

Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes, April 23, 2015

Present: Bill McCarthy, Bob Keating, Pat Elwell, Donna Jensen, Bob Keating, Brad Jones, Allison Knab, Bill Kenny, Dan McAuliffe, Select Board Representative Tim Copeland, Town Administrator Paul Deschaine

Public Session

The meeting was called to order at 7:05pm.

Minutes

There were no minutes available for review.

Mail

A letter from NHDES notified the town that Unitil has begun replacement of the natural gas lines adjacent and beneath the Squamscott River and Route 101 in Stratham.

Land Locked Wood Lot

Bob O'Sullivan and Sara Gallagher from the Stratham Memorial School Board approached Pat Elwell about donating a school-owned wood lot. The lot is adjacent to the Gordon Barker Town Forest and the Short Property that will be put in conservation easement later this year. After a phone call to Mr O'Sullivan, Pat and Paul ascertained that the wood lot is approximately 1.4 acres in size and located on the old town map 12. The commission discussed receiving the parcel pending a deed review and as long as there would be no cost to the town associated with accepting the parcel as a gift. Pat moved and Tim seconded the motion that the commission would accept the parcel given the stated conditions. It would be a benefit to have the property in conservation, as it is contiguous with other open spaces.

Rollins Hill Farm Residential Development

The developers of the proposed development at Rollins Hill Farm Road revised its plans to the project, which were delivered to the town on April 23. The revised plans include an additional lot (total 47) from the prior plan, and also included pervious pavement for the road, which would be private. Some of the issues previously identified as actionable were not addressed, including most importantly inadequate setbacks from the vernal pools and the Atlantic White Cedar swamp. It was also noted that the proposed road way was still appeared in the 25-foot buffer zone adjacent to a vernal pool-associated wetland. It has been suggested by Lincoln Daley (town planner) that the commission send another letter to the Stratham Planning Board identifying more conservative setbacks for these sensitive wetland areas, citing the UNH Fact Sheet and other authoritative source recommendations for Atlantic White Cedar swamps and vernal pools. The commission suggested the most conservative recommendations were provided by the Army Corp of Engineers who urge a 1000-foot setback for some wetlands.

Wigin Memorial Library Book Donation

Dan moved and Pat seconded a motion to reimburse Allison \$43.99 for the purchase of the Caroline Robinson memorial book. The motion passed unanimously.

Stratham Circle Collector's Eye Proposed Property Development

The 5.7 acre parcel is for sale at the property located at the Stratham circle. The realtor listing the property at 132 Portsmouth Avenue is working with a developer who would like to create a mixed-use commercial property that would include a bank with drive through service lane, which would require demolition of the historic barn on the site. The commission discussed it briefly and identified many concerns with it including high-density use next to the sensitive Mill Pond feeding a stream leading to the Great Bay. The 100-plus parking spaces proposed for the site were also a concern given the perilous traffic at the circle. The Planning Board will hear the developer's proposal during the next planned meeting (May 6).

Post Event Issues from the April 18 Bin Sales and Annual Road Side Clean-Up Day

There were approximately 60-70 volunteers in attendance for the clean-up day. Donna will complete the paper work documenting the clean up for the NH the Beautiful organization that provided the blue trash bags.

Bob Keating picked a name out of a hat for the compost bin raffle. The winner was Jeff Simeone. Bill Kenny will notify the winner by phone.

There are still several compost bins available for sale, which remain unsold following the annual sale. Bill Kenny reported there were 3 rain barrels delivered without tops. He is working with the vendor Northeast Recycle and Recovery Association to receive replacements.

Allison will write thank you letters to volunteers for publication in the Exeter Newsletter. She will also compose a letter of commendation for Colin Lavery for his assistance picking up garbage bags left on the side of the road by volunteers during the clean-up day. She will also compose a third letter to thank Lindt Chocolate for the donation of chocolates.

Zarnowski Property Easement for NHDES Mitigation

Paul Deschaine stated that he was working with Southeast Land Trust to create an easement on the property, which will be placed in easement to mitigate for wetland impacts that will be a part of the Market Basket/Subaru Exeter dealership access road. The Zarnowski building is a town-owned property is adjacent to the Scamman and Scullers properties which have conservation easement on them. Paul asked the commission what language should be included in the easement; the commission scheduled a site walk on Thursday May 7 at 5:30pm to review the parcel.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 pm.

The next meeting will be held May 13, 2015.