

# APPROVED

## Town of Grantham Grantham Conservation Commission

### MEETING MINUTES June 17, 2013

Chairman Richard L. Hocker called the Grantham Conservation Commission to order on Monday, June 17, 2013 at 7:07 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; Sheridan Brown; Susan Buchanan; Connie Howard; Joseph Watts (Alternate); David Wood (Alternate); and Caroline Hoen (Clerk)

**Absent:** Lindsey Lefebvre

#### ADMINISTRATIVE

##### *Approval of Minutes for 20 May, 2013 Meeting*

Chair Hocker asked the Commission members if there were any additions, corrections, or modifications to the draft minutes for the May 20, 2013 meeting. (At this point in the meeting, Mr. Brown was excused to assist a member of the public with an outside emergency.)

*There being none, a motion was made by Buchanan to approve and accept the May 20, 2013 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

##### GCC Finances: Open Space Initiative

Hocker referenced the Selectmen's request that the Commission provide \$3,000.00 to cover administrative costs for the proposed new Open Space committee. He reported that he had investigated alternative sources of funding within the Town budget system, but had found none that was viable. The Selectmen have indicated that, in accordance with the Commission's proposal, they will empanel this committee and oversee Phase I of the program which is intended to create an inventory and map of Grantham's undeveloped areas of ten (10) acres or larger. Hocker stated that one of the advantages of having the Selectmen oversee the program is the credibility this arrangement will provide for future Town conservation efforts. He recommended that the Commission make the allocation of \$3,000.00 available to the Selectmen as a gesture of good faith and as a way to encourage the advancement of the initiative. He noted that a key goal of this program is to lay some of the ground work for the Planning Board's mandated 2015

## **APPROVED**

Master Plan revision. He also noted that Phase II of the plan was not being considered for action at this time. This second phase involves the prioritization of the catalogued open spaces for the implementation of selected conservation easements and/or the outright purchase of land by the Town as a way of conserving open space. He expressed concern that, with the current recovery in the housing market, new construction would be increasing, leaving some key open spaces vulnerable to developers. Hocker speculated that the requested \$3,000 would be in excess of the proposed committee's needs and there ensued a discussion of alternative means of distributing the funds to the Selectmen.

*A motion was made by Wood, with input from Buchanan, to authorize the Select Board to withdraw up to \$3,000 from the Conservation Commission's Current Use fund on an as-needed basis to cover administrative costs for the implementation of Phase I of the proposed Open Space Protection Plan program. A stipulation was added that all such costs be documented for the Commission's review. Second by Watts. There being no further discussion, the motion was put to a vote.*

***Unanimously Approved & Accepted***

### **Planning for Conservation**

#### ***Wetlands Inventory and Protection Program***

No new activity was reported.

### **New Initiatives**

#### ***Invasive Species Inventory and Eradication***

Wood stated that his work on the identification and eradication of invasive species within the Eastman community is ongoing, with funding approved by the Eastman board along with the directive to educate residents as to the importance of the program and its safety. He pointed out, however, that with regard to the future implementation of an eradication program in Grantham as a whole, he foresaw a need for the prioritization of goals. He noted that some invasives are more aggressive and destructive than others. He cited Japanese knotweed as the most serious threat to Grantham's natural ecology and an obvious focus for eradication, while other more benign species, such as autumn olive, might require less attention. Wood underscored that a Town-wide program would involve judgment calls in terms of allocation of resources. Howard offered suggestions of some simple and unobtrusive ways of informing and involving the public in eradication efforts. Buchanan raised the possibility of joining forces with other towns working to control invasives and inquired about the University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension as an appropriate resource. Wood noted that this organization provides seedlings of native species to be used in replanting areas that have been cleared of invasives.

### **Perambulation Status**

Wood stated that there was no new activity to report on the Town perambulation front but that there remained only the Plainfield line to be charted with plenty of time to complete the task.

### **Town Forest Management**

Hocker stated that, given forester Jeremy Turner's recommendations, the Smith Lot section of the Town Forest would likely be the focus of possible forest management activities this year. He

## **APPROVED**

pointed out that the Commission would need to communicate with Turner promptly as to the specifics of the work it intended to contract for. He invited the Commissioners to walk some of the property with him on the following Friday, June 21st at 9:00 a.m. to consider the question. Watts brought up a prior discussion concerning the creation of a trail system on the Smith Lot and Hocker agreed that this goal should be part of the discussion.

## **HANDOUTS**

None

## **ADJOURNMENT**

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

*The Commission voted unanimously to adjourn at 8:35 p.m.*

## **NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Grantham Conservation Commission will be held at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, July 15, 2013, in the Jerry Whitney Memorial Conference Room.

Respectfully submitted,

*Caroline Hoen*

Caroline Hoen, Clerk