

**Stratham Conservation Commission**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**Public Session**  
**September 24, 2014**

**Conservation Commission Members Present:** Tim Copeland, Pat Elwell, Allison Knab, Bob Keating, Bill Kenny, Dan McAuliffe, Bill McCarthy

Town of Stratham employees present: Paul Deschaine

Meeting Called to order @ 7:02 PM

Allison introduced a neighbor who is considering joining the CC.

Bill Kenny introduced Jeff Barnum, Great Bay/Piscataqua “Waterkeeper” from the Conservation Law Foundation. Jeff spoke about “Challenges Facing Great Bay.”

He explained that the “Waterkeeper” program is worldwide, with approximately 200 Waterkeepers around the globe. Their focus is clean water, air and energy. There are 42 NH towns and 10 Maine towns in the Great Bay watershed.

The health of the bay depends on the health of the eelgrass and oysters in the watershed. In 1986 there were approx. 2900 acres of eelgrass. In 2014, only 1373 acres of eelgrass exist. The loss of eelgrass is primarily due to the increased amount of sediment which prevents eelgrass from getting light for photosynthesis. In 1993 there were approximately 1100 acres of oyster beds which would filter the entire bay of sediment and nitrogen in 2-3 days. Today there are only 100 acres of oyster beds. The loss of the oyster beds has been due to over-harvesting, disease but primarily increased amounts of sediment.

There are 18 wastewater treatment plants in the watershed that are a point source of nitrogen loading into the bay. Another point source has been the scrap metal piles in Portsmouth as they have been unable/unwilling to control stormwater runoff. Pease Development Authority is not renewing the Grimmel contract for the scrap metal. The current contract will expire at the end of this year.

More than 35% of nitrogen is caused by atmospheric deposition for which there is little control. The remaining percentage of of nitrogen loading comes from land non-point sources. One primary source comes from lawn care fertilization. Approx. 40% of area homes fertilize and 20% use a company.

Jeff explained that “smart fertilizing” is one of the primary education efforts that towns can pursue to help reduce nitrogen run-off into the bay. Other efforts would be to pass a stormwater ordinance, use asphalt-based driveway sealcoat instead of coal/tar based sealcoat, and education about septic maintenance. In addition, using pervious pavement where possible is advised.

The Jeff has a boat and is willing to escort up to 3-4 people at a time on a tour of the watershed. His contact information is: [jbarnum@cfl.org](mailto:jbarnum@cfl.org) and website is [www.cfl.org/great-bay-waterkeeper/](http://www.cfl.org/great-bay-waterkeeper/)

*CC Meeting Minutes:*

Tim moved, Bill seconded, approving the accepting minutes of the September 10, 2014 meeting with corrections. Motion passed unanimously.

Allison will submit approved minutes to the town office.

*NHACC Annual Meeting*

Bob moved, Dan seconded, paying for Pat to go to the NHACC meeting on Nov. 1 since Pat will not be speaking on behalf of the 4H program. Motion passed unanimously. The CC can send a student to the meeting for free. Allison will follow up with the Librarian to see if there are any students who may have an interest in this.

*Rollins Hill Development*

Paul gave an update of the Public hearing held at the Oct. 1 Planning Board meeting regarding the Rollins Hill Development. The applicant presented and updated design that was reviewed by the CC. The CC felt that the applicant did not feel that the applicant had offered any serious consideration of the development impact would have on the natural resources on the parcel. Pat moved, Bob seconded authorizing Allison to write a second letter to the Planning Board. The motion passed unanimously. The letter will reiterate the following CC concerns about the development:

- This project has regional impact and abutting towns should be brought to the table for discussion/review
- The project is in the Dearborn watershed and is addressed in the Stratham NRI as an area of concern
- Lot 48 seems to be new to the plan and cuts off additional wildlife corridor access.
- The road should not be considered a wildlife corridor.
- A hydrogeological should be REQUIRED
- Test pits must be witnessed, the CC does not feel that the wording of the regulations exempt the developer from this standard requirement.

*PB Stormwater Subcommittee:*

Paul noted that the PB has a Stormwater Subcommittee, consisting of Jamie Payne, Bob Baskerville, Lincoln Daley and Julie Labranche (RPC rep), that is going to review storm water regulations soon. It has not been determined whether this will be written as a regulation or as an ordinance.

### *Municipal Updates*

Paul provided the following updates:

- Last week he attended the Town Managers conference in Charlotte NC and noted that all of the towns were discussing stormwater and how to meet new EPA regs.
- The Town Center details are still being worked out.
- The new ball field has installed behind the Municipal Center.

Pat noted that she attended the Button Up program that discussed ways to “button up” homes to conserve heat and energy.

There will be a Selectmen’s meeting on October 20<sup>th</sup> to discuss goal for the park/forest. Allison will work with Lincoln to have a joint meeting with the Park Association prior to the Selectmen’s meeting to discuss how we would like to proceed with working with a forester.

The Hazardous Waste Collection will take place on October 4 at the Exeter PW Dept. Paul, Bob and Pat all volunteered to assist with the collection.

Bill K moved, Bob seconded adjourning the meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

**Next regular meeting scheduled for 7 PM on Wednesday, October 8th at the Municipal Center.**

Respectfully Submitted:

Pat Elwell