

APPROVED

Town of Grantham Grantham Conservation Commission

MEETING MINUTES

May 21, 2012

Chairman Richard L. Hocker called the Conservation Commission to order on Monday, May 21, 2012, at 7:04 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; Merle Schotanus; Kristina Burgard; Lindsey Dixon; Joe Watts (*Alternate*); and David Wood (*Alternate*).

Absent: Jeremy Turner

Members of Public: None

ADMINISTRATIVE

Approval of Minutes for 16 April 2012 Meeting

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

There being no corrections, Watts moved to approve and accept the April 16, 2012 Minutes as written; second by Wood. There being no further discussion, the motion was put to a vote.

Unanimously Approved & Accepted

NEW BUSINESS

None

OTHER BUSINESS

Land Issues

Cote & Reney Properties

Schotanus reported that the Board of Selectmen acted on the application for current use in connection with the Cote & Reney properties, and approved 38.3 acres for current use of which approximately 29 acres is wetlands.

Schotanus also reported that an agreement was signed for NH Fish & Game to acquire title to the two Cote & Reney parcels providing access to open water, i.e., the 0.77 acre stand-alone parcel providing access to Bog Brook and the approximate 3.5 acre piece of the larger parcel containing the boat launch to Stocker Pond (which will be subdivided from the existing large parcel), subject to the conditions that the parcels are perpetually open to the public and provide public access for recreation on the water, and are dedicated to Beverly Reney. The closing is estimated for October. Mr. McIntire has completed surveys of these two parcels, and asked if the

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Conservation Commission would provide support for obtaining an appraisal to support the value of each of the donated Bog Brook and sub-divided Stocker Pond landing parcels.

Wood inquired about the status of the triangular parcel at the corner of Stony Brook Road, which has the pseudo-road through it, that Mr. McIntire wanted to donate to the Town. Schotanus advised that he believes that this issue will be taken up again in the future, but for now Mr. McIntire is focused on the donation of the two parcels to Fish & Game.

There being no further discussion, Schotanus moved that the Commission encumber up to \$1000 from the Conservation Fund to support the cost of an appraisal of the Cote & Reney Stocker Pond landing parcel and the Bog Brook landing parcel that will be performed close in time to when NH Fish & Game takes possession of these parcels; Watts seconded the motion. There being no further discussion, the motion was put to a vote.

Unanimously Approved

Hastings Lot Memorial

Chair Hocker opened the discussion tabled at the previous meeting regarding a memorial plaque for the Hastings parcel acquired by Upper Valley Land Trust (“UVLT”) in connection with the Recreation Park’s wetlands mitigation. Hocker reported that UVLT has no objection to erecting a memorial plaque. Watts stated that as previously reported, a bronze plaque, approximately 8”x12”, with a metal anchoring post costs about \$600, and this type of plaque would be anchored in place by putting concrete in the post hole. Watts also restated the other options, including an engraving on a rock that is taken to the engraver, or having the engraver go out to the site and engrave a boulder. After some discussion, it was agreed that the best option would be the bronze plaque mounted on a metal anchoring post secured in the ground with concrete.

There being no further discussion, Burgard moved that the Commission obtain a bronze memorial plaque, approximately 8”x12”, for posting on a secured pole, which plaque is engraved using language substantially similar to one of the suggestions provided by Ms. Hastings; second by Watts. There being no further discussion, the motion was put to a vote.

Unanimously Approved

Burgard also moved to expend up to Seven Hundred Dollars (\$700.00) from the Conservation Fund for the purchase of an engraved bronze memorial plaque and a post and other supplies needed to erect the plaque; second by Dixon. There being no further to discussion, the motion was put to a vote.

Unanimously Approved

Planning for Conservation

Continued Planning for Wetlands Inventory project – Next steps

Chair Hocker asked for any updates relating to the Wetlands Inventory project. Schotanus stated that a refresher Wetlands Inventory Volunteer training took place and asked Dixon to report on that. Dixon stated that the training went well despite the cool weather, but there were some volunteers who could not attend and they requested that another refresher training be

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scheduled, if possible. Dixon advised that the only available dates are either Saturday, May 26th or June 2nd, and the first one is Memorial Day Weekend. After some discussion, it was agreed that Dixon would schedule another refresher training session for Saturday, June 2nd.

Schotanus asked Watts for a landowner update. Watts advised that he received several more returned access permission forms. Watts stated that a letter requesting an opportunity to talk with the Commission accompanied the returned access form granting permission from the Society for the Protection of NH Forests (“SPNHF”). The Commission discussed the best way for responding to this letter, and Schotanus volunteered to coordinate following up with SPNHF.

Schotanus inquired how the volunteers are being apprised of the status of access permission for the Wetland Evaluation Units (“WEUs”). Dixon advised that she created maps that contain the access permission status, and she provides this information for a WEU to the team evaluating that WEU. She will need to update her maps with the new information received by Watts. Burgard volunteered to update the landowner access status list with the information in the latest returned forms, and send the updated list, in parcel number order and divided into WEUs, to Dixon as soon as possible.

Hocker asked Dixon where things stood in terms of the number of WEUs evaluated so far. Dixon indicated that there are teams assigned to a number of units, and she has a few completed evaluations. WEUs are being prioritized based on ease of access and those indicated as highest priority by Dr. Van de Poll. Dixon advised that she needs more teams to volunteer to take WEUs. Wood advised the he and a partner can take several more WEUs, and Hocker advised that he has a team that is ready for more assignments as well.

Schotanus inquired about what is happening with regard to the portions of the Revised NH Method evaluation forms that are solely based on calculations. Dixon indicated that she has the values needed to perform the calculations for each evaluation unit, and has completed the calculations for a number of the WEUs. Volunteers are welcome to calculate these on their own, but she is also willing to do the calculations if the volunteers aren’t comfortable doing so. Burgard inquired whether Dixon would like help with this given her schedule over the next month. Dixon advised that she should be fine, but is willing to train others on the Commission just in case help is needed.

Schotanus asked Burgard for a Public Outreach update. Burgard advised that Wood staffed the Seedling Giveaway table on May 19th, and distributed seedlings and had a number of people sign up for the Commission’s E-News. Burgard is working on the next edition of the E-News for distribution some time in June, and asked if the anyone had a write-up or event they’d like included in the newsletter. Schotanus indicated that there is a write-up of the Barraspur conservation easement, and that Burgard might want to look at that and prepare a quick summary to include in the newsletter. Hocker noted that there are some UVLT events happening in June that Burgard might want to include if the newsletter goes out before they occur.

Burgard reported that the first Earth Day Clean-Up, co-sponsored with the Blue Mountain Snowdusters, was a success. Twelve volunteers came out to help remove trash and recyclables along Croydon Turnpike all the way from Hartshorn Road to the Town borders around Chase

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Pond. In total, 13 bags of recyclables and 7 bags of garbage were removed, as well as some very large objects such as gas tanks, bumpers, and broken timber-dragging chains.

Burgard indicated that another public outreach event the Commission might want to consider is sponsoring an amateur photo contest where all the photos submitted must have been taken within the boundaries of Grantham. Burgard noted that in her opinion there is not enough time to pull this off for Old Home Day, but perhaps such a contest could be arranged for the fall. It was agreed to consider such an event for the fall, or possibly delaying for a year until next spring. The issue will be revisited in the next few months.

Dixon advised that she was approached about whether a group of school children could attend a WEU training session or evaluation. Dixon feels that appropriate attention could not be given to the children at volunteer training sessions or actual evaluations, but feels that a special walk and training could be arranged for children over the summer. Burgard noted that she has tried to arrange something with the school, but it has not worked out due to how busy things are at the school in spring/early summer. She noted that there is a wetland on the school property that would be ideal for leading a walk/training for children, so the Commission could ask the SAU for permission to lead a wetlands education walk on that site over the summer. It was agreed that Dixon and Burgard would coordinate to arrange such a walk some time in the next few months.

Schotanus stated that the Commission should begin to think about the action plan for the next steps of the Wetlands Inventory once the evaluations are completed at the end of next month. EMC/Dr. Van de Poll will be tabulating the results of the evaluations, and then the Commission will work with him regarding the criteria for determining which WEUs should be proposed for prime designation. That in turn will lead to preparation of wetland designation warrant articles and zoning ordinances, which requires coordination with the Planning Board and Zoning Board.

Schotanus feels that the open space inventory should be completed between now and next Town Meeting, and the Commission should move forward with taking the steps to get an open space committee put together so that work can begin. Schotanus stated that he would prepare a proposal for the Commission's review for convening an open space inventory/evaluation committee, likely comprising 1 member of the Commission, 1 member of the Planning Board, and 3-4 members of the public.

In addition, Schotanus noted that in the process of working on the Cote & Reney matters, he had the opportunity to use the updated GRANIT system to pull up information on the aquifer on the Grantham-Springfield border, and he believes further study of aquifers in Grantham is needed. He proposes that an aquifer study follow on after the Wetlands Inventory is completed. It was agreed further discussion about an aquifer study would be taken up in late summer once the evaluation and analysis phases of the Wetlands Inventory are complete.

Perambulation Status

Chair Hocker asked Wood and Watts for an update on the Perambulation. Wood reported that scheduling walk dates with the representatives from other towns has posed some difficulties. He is actively working with the representatives from Enfield (Kurt Gotthardt) and Springfield (Bruce Allen) to schedule perambulation dates, but so far he has not received any response from the others. Wood noted that he, Hocker, and Enfield representative Gotthardt are scheduled to

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perform their first walk later this week. Wood noted that it might be necessary to wait until later in the summer to continue Perambulation walks, as schedules seem to be very full through at least June. Hocker noted that the Croydon corner must be completed by October 1st as hunting starts in Corbin Park then and they will not grant us access after that date.

OTHER BUSINESS- Additional Items

Chair Hocker asked if there were any additional items.

Schotanus inquired about the status of joining the Upper Valley Trails Alliance. Hocker indicated that to his knowledge, a membership application and associated payment has not occurred. It was agreed that Burgard would submit a membership form for the Commission and pay the membership fee, then submit for reimbursement of the fee.

Chair Hocker advised that the Springfield Conservation Commission is contemplating holding a fall public information session on the topic of landowner liability, and they inquired whether the Grantham Conservation Commission would support this event. Burgard inquired what type of support is being requested. Hocker indicated that the support they are requesting is advertising the session in Grantham. The Commission unanimously agreed that if the Springfield Conservation Commission organizes such an event, the Commission would help advertise it in Grantham through various means available to the Commission.

HAND OUTS

None.

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 8:53 p.m.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be at 7:00 p.m. on June 18, 2012, in the Jerry Whitney Memorial Conference Room.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristina Burgard

Kristina Burgard
Grantham Conservation Commission