

**Town of Grantham
Grantham Conservation Commission**

**MEETING MINUTES
JULY 20, 2015**

Chairman Sheridan Brown called the Grantham Conservation Commission to order on Monday, July 20, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. The meeting was held in the Jerry Whitney Memorial Conference Room at Grantham Town Hall located at 300 Route 10 South in Grantham, NH.

Present: Chairman Sheridan Brown; Susan Buchanan; Laura Nagy; Rich Kaszeta and David Wood

Members of the Public: Shawn Phelps, Ebba McArt

ADMINISTRATIVE

Approval of Minutes for the June 15, 2015 Meeting

Brown asked if there were any additions, corrections, or modifications to the draft minutes for the June 15, 2015 meeting. Under the “Brookside Park” header, Wood clarified that it was Nagy, not him, who contacted the Student Conservation Association. Wood suggested changing it to read “Wood said that the Upper Valley Trails Alliance and Student Conservation Association had been contacted.” Wood also noted that “UVLT” needed to be replaced with “UVTA” in two places. Nagy asked that Page 4 be changed to include the date of September 23 for the Open Space Committee presentation to the Board of Selectmen. Wood mentioned that the very end of the section just before ticks should be changed to state that he said he would contact the Lake Sunapee Kearsarge Regional Planning Commission regarding their assistance with trail mapping. Brown then asked if there were any further changes to be made.

There being none, a motion was made by Wood to approve and accept the July 27, 2015 minutes as amended; second by Nagy. There being no further discussion, the motion was put to a vote.

Unanimously Approved & Accepted

NEW BUSINESS

Eastman Charitable Foundation Presentation

Shawn Phelps (President) and Ebba McArt (board member) of the Eastman Charitable Foundation appeared before the Commission to provide an overview of their grantmaking and other community activities. The Foundation, a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit, has been in existence for 11 years and serves Grantham, Springfield, and Enfield—not just Eastman. The Foundation’s primary mission is to protect the area watershed feeding into Eastman Lake for its benefits to drinking water, wildlife, and recreation. Whereas the Foundation’s primary focus is environmental conservation, its members are very interested in collaboration with the

Commission. The Eastman Lake Watershed Study completed in 2009, available on the Foundation's website (www.ecfnh.org) is an example of one of the projects it has funded. The Foundation also assisted in the establishment of the Town Recreation Park and with environmental education programs locally.

The Foundation will be holding an event with Willem Lang on October 11 at Grantham Town Hall to raise funds and solicit ideas for ways to be more involved in Town.

Byrne Foundation Grant/Brookside Park Project

Nagy asked if the Board of Selectmen had voted to accept the \$15,000 grant received from the Byrne Foundation for universally accessible trails at Brookside Park. Brown advised that the Selectmen needed to wait until their next meeting on August 12 to vote on the funds in order to allow the legally required notice for the public hearing.

Nagy urged that the Commission should promptly send a thank you to the Byrne Foundation. Nagy and Brown signed the letter at the meeting so that Nagy could send it.

Brown asked about progress researching trusses and other next steps. Nagy suggested that SCA should come back to the site for a more detailed look at the site. Brown suggested that SCA should also evaluate possible camping near the worksite where they could stay. The Commission agreed it would probably be scheduling work for late spring work given that we are nearly into fall.

Kaszeta summarized his conversations with companies that could make trusses, and it seems that a pre-built wood truss will not be strong enough to cover the span at Brookside where we hope to locate our bridge. Snow loading is also an issue. Wood and Kaszeta will continue their conversations with vendors, but it appears that an aluminum bridge may be the only option. Altering the location of the bridge remains an option as well.

Brown provided information on the National Park Service Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Service and the "Upper Valley Trail Corps" that it is currently funding in area high schools. He also provided Nagy with grant information for the upcoming Quabbin to Cardigan and NH Recreational Trails Program grant funding solicitations.

The Commission discussed various engineering options for a log bridge to Sun Rock and the possibility of completing the easier of its two proposed bridges this season. That bridge only needs to cross a 24-foot span.

Stocker Pond Access

Brown briefed the Commission on his meeting with Town Administrator Melissa White and the landowner who owns the access point to Stocker Pond that was recently posted "no trespassing." The land was closed to the public due to illegal shooting, drinking, and littering on the property which raised landowner concerns about liability. Brown explained to the landowner that persons

allowing recreational access to their property for recreational purposes—as long as it is not for consideration—enjoy broad liability protection under state law. Nonetheless, Brown and White are working with the landowner to develop some sort of controlled access to the property by the general public after they sign a release and acknowledge the list of prohibited activities on the property. Brown is currently drafting the agreement for review by Town counsel and the landowner’s counsel. Brown noted that he is impressed with the landowner’s interest in working on a solution even though some parties have clearly disrespected his land and past generosity in allowing access.

Brown asked the Commission to consider providing funds for a gate to the property once a cost could be determined, and Kaszeta and Wood agreed to look into gate options and costs.

GCC New Member and Remaining Vacancies

The Commission welcomed new Alternate Member Rich Kaszeta. Brown also announced to the Commission that he would be stepping down due to his appointment to the Board of Selectmen as the successor to Ken Story, who has resigned to take the position of Deputy Town Clerk/Tax Collector. Brown will serve as the Selectmen’s representative to the Commission, however.

The Commission discussed the willingness of Hocker returning to the position of Chair, and Wood said that Hocker would be interested in serving for at least 1-year term until someone else is able to take over. Nagy may have an interest in doing so at a later time. The Commission members agreed that Hocker’s historical knowledge from his involvement with a wide variety of conservation efforts and issues is a great asset as Chair.

OTHER BUSINESS

Sherwood Forest Access

The Commission discussed continuing access issues at Sherwood Forest. Brown is reviewing the conservation easement documents and rights to remedy that are included within them.

ADJOURNMENT

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

The Commission voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 9:21 p.m.

NEXT MEETING

THE NEXT MEETING OF THE Grantham Conservation Commission will be held at 7:00p.m. in the Jerry Whitney Memorial Conference Room on Monday, August 31, 2015.

Respectfully submitted,

Sheridan Brown, Chair

