

Conservation Commission

Minutes - May 11, 2016

Members: Whit Spaulding, Hugh Mellert, Peter Christie, Jim Kennedy, Bill Mlacak, John Trummel

Others: Scott Williams

1. April 13, 2016 Minutes

The following changes were noted:

- In Resource Stewardship section, change "Erhert" to "Erhard". Change "landowner's" to "landowners".
- In the last paragraph, change "Seeding will occur" to "Seeding and invasives removal will occur".

The minutes were approved with the above corrections.

2. Bank Stabilization and Seasonal Dock Project - 26 River Road

The application was presented by Scott Williams. It involves 215 linear feet of bank stabilization below an existing cottage and septic field at 26 River Road, just north of where Slade Brook meets the Connecticut River. The NH DES application was filed on April 12, with 3818 square feet of wetland impacts, with 288 feet of this for a seasonal dock. The Wetlands Special Exemption was filed, also for 3818 square feet with 300 square feet impacted within the 25-foot buffer.

The review by Pathways started in the fall, initiated by the landowner in response to concern about a partially collapsed bank, 3 to 6 feet high below the cottage. There are some smaller bank collapse areas downstream. There is no imminent concern, but it seems to be getting worse, and will likely continue. For the vertical area under the corner of the cottage, there has been some change since the fall.

Jim questioned the need, as the slope appeared stable. Mature hemlock trees are there. It might be that more damage would be done through the planned work rather than not doing anything.

Scott indicated that they needed access to get down to the area to repair the bank. He believes that there is enough of a buffer so that existing trees can be avoided. Jim disagreed saying that many roots are on the surface.

Whit asked about evidence of the need. Similar areas along the Connecticut are holding up fine.

Jim asked why a path was needed to a new dock. Scott answered that the current dock is not usable for boating as it is too shallow. The other access is off the point. The dock is a secondary use, and not the primary reason for the application. The owner may be willing to eliminate that from the application. The bank stabilization is at the extremities, so the idea was to make these fixes while bringing in materials and equipment anyhow, and use the access afterwards for the dock.

Whit indicated that the commission has concerns about problems due to the access construction. Scott indicated that he has contacted contractors. They need to get to the bottom to establish the toe and

work back up. Jim thought a contractor might need a 7 to 8-foot path to access equipment and material. Scott answered that a number of contractors have reviewed the plans, which call for a 3 to 4-foot path, and they would need to adhere to the plan.

The necessity seems unclear. It seemed possible to reduce the areas being stabilized. The least impacting alternative should be established. The need for a dock should be assessed, particularly in a nonstandard configuration. Are there alternatives for getting equipment down there, such as boating? What type of equipment would be needed and of what dimensions? What about steps?

The comments from Vicki's email were discussed. The Commission needs to provide a letter with recommendations.

Jim pointed out that there may be a need for compensatory mitigation. The DES makes the determination. A landowner can provide wetlands to compensate for disturbance, but if that isn't an option, they pay \$200 per linear foot into special fund.

After discussion, the Commission agreed upon the following letter:

The Conservation Commission does not recommend this project.

The Commission does not feel that the applicant has demonstrated sufficient need for the project as presented:

- stabilization of the bank below the house
- access path
- dock
- stabilization of 215' of shoreline.

The Commission does not feel that the Applicant has demonstrated the least impacting alternatives

There may be a need for compensatory mitigation given the scope of the project as submitted.

Furthermore, the Commission has concerns about:

- planting, in particular the impact on existing hemlock root systems
- impact of construction equipment
- impact to existing leach field during construction phase
- impact from storm water drainage from the roof

The motion was moved by Jim, seconded by Hugh; passed.

The letter will be sent to Judy Brotman and NH DES.

Jim said that the Upper Valley Subcommittee of the Connecticut River Joint Commissions is looking at the project and will be looking at the Conservation Commission recommendation.

3. Robes Septic Replacement at 1 Three Mile Road

A site visit was held on May 2 with Hugh in attendance.

After discussion of the plans, the Commission agreed on the following motion:

The Conservation Commission visited the site on May 2, and discussed the project at the meeting on May 11.

The Commission recommends the project with the following stipulation: make sure the location of the discharge pipe is suitably marked above the surface to prevent vehicles from damaging the pipe.

Motion passed.

4. Resource Stewardship

Jim described a native plant identification workshop that would be done by botanist Alice Schori. She would train volunteers in a 2 to 3-hour session.

He moved to expend \$180 for this workshop. Second by John; Motion passed.

5. Administrative Business

- Whit Spaulding is the June minutes taker
- John Trummel is the July minutes taker

6. Trails Committee Report

Bill described the April 20 site visit for a proposed trail to the Steele Property. A site plan was distributed. The proposed trail would start on Ferguson Field opposite the Kendal entrance, then follow along an existing trail to an outlook. That section is nearly level, and could easily be made accessible to walker or wheelchairs. There would be a steep section to connect the outlook down to the Storrs Pond trail. Bill moved to seek approval for the new trail, second by Whit; approved.

Bill described the May 3 Highway 38 site visit with the Appalachian Trails Conservancy. The discussion was about the easement and AT access, and future maintenance. The ATC is looking to do mowing once a year. This should be done after August 1 to avoid disturbance to nesting birds. Bill would like to explore options with DPW for more frequent mowing of the trail corridor in the field.

Bill asked about the procedure for trail bridges. Jim offered to provide the Trails Rules document. He also indicated that Trail Notifications need to be filed with DES with a 10-day notice for any water area. He said that Bill should check to see if John Taylor is doing such notifications.

7. Stewardship Committee Report

Jim reported that Ordinance 31 relating to the discharge of firearms is not being enforced. It was not in accord with state law.

The Biodiversity Committee is working with neighbors to set up several monitoring stations for deer browse at Tanzi Tract. The Committee has also hiring Alice Schori to lead sessions on native plant identification, monitoring and evidence of deer browse at Girl Brook.

The Biodiversity Committee had a work day at Rinker Tract to pull buckthorn seedlings and plant native shrubs. At Hayes Farm park, they will clear buckthorn on upper part, but he would prefer to wait until Vicki's return before proceeding.

Jim will try to establish a pollinator plot at Hayes Farm Park. A group of volunteers organized by the Biodiversity Committee, including Jim, is continuing to monitor the Canada lilies.

At Wilsons Landing, a permit has been obtained for the dock. The budget is in progress.

8. Other Business

There was some discussion about changing the meeting time to 5 pm. Some members preferred it, but the existing time seemed acceptable to most. Therefore, no change to meeting time at this point.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:03 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Bill Mlacak