

APPROVED

Town of Grantham Grantham Conservation Commission

MEETING MINUTES December 17, 2012

Chairman Richard L. Hocker called the Grantham Conservation Commission to order on Monday, December 17, 2012 at 7:00 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; Joseph Watts (Alternate); David Wood (Alternate); and Caroline Hoen (clerk)

Absent: Lindsey Lefebvre

Members of the Public: Sheridan Brown

ADMINISTRATIVE

Approval of Minutes for 13 November, 2012 Wetlands Inventory Public Forum

Chair Hocker asked the Commission members if there were any additions, corrections, or modifications to the draft minutes for the November 13, 2012 public forum.

There being none, Burgard moved to approve and accept the November 13, 2012 public forum minutes as written; second by Schotanus. There being no further discussion, the motion was put to a vote.

Unanimously Approved & Accepted

Approval of Minutes for 19 November, 2012 Meeting

Chair Hocker asked the Commission members if there were any additions, corrections, or modifications to the draft minutes for the November 19, 2012 meeting. Burgard requested the following correction: page 7, the addition of a link to the online location of the handout *New Hampshire Guide to Upland Invasive Species* booklet. Schotanus requested the following corrections: page 3, 1st full paragraph, line 17, delete the words “a snowmobile club” and insert “ORC”, and in the 2nd full paragraph, line 1, after the word “submission”, insert the words “on November 13, 2012”.

With no further corrections suggested, a motion was made by Burgard to approve and accept the November 19, 2012 Minutes as amended; second by Wood. There being no further discussion, the motion was put to a vote.

Unanimously Approved & Accepted

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Approval of Minutes for 19 November, 2012 Meeting Non-Public Session

Chair Hocker asked the Commission members if there were any additions, corrections, or modifications to the draft minutes for the November 19, 2012 meeting non-public session. Schotanus requested the following correction: page 1, title, line 2, change “Meting” to “Meeting.”

With no further corrections suggested, a motion was made by Burgard to approve and accept the November 19, 2012 Meeting Non-Public Session Minutes as amended; second by Wood. There being no further discussion, the motion was put to a vote.

Unanimously Approved & Accepted

An additional motion was made by Burgard to seal the November 19, 2012 Meeting Session Minutes; second by Schotanus. There being no further discussion, the motion was put to a vote.

Unanimously Approved & Accepted

NEW BUSINESS

Expedited Wetlands Application for 13 Walton Heath Drive, Eastman

Hocker asked the Commission to review a dredge and fill application to the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (DES) for driveway construction on wetland terrain at 13 Walton Heath Drive in Eastman. He explained that the Commission normally has thirty (30) days to review and comment on such applications, but has less time in this case because of the expedited designation. He distributed application packets and requested that Commission members review them in detail and submit comments to him via email by December 20, 2012. He stated he would then summarize the Commission’s comments, if any, in a letter to DES and send it on December 21, 2012, along with his signature on the application, to indicate that the Commission had signed off on it. He asked that the Commissioners return the packets to the Town Administrator by December 21, 2012. In response to a question from Schotanus as to normal procedure for such applications from Eastman, Hocker and Wood explained that most would go first to the Town Administrator and to DES, and then to the Commission for its review. Wood stated that Eastman’s Environmental Control Committee (ECC) has no mandate to consider wetland welfare in relation to private property and no jurisdiction over Association-owned property. Further, the ECC does not make recommendations to the Town and DES has final jurisdiction on building applications for wetland areas.

OTHER BUSINESS

Planning for Conservation

Grantham Wetlands Inventory and Protection Program – Ongoing Activities

Burgard reported that she and Schotanus had appeared before the Grantham Planning Board on December 6, 2012 to request the scheduling of a public hearing on the Conservation Commission’s recommendation to have two warrant articles added to the March 2013 Town ballot. One of these seeks approval for the designation of an official Town wetlands map and the other approval to designate eight (8) wetland evaluation units as prime wetlands in accordance with RSA 482-A:15 and NHDES Env-Wt Rules Chapter 700. This first Planning Board hearing

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would be the one required by RSA 482-A:15 and then it would be followed by one or more hearings under RSA 675. Burgard stated that the first hearing was duly scheduled for January 8, 2013 and that on December 7, 2012, one hundred and sixteen (116) notifications, including maps of the wetlands in question, were sent to affected property owners (hereafter referred to as “abutters”).

Burgard also reported that, as a result of calls placed to Commissioners in reaction to the notification, an updated version of the Wetland Inventory frequently asked questions (FAQ’s) document was prepared and distributed to all for review and comment. Burgard noted that comments had only been received from Schotanus and Wood and the document was amended to include those comments. The Commission agreed the updated FAQ’s should be finalized and posted on the website and copies made available at Town Hall. Burgard announced that Commissioner Lefebvre agreed to prepare maps for each prime wetland candidate, adding the parcel lines and information upon her return in late December. These maps will then be posted on the website and poster-sized versions made up for display at the hearing.

Burgard stated that the RSA 675 hearings were also scheduled, with the first set for January 22, 2012 and a second for February 5, 2013. She reported that, based on comments made at their December meeting, the Planning Board will postpone voting on its recommendation regarding the warrant articles until the January 22nd hearing. Schotanus observed that the Commission would need to repeat its power point presentation on the wetland recommendations at the January 8th hearing and that he had contacted consultant Dr. Rick Van de Poll to request his attendance to address the inventory data collection process. Schotanus also reported that Commissioner Lefebvre is willing and able to handle the application process for DES prime wetland designations, assuming the approval of the warrant articles in March.

Wood expressed concern that some lower overall scoring wetland units not slated for designation as prime wetlands in the current warrant articles might turn out to have significant importance for future municipal initiatives. He questioned whether the failure to apply for prime wetland status now might prohibit doing so in the future. Burgard pointed out that the Commission had made clear that the overall score rankings were secondary to the four Master Plan mandates used by the Commission to make its current recommendations for prime wetland designations. She indicated it was her understanding that other evaluated wetlands could be recommended for prime designation at a future date as long as the scientific data could be provided to support the recommendation. In answer to a question from Watts about the process for adding local protection, Burgard explained that it is her understanding that the Zoning Board, Commission and Planning Board can propose local zoning ordinance amendments. These amendments would then have to go through the hearing process of RSA 675 prior to being placed on the ballot for Town vote. She added that the Town is solely responsible for enforcement of the provisions in any locally adopted ordinances.

Land Issues

Stocker Pond Access

Schotanus reported that the possible donation by Todd McIntire, owner of Cote & Reney, of 3.5 acres of land on the west side of Interstate 89 and .7 acre on the east side to the New Hampshire Fish & Game Department appears to be stalled. A conceptual plan was presented by surveyor

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Allen Wilson to the Planning Board at its December 6, 2012 meeting and approved by that Board. There appears to be an issue with regard to getting the necessary paperwork prepared. Schotanus expressed the opinion that a donation of the .7 acre parcel might be the most that could be hoped for at the present time. The Commission discussed various possibilities in connection with this parcel's donation and it was agreed that Schotanus would take up the idea of a donation of just the .7 acre with Mr. McIntire and offer Commission assistance with the structuring of the donation.

New Initiatives

Invasive Species Inventory

Schotanus reviewed his ideas for an Invasive Species Inventory program designed to identify, control and eradicate invasive species in Grantham and to educate the public on the subject. He reiterated his enlistment of support from Douglas Cygan, the Invasive Species Coordinator at the New Hampshire Department of Agriculture. He also reported that he had suggested to the Chair that the Chair appoint a subcommittee to be led by Commissioner Wood with the assistance of Commissioner Lefebvre and possibly of Renee Gustafson who is very knowledgeable on the subject. Methods for mapping invasives were discussed. Chair Hocker recognized Sheridan Brown who noted his successful experience using a hand-held GPS device for this purpose. In response to Wood's observation that a huge number of invasives thrive in the median strip on Interstate 89, Schotanus mentioned that the State's help could be enlisted in eradicating plants in the section of highway running through Grantham

Open Spaces Inventory

Schotanus also reviewed the concept of developing a Town Open Spaces Inventory that could give the Selectmen a basis for preserving open space and for supporting the Land Preservation Capital Reserve Fund. It was agreed that the Selectmen should lead this initiative with support from the Commission and that they should appoint a special committee to take on the task. Hocker said that as a first step, he would go before the Selectmen at their next meeting to present the Commission's proposal. It was agreed that Schotanus and Burgard would develop a concept paper outlining the goals of the Open Spaces Inventory.

Perambulation Status

Wood reported that the Springfield perambulation was complete and ready to be submitted. The Croydon and Enfield perambulations have been written up and are awaiting final administrative action.

NON PUBLIC

Personnel Review

In accordance with RSA 91-A:3 II-a, a motion was made by Schotanus and seconded by Watts to enter into a Non-Public session at 8:18 p.m. to discuss a personnel matter. Present were Chairman Richard L. Hocker; Merle Schotanus; Kristina Burgard; Joseph Watts (Alternate); David Wood (Alternate) and Clerk Caroline Hoen.

Following proper vote, the Commission returned from Non-Public session at 8:34 p.m.

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HANDOUTS

None

ADJOURNMENT

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

The Commission voted unanimously to adjourn at 8:34 p.m.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Grantham Conservation Commission will be held at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, January 21, 2013, in the Jerry Whitney Memorial Conference Room.

Respectfully submitted,

Caroline Hoen

Caroline Hoen, Clerk