can be posted on the town web site and advertised via the town list serve.

Consider replacing the creosote bulkhead.

Invasive removal is needed to control honeysuckle.

Vicki gave an overview of how the Town came to own the landing. In 1976, the Town received a grant to improve Wilson's Landing with an access drive, boat launch and dock. The filled area for parking and picnicking was scaled back to approximately 30,000 square feet, though 60,000 square feet of fill had been approved. The picnic table(s) were installed but no longer exist.

Carol Weingeist offered to buy a picnic table, but her offer was refused with the DPW stating that Wilson's Landing was not to be a destination. She noted that the grass area is shrinking as gravel gets plowed into the grass each year and is never raked out.

Parking

There is less boating activity now than ten years ago. It is guessed that the recession made people less able to afford gas and boats. In 1986 there would be pick up trucks and trailers every weekend; now the busiest times are still Saturday afternoons and Sundays. On

Sundays there are easily 10-20 boat trailers. Saturday mornings tend to be the favorite fishing times.

Mr. Villarreal has contacted AT and inquired about an extension of service to Wilson's Landing. This would work for rowers and others who live downtown and want to visit Wilson's Landing and the Organic Farm. This would be one way to address the parking shortage.

Access Drive

The access drive is narrow. Often boat trailers and trucks are lined up on one side of the road since the parking area is full. This makes for only one way access to/from the Landing. In addition to dust, pedestrian safety in light of the speed of departing cars is problematic. Removable speed bumps were suggested.

Docks

There was no support amongst the group for making the Town's dock accessible to people with mobility impairments. However, removing the creosote wall and invasives in the dock area was suggested.

Regatta Spectators

There was a lack of clarity about just where regattas stop and start. With the finish line at Kendal, there is not a spectator problem at Wilson's Landing. A boardwalk may be very attractive to spectators and increase Friends of Hanover Crew management burdens. Norwich is one of the best places to watch a regatta. Traditionally in other places, bleachers mounted on a flat-bed rail car have provided excellent viewing from rail road tracks.

Boating Use

There is some conflict among boat users. Motor boats must maintain "no wake" until well past the crew boats. This limits waterskiing and tubing. The Department of Safety is present and on the water almost every weekend. There is also a lot of car-top boat use.

Fishing/Hunting

While bass fishing is a tournament sport further south, it is not here. The Connecticut River is known to be a good warm water fishery. There is some duck hunting that takes place on the River. There are blinds on the peninsula.

Habitat

Wilson's Landing offers good bass habitat. Beavers are inconvenienced by the water fluctuations. The spot is very popular with bird watchers. Benches and a board walk with screened gazebo would be appreciated. The boardwalk may well be a burden to the Friends of Hanover Crew as they would have to enforce a "no spectator" rule on the board walk.

It was observed that people take logs and flowers from the landing.

Invasive Plants

Mechanical removal of invasive plants should be encouraged as long as riparian vegetative buffers can be maintained.

Dog Visitation

Dogs are frequent visitors to the Landing. Their masters need to be reminded about the carry-out policy for dog waste.

Swimming and skating

There are frequent swimmers at the Landing. With the boat traffic on the River and at the Landing, swimming is not safe. Skating takes place in the winter with good ice conditions. The access road is plowed to enable the fire department to fill tankers.

Water Fluctuation

The Creaghs experience stranding of their boat. They have been told by the power company that the problem is silt. They see it as a problem of the amount of water the company releases and the duration of the release.

Erosion

Landowners are both losing and gaining land due to erosion and sedimentation. The riverbank is dynamic. This particular section is convex so catches silt. The wake from motor boats causes erosive wave action.

Amenities

The group was supportive of picnic benches. A kiosk could provide information about use, hours, boating, trash policy, wildlife.

Emergency Communications

Emergency communications are problematic at the Landing. Cell coverage improves at Route 10.

Meeting adjourned at 5:05 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Vicki Smith