

OFFICIAL CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

August 10, 2015

S. Couture called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

Attendance: Steve Couture, Chair; Cindy Robertson Vice-Chair; JoCarol Woodburn, member; Phil Fitanides, member; Deborah Miville, Alternate; Mila Paul, Conservation Easement Intern; David Hess, member (4:10pm)

Excused: David Ross, Town Council Rep.

Public Input

None.

Meeting Minutes

C. Robertson motioned to approve the meeting minutes for July 27, 2015. Seconded by J. Woodburn. Motion passed.

Appointments

a. Dan Tatem, Stantec – Merrimack Riverfront Project

D. Tatem: I did the same thing as last time. I gave you a summary and added new comments in red. Per the last meeting, we removed the nature trail and alternate trail locations along the island area. Mr. Hess was going to call Mike Marchand. Did you have the opportunity to do that?

D. Hess: I tried to get a hold of him, but he was on vacation. He called me back and we couldn't meet up and then he was away again.

D. Tatem: We are submitting the Wetland permit on Friday. The Shoreland permit is drafted and ready to go so we will submit it this week. That department agreed this is a municipal road and they waived the fees and it's a quick five day turnaround. For the NHDES Trail Notification Permit, we are doing a full major permit because of the prime wetlands. Because of our design, it will be a minimal impact. I talked about logistics with Steve. We will provide the check for the fees and you can reimburse us. The fee will be around \$2,500 for the Wetland permit. It's a rough number because it's twenty cents per square foot. We will have the final number by Friday. Carolyn sent the certified mail to the easement holder and we will need the certified slip and a copy of the letter. One of the big design changes happened after we met with the farmer. I

talked to Jay Pritchard from Green Gold Farm. I noticed he already mowed the fields that he could get to. He's excited. The thing that changed is the northern crossing where the corn field is, that bridge was just going to be a pedestrian bridge, now it has to be sturdy like a road bridge. It went from 12-feet wide to 14-feet wide. He will be able to get to every field from that one crossing. You should coordinate permission through the Therrien property for him to get in there. We designed the crossing there a little sturdier than the other crossing to accommodate a loaded tractor. Now that it's going to be a farm bridge, we had to go back and do more borings. We aren't charging you the extra time, about six hours, for the boring but we had to pay the drilling company. We are waiving the administration costs to save you some money. I'll send some paperwork over to Carolyn for that. Last time we talked about grating and potential decking for the bridges. If there's grating, snow won't stick to it, and it won't be able to have snowmobiles cross it. We need to talk about what you anticipate for snowmobile traffic.

S. Couture: We don't anticipate it to be heavy. It's just abutters that use it.

D. Tatem: Because you will have gravel trails connecting the bridges, people will be snowmobiling those same trails. Snowmobiles have metal picks that can tear things apart, especially the decking on the bridge. You can apply the extra decking now and there will be an additional cost or wait and see if it's getting chewed up and do it later. But you need to decide because the contractor needs to know what to put down.

D. Hess: Have we put any thought to putting gates on the bridge at the trailhead at the loop?

D. Tatem: It's a 12-foot wide trail. A gate would be problematic for people snowshoeing or skiing.

S. Couture: Where there's existing access we want to be able to provide that but it will be very limited. There are only about five people that snowmobile on that property. Since it's an unknown and there's not a lot of snowmobile use, I think not putting that additional decking layer would be my thought at the moment.

D. Miville: Once people start using it, won't that attract more people to use it with snowmobiles?

S. Couture: The allowed uses will be posted, but we aren't advertising it as a snowmobile trail.

C. Robertson: The people using it now just need to know that they can continue using it.

S. Couture: Yes, we should send a letter to abutters. We will post it as "no motorized vehicles" and tell the abutters despite the posting, snowmobiles are a historic use.

D. Tatem: OK, if anything changes, you can always do that second coat at another time.

S. Couture: Our Town Engineer is here as well if you want to introduce yourself and let us know if you have any thoughts.

J. Donison: Hello, my name is Jim Donison and I'm the Town Engineer/Assistant Public Works Director. I think it's a great idea the direction you are going in to allow snowmobiles, see how the use is and if the bridges start deteriorating then go with the coating. I think that's a wise way to do it.

P. Fitanides: I personally like the idea of putting the coating on first as an anticipatory use. Get the cost out of the way and then you won't have to worry about it. I think from all the publicity this is getting, the snowmobile clubs may have this trail listed on there. It may not be listed as an active trail, but the trail will still be there.

S. Couture: Dan, do you have an idea what it would cost?

D. Tatem: No.

S. Couture: We could always bid the additional layer and see what it would cost and decide then.

D. Hess: Will every trail be 12 feet wide or is that just the main drag?

S. Couture: All the trails. We want to make it accessible. Somewhere between 8-12 feet would be what we need. Three or four people could walk side by side.

D. Hess: What's the cost saving between 8 feet and 12 feet?

P. Fitanides: Are you taking into consideration emergency vehicles?

D. Tatem: You would probably only save on lumber since we have to do the borings anyway. We could show both ways, but we would have to change our detail drawings.

S. Couture: What do people feel?

P. Fitanides: I like the 12 feet.

D. Hess: I like 8 feet just for the top part of the loop and the rest can be 12 feet. The Forest Society said "no greater than 12 feet," not "must be 12 feet."

S. Couture: The idea behind 12 feet is that there's room if you want to have people walk and bike along the trail. It works out well at Head's Pond with that.

C. Robertson: I'll throw in 10 feet because it is an issue if people are biking. They need room.

S. Couture: If people are indifferent, then we should stick with the 12 feet.

D. Tatem: The last thing is Steve had asked me to send a template for a temporary construction easement for the Therrien property. You can change the wording to suit your needs. I also have photos of what the bridge would look like. The span will be a 35-foot bridge. You could do a wood handrail. We did the one at Livingston Park in Manchester, which we have a picture of. It can cost up to \$8,000-\$10,000 for the design. You will probably save money with the steel, but the wood one is more aesthetic. We can help you pick the best option to fit your budget.

P. Fitanides: How long would it take to design it?

D. Tatem: Probably a couple weeks. The structural design comes from the contractor.

C. Robertson: What is the walking material?

D. Tatem: It will be wood.

D. Hess: Do you have a cost estimate for the stick built versus the pre-fab?

D. Tatem: We don't have the cost yet. It's so variable with an individually designed structure.

P. Fitanides: Do we have our choice of wood? We will get a lot more life out of a marine pressure-treated wood.

D. Tatem: There are also composite materials you can use. The only drawback to the composite is that it's slippery when wet. When we get down to the technical design you can specify what kind of materials.

D. Hess: On this it says that they have 50-foot spans so it sounds like you can get a 35-foot span without having to bolt it together, it would just be a single span.

D. Tatem: The problem is transporting it. They would probably do it in two pieces. It depends on the roads it would be transported down. If you want to go with the wood, you could get the wood railing and pursue the most cost effective material.

P. Fitanides: The composites attract mold and are very hard to clean. If it's wood you will run into splinters down the road, no matter how it's treated. What about stainless steel?

J. Donison: The steel options they present in the package are a good option if you want something low-maintenance.

D. Tatem: We will look further into those. We will get a package of different options to you. According to the DES guideline, they would like a 2-foot clearance so the sun can get under there so it doesn't kill everything under it. It has to be under 32 inches to meet ADA standards. There is a picture of the mats I was talking about. That will reduce your impact considerably. The farm bridge is on the third page. It will be on concrete abutments. We haven't figured out the detail for the ones that are only going to be on screw piles. There needs to be a treatment to keep the gravel from going under the bridge. We are still finalizing details.

P. Fitanides: We're doing a lot of work on a pretty large tract of land. It depends on the season, but you never know who's going to be out there and what time. Did we make any provisions for any type of shelters out there?

D. Tatem: We are proposing some turnoff areas where we might put a bench or something out there. Our trail specialist mentioned that some people can't walk two miles of trails without needing to stop. We hadn't thought of shelters, but certainly stopping areas. That's all I have for you tonight.

D. Hess: One question on Fish & Game and the trail, did they ever give you any documentation regarding eagles?

D. Tatem: There is documentation from NHB that I can send you.

S. Couture: Thanks for your work and your flexibility.

D. Tatem: Thank you.

S. Couture motioned to sign off on the wetlands permit application for the trail project. Seconded by P. Fitanides. Motion passed. D. Hess abstained.

D. Tatem: Quick question, you asked me not to do my billing this month. This billing has three different charges from our subs. The way that our policies work is that we bill you, you pay us, and then we pay them in 60-90 days. Can I bill just those four charges maybe in two weeks to make them not wait a whole month, or if you need to wait a month let me know. I want to make

sure I don't screw up your funding timing. Maybe Carolyn can look into it tomorrow and get back to me.

S. Couture: If you bill it, in order for us to pay it, we have to meet. We are meeting again September 14th.

D. Tatem: So if I bill it tomorrow, you won't approve it until then anyway.

S. Couture: I would bill us in the beginning of September.

D. Tatem: OK, I'll do that.

Other

S. Couture: Our Eagle Scout that's been working with us on the Pinnacle has come up with a kiosk design proposal based on the Appalachian bulletin board format. He's done some research and come up with a proposal. The kiosk will be on the right side of the trail. As directed, he's copied the example that's already there at Head's Pond. He has a nice map. The estimated cost of the kiosk is \$1,400 and he raised \$620. He plans on purchasing the supplies from Home Depot. He would like to complete the entire project by mid-September. There are impact fees that are still slated for the Pinnacle, which will help. He has priorities and deadlines. The only thing left for us to do now is to forward this to Parks & Rec for him to coordinate with them. They are the ones that will give the exact placement. It would be nice if at the same time we could get the rock placed with the plaque or attach the plaque to the kiosk. Dave, if we forward this to Diane Boyce would you be willing to be the contact person with regard to the plaque?

D. Hess: Yes. Could you please give me a hard copy of the proposal materials?

C. Cronin: Yes.

S. Couture motioned to approve the proposal by Justin Taylor for his Eagle Scout project at Pinnacle Peak and forward it to Parks & Rec and request that they place the rock with the plaques, and to make sure we see the content of the kiosk before it is placed there. Seconded by C. Robertson. Motion passed.

S. Couture: If he intends to do the content of the kiosk, we just need to get back to him and say don't place anything until we see it. Carolyn, could you forward this on and respond to Justin with our comments and find out if he intended to just build the kiosk or do the content as well?

C. Cronin: Yes.

M. Paul: I can map the trails to provide it for the content of the kiosk if you'd like.

a. Merrimack Riverfront Trail System Project

S. Couture: Did you all see the email I sent around about the potential Moose Plate grant writing assistance? She said it wouldn't cost any more than \$700. She's put together applications before. I talked to the administrator of the grant program about using the money for the bridges and culvert work for agricultural activity. It seems like a nice fit. We already have matching funds. I think we would have a good application. What do folks think? Do you want to invest in having a grant writer for this? She used to run the program.

P. Fitandes: Did you check the statutes? I've mentioned before that the funds are supposed to be only for the improvement of highways.

D. Hess: No, not the Moose Plate. Moose Plate has a special designation for use for conservation. That's why you pay more for the Moose Plate.

P. Fitandes: I'm talking about the constitutional aspect of it.

D. Hess: Not for the Moose Plate though. For gas tax it's different.

P. Fitandes: I'll send it to you.

J. Woodburn: Do we know if anyone else in town is going for a grant?

S. Couture: If anyone, it would be Heritage Commission.

J. Woodburn: Does that matter? Will we be competing with them?

S. Couture: We've both applied for LCHIP in the past. Cultural heritage is a separate pot from conservation.

D. Hess motioned to authorize Steve to negotiate a contract for the Moose Plate grant application not to exceed \$700. Seconded by J. Woodburn. Motion passed.

S. Couture: The teacher, Mrs. Brotherson, who came here about a year ago, contacted me again. I was wondering if anyone wants to be the point person for her about educational and historic opportunities for students at the middle school. Would anyone be interested in being a contact point with her to discuss projects?

D. Miville: I'm intrigued by the prospect. I would need to know more, though, before I make a commitment.

S. Couture: I think it would just entail having conversations and keeping her updated on the Merrimack Riverfront project. I think she would be open to a lot of things.

D. Miville: My field is education so I would be excited to work with the school system on this.

S. Couture: Perfect fit. Thank you.

i. Schedule Public Informational Meeting

S. Couture: We should probably wait until after we get our permits to have the meeting. That way we will know what exactly is approved. My guess is either sometime in September or October.

D. Miville: What's the process for that?

S. Couture: We would definitely send a letter to abutters and hopefully have a date and a flyer in time for Old Home Day so we could promote it. We would probably have it at the Library so it would be on their bulletin board. We did the same for Clay Pond.

b. Conservation Easement Medallion Order

C. Cronin: Mila did a draft of the rules and regulations for Clay Pond based off of the Pinnacle signage.

Consensus to remove “unless special permission is granted by the Hooksett Police Department,” remove “no profane language,” remove “children under the age of 13 must be supervised by an adult,” remove “recreational” from “no motorized vehicles,” add the word “please,” add “no motorized vehicles except for snowmobiles on Chester Turnpike,” and call it “Guidance for Enjoying Clay Pond Properties”

S. Couture: This is great work. Thank you.

M. Paul: We need seven signs. For medallions, it sounds like the most useful design would be the “Conservation Land Boundary.” It costs extra for each design, so you could pick one now and order more in the future if you need others.

J. Woodburn: How many should we order?

M. Paul: It depends where you want them, at the corners or every 200 feet? You could put them just at the corners and blaze and paint every 200 feet. You could start with 100 medallions.

S. Couture: Something we need to add to a future agenda is an item about developer requirements. When we receive conservation land as a result of development, it should be on the developer to survey the land, post it, and put in boundary markers. It's something we need to discuss and we should propose it be added to the Development Regulations.

S. Couture motioned to authorize expending up to \$225 with shipping for conservation medallions. Seconded by J. Woodburn. Motion passed.

M. Paul: I found a couple easement breaches. One is at Glencrest Estates. I have to double check because the digital mapping might be slightly off. It looks as though there is a person there who has their lawn into the easement and is mowing grass where there should be trees. I don't know how things work financially in terms of easement breach situations, but I found one at Farrwood too and I talked to JoCarol about that. There is one, maybe two gravel trails on the easement and a metal gate.

S. Couture: We haven't had any enforcement actions on these yet. I'm really not sure how it's supposed to work as far as Town resources. We are just volunteers. I would ask Carolyn to talk to staff and come up with some kind of policy. I think the most valuable thing this internship has done is validate that we have work to do.

M. Paul: Concord has a really reasonable model on how they proceed. I made notes in the "To Do" List. An intern could initiate the first and second steps but the rest has to be Code Enforcement.

P. Fitanides: Can we find out how long the life span of the medallions is and if they are resistant to fading?

M. Paul: They are very sturdy, but I can look into it.

D. Hess: There's a breach at Merrimack Riverfront too. People are mowing into the easement. I suspect it is unintentional and they just don't know it is conservation land. We should hold an informational neighborhood meeting explaining there are conservation lands and what the boundaries and restrictions are.

S. Couture: I think it could be as easy as just sending a letter to them. I want to thank Mila again for your efforts. You have us moving in a very good direction. It's appreciated. Any other comments or questions?

D. Hess: With the kiosk in Pinnacle going up, we should consider extending the southern end with a loop between Pinnacle Street and the Pinnacle itself. We have always talked about having a trail there.

S. Couture: While we are talking about breaches, Diane Boyce let us know that on the Head's Pond trail one of the houses has built steps and a trail from their house into the trail and then down into the water, as well. There may be a violation there. We are looking into it.

c. Other Business: Invoices, Correspondences, etc.

S. Couture: We got a deposit in our Current Use account. We are now up to \$600,000. Sometime between June 30th and July 31st our account went up \$100,000. As of June 30th we had \$511,000 and according to this statement received August 6th, we have \$611,000. I'm not sure what transferred out of Current Use.

J. Woodburn: It may have been from the Warrant Article.

S. Couture: Yes, they may have transferred that but it doesn't specify. That would make sense. We have a subdivision application on Chester Tpke to create two new residential lots.

C. Cronin: Yes, Mila and I were looking at that today. That is currently one of the areas where people are parking to access Clay Pond. There's a gravel turnaround where the Class VI road ends and now there are going to be three house lots there. You may want to consider sending comments to the Planning Board about that in regard to Clay Pond parking.

M. Paul: That is identified as a place to park on the Stewardship Plan.

S. Couture: On something such as this, do we have a lot of wiggle room as far as what we can ask for?

C. Cronin: Well you can ask for anything, I don't know if they'll grant it. I brought Jim Donison, our new Town Engineer's, draft comments on this. They are just a draft but his recommendation is that the homeowner provides a 20-foot by 20-foot easement on that gravel area for the purposes of allowing Town vehicles to turn around. He is requesting an easement for a turnaround but not about parking.

S. Couture: I'm not sure if that area is in the Right of Way or not.

C. Cronin: Right, that was confusing to me because I couldn't figure out why they are allowing people to park there when it's privately owned land, or why they would recommend that on the Stewardship Plan. So I don't know if this owner would be amenable to having parking for trails on their property. I'm assuming the owner is doing this subdivision to sell it.

S. Couture: Yes, if he is making three lots, I'm sure he will be marketing them.

C. Cronin: Right, so I don't know that having public parking would be a desirable land use to have there, so I don't know how well that would go over but you can certainly try and ask.

M. Paul: If that happens would signage be posted there with rules and regulations?

S. Couture: It seems like since we already have this comment, that the most effective way would be to piggyback on top of it and say in addition to the request in this memo for the turnaround easement, it would be in the best interest of the Town to have parking for trail access to the Clay Pond properties in that same area. Since he is already asking for a turnaround easement, it makes it a little easier for us to ask.

S. Couture motioned to request a parking easement in addition to the turnaround easement on the proposed Lot 2 for the Griskus 3-lot subdivision. Seconded by P. Fitanides. Motion passed.

S. Couture: We got a wetlands permit from the DOT for maintenance and culvert work. It's on the other side of the river by I-93. I have no concerns as it's just maintenance work.

C. Robertson motioned to adjourn at 6:07pm. Seconded by D. Hess. Motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn Cronin

Assistant Planner/Conservation Commission Staff Support