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Town of Grantham Grantham Conservation Commission

MEETING MINUTES July 16, 2012

Chairman Richard L. Hocker called the Conservation Commission to order on Monday, July 16, 2012, at 7:02 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 Lefebvre; Joe Watts (*Alternate*); and David Wood (*Alternate*).

Absent: Jeremy Turner

Members of Public: None

ADMINISTRATIVE

Approval of Minutes for 18 June 2012 Meeting

Chair Hocker asked the Commission members if there were any additions, corrections, or modifications to the draft minutes for the June 18, 2012 meeting.

There being no corrections, Schotanus moved to approve and accept the June 18, 2012 Minutes as written; second by Watts. 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

Chair Hocker stated that based on the report given at the last meeting, there is nothing to be done with regard to the Cote & Reney parcels. Schotanus reiterated acquisition of the Cote & Reney landing parcels by New Hampshire Fish & Game (“NH F&G”) is in process and NH F&G is actively working to complete its review and approval procedures, and further information will likely not be available for several months; however, he will check on the status prior to August meeting and report any status changes to the Commission.

Hastings Lot Memorial

Burgard advised that as discussed at the June meeting, the proposed plaque language was sent to Upper Valley Land Trust (“UVLT”) for their review and UVLT suggested two minor changes,

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which changes were reviewed and approved via email by a majority of the Commission. The revised language was sent to Karen Hastings for her review, and Mrs. Hastings indicated that she is very pleased with the language. Burgard reported that Mrs. Hastings is thrilled with the idea of a dedication ceremony and optional hike some time in the fall, and will do her best to attend. Schotanus reported that Blue Mountain Snowdusters (“BMSD”) and their Prouty team, the Grantham Mountaineers, are very much in favor of coordinating their annual fall hike with a dedication ceremony for Will Hastings.

Burgard proposed either Saturday, September 29th or Saturday, October 6th for the dedication ceremony and optional hike thereafter. There was some discussion about the dates, and the Commission concluded that either date was a possibility and acknowledged that for either date, at least one Commissioner would likely be unavailable, and that there is a slight preference for the October date. Hocker requested that Burgard follow-up with Mrs. Hastings and UVLT to determine their availability to attend on both proposed dates. Schotanus indicated he would contact BMSD to determine if they have a preference between the two proposed dates.

Burgard brought up to the Commission a comment made by Turner in a recent email wherein he suggested that the plaque should be an engraved rock or granite. Watts stated that as discussed at both the April and May meetings, the option of engraving a rock or some other form of stone is much more expensive, made even more so by the remote location of the property, and that the Commission already discussed these options at length and felt that the expense for these options was too high in light of the available funds. There was agreement among all in attendance that the currently approved option was the best one available in light of all factors, and that Watts should proceed to order the bronze plaque using the wording approved by the Commission, UVLT, and Mrs. Hastings.

Planning for Conservation

Continued Planning for Wetlands Inventory project – Next steps

Schotanus asked Lefebvre for an update on the status of the Wetlands Inventory evaluations. Lefebvre reported that 31 of the 55 Wetland Evaluation Units (“WEU’s”) were assigned to volunteers for completion of evaluations, leaving 24 still to be assigned. Lefebvre stated that she has received 13 completed WEU evaluations back plus 7 more turned in at the beginning of the meeting. Wood stated that he is unclear as to the status of each WEU, and which WEU’s still need to be assigned for evaluation. Lefebvre stated that she would create and send out a list of all 55 WEU’s that will include the assignment and evaluation status of each one. She reiterated that very few trained volunteers are available to help at this summer, and thus it will be up to the trained Commissioners to pair up, select unassigned WEU’s, and get the remaining evaluations completed. Lefebvre noted that there are several WEU’s where there is no access permission, and thus these evaluations will have to be completed without accessing the wetland property(ies), relying only on aerial images and where possible, public roadside viewings, so these can be done right away.

Watts indicated that he received one additional landowner access permission form, which form granted access. Burgard will update the landowner access list to ensure that evaluators have the most current information regarding access permission for each WEU to ensure that volunteers

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only access properties where permission has been granted and where indicated, contact landowners prior to accessing their property for those landowners who granted permission but requested advance notice of access.

Burgard reported that as agreed, the Commission had a table at Old Home Day that provided various information, such as the Wetlands Inventory FAQ, revised NH Method Manual, fact sheet on well testing, free water testing kits, information on wetlands, and water games for children, and the large conservation maps were on display. Burgard stated that other public relations items are on hold for the time being in light of her illness. She hopes to be well enough to pick things up again in a few weeks, including releasing another edition of the Commission's electronic newsletter, and scheduling some informational talks and hikes.

Schotanus noted that Ausbon Sargent is sponsoring a talk on invasive species scheduled for November 1st at Kearsarge Middle School, and indicated this would be a good item for the newsletter. Hocker indicated that another item Burgard may want to include in the newsletter is an indication that the NH Cooperative Extension is still accepting applications for its fall Coverts Cooperative training program.

Schotanus inquired whether any of the Commissioners were in communication with Dr. Van de Poll. Lefebvre indicated that she has communicated with him via email, and is sending scans of completed evaluations to his student intern for data entry into the EXCEL spreadsheets. So far, she has not received any confirmation of receipt or status report back from the student intern. It was agreed that in future, Dr. Van de Poll would be copied on all communications with the student intern.

Burgard expressed some concern about the timeline of events following completion of the evaluations, and Dr. Van de Poll's ability to get things completed in time for fall meetings and public hearings for 2013 warrant articles. Lefebvre indicated that once the evaluations are done and the data is entered into the spreadsheets, determining which of the WEU's should be proposed for designation should not take that much time, so we should be able to get back on schedule for the fall. Schotanus volunteered to contact Dr. Van de Poll to coordinate setting a schedule for the fall meetings and public hearings, and reinforce that it is very important that this schedule is met.

The Commission informally discussed which of the evaluation factors are most important to the Town based on the Master Plan and CCLI, and unanimously agreed that water quantity, water quality, and flood storage factors are some of the most important factors for Grantham.

Perambulation Status

Hocker asked Wood for an update on the perambulation. Wood reported that they have completed about one-third of the perambulation along the Enfield/Grantham border. On July 9th & 10th, representatives perambulated Croydon/Grantham borders, as well as borders inside Corbin Park. Wood estimates that they will need at least one more day to finish the Croydon borders, and a number of days to complete the Springfield and Enfield borders. He is continuing

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to work with the other towns' representatives to schedule dates to complete the perambulations before the advent of winter.

With regard to the question of the Plainfield border, Wood noted that the last perambulation of the Plainfield/Grantham border was completed in 2007, a few years after the other borders, and when he contacted a representative of Plainfield to see if they were perambulating their other borders at this time, Wood was advised that Plainfield is not perambulating any other borders. Wood indicated that since this border is not technically due for perambulation at this time, and in light of the amount of work needed to complete perambulation of the other borders that are due this year, he recommends that perambulation of the Plainfield border not be undertaken this year. Hocker supported this recommendation, adding that the Plainfield border is the most arduous border to perambulate and it takes much longer to complete, so it is a good thing to have the timing for this perambulation be in a different year from the other borders. Based on the information provided by Wood and Hocker, the Commissioners agreed that since the Plainfield border was perambulated less than 7 years ago and it is a difficult border to walk, its perambulation should not be undertaken this year. Burgard noted that it might be advisable to consider doing the Plainfield border perambulation one year early, i.e., in 2013, so that all the borders are done in back-to-back years to make it easier to remember when they are due under the statute.

OTHER BUSINESS- Additional Items

Chair Hocker reported that the balances in the Commission's accounts as of June 30, 2012 are as follows: Conservation Fund \$23,798.62; Town Forest Maintenance Fund \$15,46.03; and Sherwood Forest Account \$4,622.86. Hocker noted that there was a disbursement of \$1,500 from the Conservation Fund during this month, which represents payment of an installment under the contract with EMC/Dr. Rick Van de Poll for the Wetlands Inventory project.

Hocker noted that there is some work that needs to be done on Town Forest properties, such as releasing some of the old apple trees close to the parking area on the Smith Lot. He believes this can be done with volunteers, at little to no cost. It was agreed this would be a good project, and Hocker volunteered to check with the easement holder, UVLT, about this potential project, and if they agree, he will schedule a time for performing the work in September some time.

Hocker stated that another project for the near term is clean up of the Leavitt Hill Cemetery, which is currently in very bad shape. There is some very big work requiring heavy equipment, and then smaller work that can be done with hand tools by volunteers. Hocker indicated that it is his understanding that the Town maintenance crew has agreed to do some of the heavy work, but volunteers will be needed to help out with the small stuff. The Commissioners all expressed interest in helping out. Hocker volunteered to coordinate with the Town regarding when they plan to perform their work, and schedule a volunteer work day(s) in conjunction with or shortly after that to get the rest of the work done.

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HAND OUTS

Final, approved mock-up of memorial plaque for the Leavitt Hill Wetlands property acquired by UVLT with assistance from the Town of Grantham in connection with wetlands mitigation for work at the Recreation Park.

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 8:20 p.m.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be at 7:00 p.m. on August 20, 2012, in the Jerry Whitney Memorial Conference Room.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristina Burgard

Kristina Burgard
Grantham Conservation Commission

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In Memory of
Wilfred Malcolm Hastings
“Will” loved the woods and all wildlife.
He would be honored and humbled
to know that Grantham and UVLT
conserved this land
in memory of Grantham’s native son.