

**Stratham Conservation Commission  
Meeting Minutes  
Public Session  
August 27, 2014**

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

Town of Stratham employees present: Lincoln Daley, Colin Laverty

Meeting Called to order @ 7:02 PM

*CC Meeting Minutes:*

Pat moved, Tim seconded, accepting minutes of the June 28, 2014 meeting with corrections. Motion passed unanimously.

Pat moved, Tim seconded, accepting minutes of the July 9, 2014 meeting with corrections. Motion passed unanimously.

Tim moved, Bill M seconded, accepting minutes of the August 12, 2014 meeting with corrections. Motion passed unanimously.

Allison will submit approved minutes to the town office.

*Harmony Hill Cemetery*

Colin Laverty, Chair of the Cemetery Trustees, presented the plan for his committee to expand the Harmony Hill Cemetery (behind the Stratham Community Church). They will be clearing 4 acres, leaving hardwoods, pine, red oak, and hemlock trees along the abutters border. They are avoiding wetlands and are within the wetland setbacks. Colin presented information to explain the layout.

The Conservation Commission was pleased with the overall design planned and appreciated that one paved road down the middle had been eliminated from the original design to help reduce impervious surface. Pat asked if porous pavement could be used. This would add 3x the cost to the project (approx.. \$8,000 to \$24,000). Tim stated the town does not have the equipment to handle the cleaning required of porous pavement, but Colin noted that the cemetery is closed in the winter and the roads around the stones are not salted, sanded or plowed in the winter. Since the plan is expected to take the town needs out another 130+ years, Pat asked if it was necessary to complete the entire paving project now, perhaps some other type of pavement or pavers could be considered due to the proximity to the wetlands. Colin will bring comments back to his committee

*Rollins Hill Development*

A preliminary conceptual meeting was held with the Planning Board regarding the Rollins Hill Development. Lincoln presented information to the CC about the concerns raised at the meeting.

All of the roads into the project are hammer heads and designed to avoid any wetlands or wetland setbacks. However, 48 homes are being proposed for this ecologically sensitive area that abuts both North Hampton and Exeter and is at the head waters for Parkman Brook. Some residents from North Hampton expressed hydrology concerns since they have had dry wells in the area and this would be adding “48 more straws” into the available water resources. They also expressed at the meeting, and in an email to Allison, concerns about the cutting of trees that may have been impacting wetlands, but Lincoln said that had been investigated by code enforcement and that it was not impacting wetlands and would only be considered a landowner clearing trees from their private property. There would be a gated emergency access road being required for secondary access down to the industrial park.

The town will be having soil scientist Mike Cuomo review all wetland delineations and will also supervise the 2 test pits per proposed lots. The project is under the “Retirement Planned Community” zoning designation that allows smaller ½ acre lots. All open space proposed in this plan appears to be wet and would not allow for use. Since it abuts the towns of North Hampton and Exeter the planning process will most likely trigger the “regional impact” status. According to Lincoln, the developer is expected to make the following waiver requests: the roads be public (ie, town maintenance), 22’ v 24’ road width, septic designs, secondary access. The next stage of the process would be the October 1 Planning Board meeting/public hearing to accept the proposal as complete.

CC discussion expressed concerns regarding the wildlife corridor and wetlands impacts as well as the hydrology of the area, specifically how this would impact the Parkman Brook area since that feeds into both North Hampton wells and the Exeter water supply.

Pat will write a letter from the Conservation Commission requesting that the PB require a Hydrogeological Study and a Natural Resources Inventory prior to the approval of this project. The Natural resources inventory should be conducted in the Fall, Spring or Summer and NOT in the winter in order to be able to identify potentially significant flora and fauna in the area, vernal pools, and other important ecologically sensitive features. The CC also requested that Lincoln schedule the applicant to come before the Conservation Commission on September 10 around 7:30 to present their plan and discuss concerns.

#### *Town Forest:*

Bill spoke with Seth regarding the marking of the town forest borders with the new metal markers in conjunction with the marking of the forest with no hunting signs. Seth has already placed some no hunting signs but still needs to go out with GPS and continue the project. Seth offered to put up the CC markers at the same time and will contact us when he is ready to continue the project in the fall.

Lincoln would like to schedule a joint meeting with Seth, Rec Dept, and the Stratham Hill Park Association to get the process going to come up with a scope of work for a forest management plan so it can go out to bid and be in place to occur in the Spring of 2015. He will ask all parties to attend the Sept. 10 CC meeting at 7 pm.

*Scamman property Corn Maze:*

Lincoln explained to the CC that there were some potential concerns as to whether or not the Scamman corn maze was an approved use for this conserved property.

Per NHDES and SELT, this would be an approved use however parking was a concern. They can allow parking in the field as long as there are not “too many” cars that would destroy the soil underneath.

*Town Center:*

Lincoln provided the CC with an update on this project. Included in the project will be a bio-retention drainage area, bike lanes, sidewalks, lighting, improving the intersection of 33/Winnicut Rd and better defined lanes on Route 33. Some of the specific aspects still require approval by the Selectmen. Brad expressed concerns about how sidewalks will ruin the appearance of newly conserved land, but later found that the sidewalks would not be on that side of the road.

*Water/Sewer update:*

Lincoln stated that the negotiations regarding water and sewer delivery from Portsmouth were continuing. The overall discussions have been positive and would be very beneficial to the town as they relate to reducing impacts under MS4. The town is looking at a potential warrant article in 2015 to approve and engineering study.

*ESRLAC:*

Donna Jensen may be appointed as the Stratham Representative to ESRLAC by the Selectmen.

Tim moved, Dan seconded, moving into non-public session to discuss potential purchase of conservation property. Motion passed unanimously.

Following the non-public session, Tim moved, Bill Kenny seconded coming out of non public session.

Allison has a neighbor possibly interested in joining the CC. Tim suggested he fill out the application that is online and submit it to the Selectman for approval.

*Waterkeeper Program*

Bill K has contacted other Conservation Commissions and provided the Wiggin Memorial Library with a flyer that has been sent to other local libraries regarding the Great Bay program being hosted by the CC on September 24. Pat will send an e-blast about the program and Lincoln will provide information to the WISE group about the program.

*Mail review:*

- NHDES has approved the alteration of terrain application for Subaru
- NHDES has approved the 319,000 sq. ft. wetlands disturbance for UNITIL to install a pipe under the Squamscott River.
- NHDES has approved logging at Scamman's with minimum wetlands impact.
- NHACC Annual meeting and conference is scheduled for Nov. 1. The topic is inspiring young conservationists. Pat will plan on attending since she may be speaking at the program as a 4H representative.

Tim moved to adjourn, Bill M seconded. Motion passed unanimously 8:59 pm.

**Next regular meeting scheduled for 7 PM on Wednesday, September 10th at the Municipal Center.**

Respectfully Submitted:

Pat Elwell