

APPROVED

Town of Grantham Grantham Conservation Commission

MEETING MINUTES February 20, 2012

Chairman Richard L. Hocker called the Conservation Commission to order on Monday, February 20, 2012, at 7:02 p.m. The meeting was held in the Jerry Whitney Memorial Room at Grantham Town Hall located at 300 Route 10 South in Grantham, NH.

Present: Chairman Richard (Dick) Hocker; Jeremy Turner; Merle Schotanus; Lindsey Dixon; David Wood; Joe Watts (*Alternate*); and Kristina Burgard (*Alternate*).

Absent: None

Members of Public: None

ADMINISTRATIVE

Approval of Minutes for 16 January 2012 Meeting

Chair Hocker asked the Commission members if there were any additions, corrections, or modifications to the draft minutes for the January 16, 2012 meeting.

Watts requested the following corrections: page 3, 2nd full paragraph, line 3, insert “to” before “landowners”; and page 4, 2nd full paragraph, line 5, insert “is” before “about.” Burgard asked that at the bottom of page 4, every instance of “McIntyre” be changed to “McIntire”.

With no further corrections suggested, a motion was made by Schotanus to approve and accept the January 16, 2012 Minutes as amended; second by Wood. There being no further discussion, the motion was put to a vote.

Unanimously Approved & Accepted

OTHER BUSINESS

Land Issues

Frog Pond

Chair Hocker advised that the Frog Pond project appears to be close to being finalized. Last week, Ken Ryder affirmed that there will be a resolution making the Eastman Council responsible for determining in the future what, if anything, is done on this property. Thereafter, a submission will be made to NH DES to see if they approve this course of action.

[At this point, Commissioner Wood joined the meeting.]

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Stevens Institute Parcel

Chair Hocker reported that he is still attempting to reach Dawne DiSilva at Stevens Institute for a follow-up to their discussion a few months ago. Schotanus noted that this property was extensively lumbered a few years ago, and queried if anyone knew how Stevens Institute came to own the property. Burgard volunteered to search the Registry of Deeds for information, and report back to the Commission.

Chaloux Property

Chair Hocker indicated that the Chaloux property is a 9.6-acre parcel abutting the Town Forest that is essentially land-locked as it cannot be reached without crossing another owner's property. The Commission agreed that it would be worth investigating possible acquisition of this property and annexing it to the Town Forest.

Cote & Reney Properties

Chair Hocker reported that three letters were received from Mr. Todd McIntire: one relating to an ~0.77-acre triangular parcel where Stocker Brook comes out; another relating to ~2.3 acres of a larger parcel by the intersection of Route 114 and Stony Brook Road; and the third relating to ~3.5 acres of a larger parcel east of the retail lumberyard that contains the boat launch. Chair Hocker noted that the first parcel is potentially large enough for a small parking area, subject to DOT approval, and at least kayak's could be launched from there, though probably not canoes. Mr. McIntire is proposing that the Town purchase this piece of property from him, but set no asking price. The appraised value for tax purposes is about \$1,500.

Schotanus noted that acting on one or more of these proposals could be an initial step towards protecting the valuable water assets in this area, which also has significant recreational value. Wood noted that the 0.77-acre parcel seems to have little value on its own, thus it seems better to consider it in the context of the other properties being offered. Burgard noted that with regard to the two other proposals, the parcel sections offered in the letters are much smaller than what Mr. McIntire suggested when he met with the Commission, and protecting such small areas of the much larger wetlands on the Cote & Reney property has significantly less value in connection with protecting the water and wetland assets there. The other Commissioners agreed.

Schotanus will follow-up with Mr. McIntire regarding his proposals, and discuss with him the Commission's concerns regarding the offered wetland parcel pieces being such small sections of the overall wetland areas on his property.

Planning for Conservation

Continued Planning for Wetlands Inventory project – Next steps

Schotanus asked if there were any updates regarding the Wetlands Inventory project. Watts reported that 85 follow-up letters went out to the first two batches of landowners previously contacted. To date, he has received 5 more positive responses, and 1 negative response, and that now there are 41 recipients that have not responded. Watts suggested next steps might include the Commission reviewing the list of landowners who have yet to responded to identify those

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they know, and each Commissioner would follow-up with those they know, and the rest would be divided equally between the Commissioners. Watts indicated that the letters to landowners not previously contacted would go out sometime in March.

Schotanus asked if there was anything else. Burgard reported that the draft *Eastman Living* article would be sent in by the upcoming deadline, but it is not clear whether it will make the issue. The new editor has indicated she will do her best to get it in, but it will depend on the total space they have for that issue.

Town Meeting Prep

Chair Hocker indicated that in the next few days, he will confirm with the Selectmen and Moderator whether or not the Commission will be allowed to have an information booth during the ballot voting parts of the Town Meeting day, and report back to the Commission. If it is possible, Chair Hocker proposes setting up a table similar to last year, including the large maps. Burgard noted that she still has numerous copies of various handouts, such as the Wetlands Inventory FAQ, Habitat Stewardship brochures, Dollars & Sense of Conservation, and the like, which can be offered at the table. She also suggested that a copy of the first e-Newsletter be on-hand, as well as a sheet for people to sign-up to receive the e-Newsletter.

Chair Hocker stated that the last warrant article at Town Meeting relates to the request for additional funds for the Land Preservation Capital Reserve Fund. Schotanus stated that he felt there would be support for the warrant article as written. Burgard noted the primary reason for putting in a request for funds in this year's warrant articles is to replace the ~\$60,000 that was unexpectedly spent this year in connection with the wetlands mitigation needs for the new soccer field permit from DES. She proposed that someone from the Commission submit an amendment decreasing the amount requested to \$60,000. The Commissioner's generally agreed with this, and Schotanus also suggested amending the source to be the Fund Balance surplus.

OTHER BUSINESS – Additional Items

Chair Hocker asked if any one had additional items to discuss. Turner indicated he had two items he wanted to discuss with the Commission. The first item relates to a refund owed to Bruce Streeter, the forester who worked on the recent timber harvest in the Town Forest. Prior to the harvest, as a performance bond he deposited an estimated stumpage tax payment in the amount of \$370, but the actual amount due is \$270. Thus, he is owed a refund of \$100. Chair Hocker indicated he would follow up with the Town Administrator regarding the refund.

Turner inquired about where the proceeds for the Town Forest timber harvest were deposited. Chair Hocker indicated that he advised the Town Administrator and Treasurer that these funds should be deposited in the dedicated Town Forest Maintenance Fund, but at this time, it is unclear whether the Town is maintaining this as a separate fund. Turner indicated that these funds are required by statute (RSA 31:113) to be kept in a separate special fund. Schotanus and Burgard supported Turner's statement, and Burgard suggested that a letter be sent to the Board

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of Selectmen and Town Treasurer regarding the need for keeping Town Forest money in a special, separate fund, and that the recent timber harvest proceeds should be deposited in that fund. Chair Hocker indicated he would prepare and send such a letter.

Turner reported to the Commission his home is up for sale, and he may be moving out of Town soon. He indicated that he would continue to serve on the Commission as long as he could, but wanted the Commission to be aware that he may need to resign soon.

Schotanus acknowledged and offered Turner congratulations on the marvelous job he did on the forestry tour he recently gave on the Reney Memorial Forest property in conjunction with representatives from the Society to Protect New Hampshire Forests.

HAND OUTS

Saving Special Places 2012 Meeting Reminder – 1 page

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Hocker asked if there was any further business. There being none, Burgard moved to adjourn, and Schotanus seconded the motion.

The Commission voted unanimously to adjourn at 8:43 p.m.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be at 7:00 p.m. on March 19, 2012, in the Jerry Whitney Memorial Conference Room.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristina Burgard

Kristina Burgard
Grantham Conservation Commission, *Alternate*

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