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**Town of Grantham
Grantham Conservation Commission
MEETING MINUTES
March 2, 2011**

Chairman Richard L. Hocker called the Conservation Commission to order on Wednesday, March 2, 2011, at 7:05 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; Lindsey Dixon; Joe Watts (*Alternate*); and Kristina Burgard (*Alternate*).

Members of the public: Rick Miller (*joined meeting at 7:20 p.m.*)

Approval of Minutes

Chair Hocker asked the Commission members if they had reviewed the minutes from the January 17, January 31, and February 15, 2011 Conservation Commission meetings and the February 21, 2011 Wetlands Inventory Public Forum, and asked if there were any additions/corrections to be made to any of these minutes. Burgard indicated that she has a number editorial changes to each, and requested the following revisions:

January 17, 2011 - Change every instance of “Committee” to “Commission”; in Approval of Minutes section, change “be recognized as saying” to “revise the Minutes to add that she was recognized and stated”; in Other Business, Wien Property section, correct spelling of Wien, and in line 2, after “Wednesday,” insert “which”, and in Planning for Conservation section, line 1, delete “at”, and line 2, change “meeting” to “Wetlands Inventory Public Forum”, and line 3, after “week)” insert “there”, and in the second paragraph, after “for” insert “public outreach including”.

January 31, 2011 – Change every instance of “Committee” to “Commission”; Opening paragraph, line 4, after “and/or” insert “if there were”; Second paragraph, line 1, change “make” to “entertain” and “the” to “this”, and line 2, delete “made a motion and second” and insert “moved to accept the last version of the contract currently before the Commission as written, which motion was seconded”; Third paragraph, line 2, before “contract” insert “accepted”, and delete “Motion by” and after “Eastman” insert “so moved”; Fourth paragraph, line 3, delete “do was” and insert “address, which is to”, and lines 3-4, delete “the merge” and insert “finalizing the landowner letter, the address merge,” , and line 5, delete “be handling most of the paperwork and future” and insert “handle the address merge and printing the letters, and the landowner access team will handle the rest. Burgard also volunteered to manage the Commission’s”.

February 15, 2011 – In the March 2nd Meeting section, change all occurrences of “Minor” to “Miner”, and in line 1, after “stated that” insert “Town Administrator”.

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February 21, 2011 – Opening paragraph, remove “to order”; in the paragraph after Handouts, insert “the” after “welcomed everyone to”; first question, line 2, remove the “f” after “of”; in second response, line 3, change “the” to “their” before “nutrient transformation”; fourth response, line 3, change “want” to “wants”; in second question on page 3, line 4, after “used” insert “successfully in” and in line 5, delete “in the United States”; and next response, two thirds down, change “may need” to “may be needed”.

Motion by Schotanus to approve and accept each of the January 17, January 31, February 15, and February 21, 2011 Minutes as amended, which motion was seconded by Watts. There being no further discussion, the motion was put to a vote.

Unanimously Approved & Accepted

New Business

None

Other Business

Flewelling Property Access Route – Don Miner:

Chair Hocker stated that it appeared that Don Miner would not be attending tonight’s meeting. Chair Hocker indicated that Mr. Miner typically is the point person for these discussions, but that the property is actually in an estate and Karen Partin-Miner and her brother are the trustees of the estate. Burgard stated that, unless he has power of attorney for the estate, it does not appear that Mr. Miner has legal authority to speak in a binding fashion for the estate. Going forward, it needs to be clear on the record that the person with whom we are dealing has legal authority to speak for, and bind, the estate.

Based on the discussion at the Conservation Commission’s September 2010 meeting, the status of this matter is that the estate was to send the Conservation Commission a letter clearly stating their position and proposed resolution; however, we have yet to receive anything from the estate.

[Rick Miller of the Blue Mountain Snowdusters joined the meeting at this time, 7:20 p.m.]

Chair Hocker recognized Mr. Miller and showed Mr. Miller a map of the Flewelling Property and pointed out possible alternative routes for accessing the property without using the existing easement right-of-way up the driveway, which the present owners find disruptive. He indicated that these potential alternatives would likely require a bridge of some sort.

Mr. Miller said that the former route is physically blocked, and so right now the snowmobilers come down a trail from the northeastern side of the Flewelling property, and then as soon as the pond is visible, they veer right back toward the pond. This year, Mr. Miller has never seen a snow mobile even head towards the Miner house.

Mr. Miller pointed out that the section of Miller Pond Road that is involved in one of the potential alternatives is very dangerous to travel on snowmobiles, mainly because of the old dam and inability of cars to see there, and it’s very steep so there is no way for banks to be fixed.

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Since it is so dangerous, he feels strongly that any alternative route should not put snowmobilers on that section of road.

Schotanus suggested that the Blue Mountain Snowdusters take a look at the map of the property, and then advise the Conservation Commission of their preferred alternative route. Chair Hocker agreed with this suggestion and stated for Mr. Miller's benefit that the Commission is charged with overseeing what happens on this property and the easement provides benefits to various people including snowmobilers. So, it is important to have the snowmobiler's perspective as the Commission works with the property owners to facilitate resolution of this issue.

Mr. Miller said that with some work and a bit of money, there might be a possibility that some old trails or logging roads could be opened up to provide alternative access for snowmobiles.

Schotanus requested that Mr. Miller go back and work with Donnie Holmes and Warren Legacy, and ask the Blue Mountain Snowdusters to come to a consensus about their preferred alternative trail to avoid the Miner residence, and then present a recommendation to the Commission by our next meeting, March 21st, if possible, or if that's too soon, by the Commission's April 18th meeting. Mr. Miller agreed that the Snowdusters would review this, including physically checking out possible alternative trails, and get their preferred alternative trail recommendation to the Commission as soon as they can.

[Rick Miller left the meeting at this time, 7:32 p.m.]

The Commission continued discussion about alternative routes, and the need to ensure that the interests of all beneficiaries of the easement are addressed in any proposed alternatives to attempt to address the Miner's unhappiness with the original course of the easements and deeded right-of-way.

Planning for Conservation – Wetlands Inventory

Chair Hocker turned the floor over to Schotanus to address next steps regarding the Wetlands Inventory. Schotanus asked Watts for a report on Landowner Access following the Public Forum. Watts reported that the Commission now has six (6) executed access forms, and so there are about 140 others that potentially need to get a follow-up letter regarding access. Watts suggested that the Commission use the draft letter provided by Dr. Van de Poll as a starting point, and make a few modifications to adapt it to our situation.

The Commission discussed the proper timing for the follow-up landowner letter. Schotanus suggested that the Commission contact Dr. Van de Poll to get his input on the timing for sending out this letter, as the map work he is currently doing might alter the list of who should receive this letter. The Commission agreed, and Chair Hocker was tasked with contacting Dr. Van de Poll to get his opinion on the timing, content, and recipients of the follow-up letter.

Schotanus stated that Watts would continue to coordinate everything relating to landowners, and if any of the Commissioners have information relating to landowners, please forward that information to Watts. Schotanus stated regardless of when we decide the letter should go out, it

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would be prudent to proceed with finalizing the content of the letter so it ready to go when needed. Burgard agreed to prepare an electronic version of the draft and distribute it to everyone, and each member will then review and send any comments or revisions to Watts.

Schotanus requested an update on Volunteers from Dixon. Dixon stated that the current number of volunteers is 38, 11 of whom signed up at the Public Forum. This number includes 9 people who signed up at a previous Town Meeting. Schotanus requested that an email be sent to these 9 people to confirm if they are still interested in volunteering, and Dixon agreed to send such an email. In addition, Dixon will provide the current list of volunteers to the rest of the Commission.

Schotanus requested that the Commission work to finalize the dates in May and June for volunteer training so that we can provide this information to the volunteers and begin publicizing the training dates. Chair Hocker volunteered to contact Dr. Van de Poll to get his suggested dates, and then confirm availability of space at Town Hall for in-house training dates.

Schotanus then requested an update on Public Outreach from Burgard. Burgard discussed the Frequently Asked Questions (“FAQ”) draft that was prepared based on the Q&A session at the Public Forum and other commonly asked questions relating to Wetland Inventories. To ensure that the FAQ is finalized in time for Town Meeting day, all members agreed to provide any comments or proposed revisions to Burgard by no later than March 6th.

Burgard reported that her meeting with Kurt Gergler at the Grantham Village School went very well. She indicated that one idea of particular interest would be to work with students to visit the wetland behind the school in each of the four seasons and journal what they see. Mr. Gergler queried whether the Commissioners would be willing to form and run an Ecology Club for certain grade levels, which could be the forum for various activities. Burgard asked whether the Commissioners are willing to be mentors, and all members indicated they would be willing to be involved in this. Schotanus indicated that some of the Commission’s volunteers would most likely be very happy to help out with this as well. It was agreed that Public Outreach should put together a proposal to the school, and work with the school and volunteers to get the program approved and running.

Burgard reported that Public Outreach needed some input from the Commission regarding the subject matter for upcoming Posters. Burgard stated that she and Eastman envisioned the next Poster as being about the Functions & Values of the Revised NH Method, but that they needed some input as to whether this should wait until the Revised NH Method document was officially released. Dixon indicated that it should be fine to generally describe what the 12 Functions & Values are, and the Commission agreed this would be the best topic for the next Poster. Schotanus stated that the next Poster after that should be about Buffers as there will be a lot of interest in this topic. Burgard agreed to prepare a revised calendar proposing the timing & topic for Posters over the next several months.

Schotanus advised that the Commission has permission from the Moderator to set up a display and information table in Town Hall during voting from the time they open until about 4:00 p.m. Chair Hocker showed a large map with a lot overlay that highlights the Grantham land that is on

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the market. The Commission agreed that the display would include this map, and there would be copies of various handouts available for people to take (including the finalized FAQ, the Public Forum presentation, SPNHF's Economics of Land Conservation, the UNH Habitat Stewardship Series pamphlets, and What Wetlands Do For You), as well as display copies of the Master Plan and CCLI. The Commission discussed staffing of the display table, and agreed to a schedule that provides coverage by a Commission member for the entire period the display table will be set up.

For the members benefit, Chair Hocker generally identified parcels on the display map. He also informed the Commission that the Town needs a wetlands permit in connection with the new athletic field, and in order to proceed, the Town must file a wetlands mitigation plan that needs to include a plan to put into conservation a fairly sizeable piece of property with wetlands on it. There are available lots that would be ideal for this purpose, and the Selectmen have been advised of this. The Commission continued to discuss the available parcels on the map, including three (3) owned by Mrs. Hastings.

Schotanus suggested the Commission send a letter to Mrs. Hastings indicating interest in her properties for conservation, and the Commission agreed this should be done as soon as possible. Chair Hocker agreed to coordinate drafting and sending such a letter.

[Dixon left the meeting at this time, 8:35 p.m.]

The Commission continued to discuss planning for the display table and Town Meeting.

Schotanus advised the Commission of three upcoming events of interest.

On Thursday, March 17th, from 6-9pm, UVLT is holding a Conservation Commission Gathering, starting with a Chili Dinner followed by a meeting and discussion on how towns can achieve conservation goals, at Bugbee Senior Center in White River Junction. Schotanus indicated that this would be a valuable event to attend, and he is planning to attend. Any one else who'd like to attend should let him know as soon as possible.

Saturday, April 9th is UNH Cooperative Extension's Saving Special Places 2011 Conference, from 8 a.m.-3:45 p.m., at Kearsarge Regional High School. The registration fee is \$60 (or \$75 after April 2nd), and Schotanus queried whether the registration fee could be reimbursed. Chair Hocker indicated that members could request reimbursement of this registration fee as it relates to educational opportunities. Schotanus stated that the workshops offered this year look very informative. He has already signed up, and highly recommends that other members do the same as soon as possible. In order to maximize attendance at the different workshops, Schotanus suggested that each member who registers let him and the other members know which workshops they selected.

On April 27th, from 7-9 p.m., UNH Cooperative Extension is holding a workshop on Land Conservation Options for landowners at Grantham Town Hall. Chair Hocker and Schotanus discussed following up with Chuck Hersey at UNH regarding Grantham Conservation Commission's co-sponsorship of this workshop and publicity regarding the same. Schotanus volunteered to follow-up with Chuck Hersey on this matter.

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Hand Outs

None

Adjournment

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

The Commission voted unanimously to adjourn at 9:00 p.m.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be at 7:00 p.m. on March 21, 2011, in the Jerry Whitney Memorial Conference Room.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristina Burgard

Kristina Burgard

Grantham Conservation Commission, Alternate