

APPROVED

Town of Grantham Grantham Conservation Commission

MEETING MINUTES October 17, 2011

Chairman Richard L. Hocker called the Conservation Commission to order on Monday, October 17, 2011, at 7:09 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; Lindsey Dixon; Joe Watts (*Alternate*) and Kristina Burgard (*Alternate*).

Absent: Andy Eastman; Merle Schotanus; Jeremy Turner;

ADMINISTRATIVE

Approval of Minutes for 19 September 2011 Meeting

Chair Hocker asked the Commission members if there were any additions, corrections, or modifications to be made to the draft minutes for the September 19, 2011 meeting.

Burgard stated that on Page 2, Paragraph 3, line 2, remove apostrophe ess, changing “Commission’s” to “Commission”. Watts noted that Page 2, Paragraph 7, line 5, states that Dixon would be going on her first walk but she actually walked the property the previous year, and requested changing “first” to “an” before the word “opportunity”.

With no further corrections suggested a motion was by Burgard to approve and accept the September 19, 2011 Minutes as revised; second by Watts. There being no further discussion, the motion was put to a vote.

Unanimously Approved & Accepted

*OTHER BUSINESS

Budget for Next Year

Chair Hocker explained the budget proposal process is different than in previous years, and that the Town office is asking for the Commission’s budget proposal by the beginning of November rather than in January. He noted that for the last four years the Conservation Commission has had \$2,500 set as its financial budget, with \$1,500 for clerk services and \$1,000 for office supplies and training. Chair Hocker explained that the September financial report he received

APPROVED

showed expenditures of \$551.00 for clerk services and \$373.00 on supplies, both well within the budget for the year. Burgard noted that the clerk figure only reflects about three months of using a paid clerk, and queried whether the budgeted amount for the clerk would cover an entire year's worth of services.

Chair Hocker indicated a \$2,500.00 budget covers everything that the Commission may need. Chair Hocker also stated that the Commission has other accounts. One is the current use account (a.k.a., Conservation Fund), and he expects the Commission should be getting some money into that account for properties that are taken out of current use this fiscal year. The other account is a fund that was set up by Flewelling's to help pay for work in Sherwood Forest deemed necessary by the Commission under the terms of the Flewelling easement, and to his knowledge this account has not been touched since it was set up.

Chair Hocker stated that last year the Commission received \$100,000.00 from the Town, and would like to ask the Town for another \$100,000.00 at the 2012 Town Meeting for the purposes of conserving key parcels in Town. Chairman Hocker stated it is critical to be able to do this in order to prevent loss of properties vital to the community. Watts asked where these funds are kept. Burgard explained that these funds are in the Land Preservation Capital Reserve Fund, and that after the Special Meeting, the Selectmen are the agents to expend on that fund, and the Commission acts in an advisory role, presenting the Selectmen with support as to whether a Grantham parcel satisfies the purpose of the capital reserve fund.

Chair Hocker explained that right now the Capital Reserve Fund has about \$140,000.00, but up to \$70,000.00 of that is obligated for the purchase of Hastings Lot 208-002, leaving this fund with about \$70,000.00. Burgard indicated that she feels it is very important to have sufficient funds on hand to be able act on vital conservation opportunities as they arise, but has mixed emotions about going back to Town Meeting asking for the same amount again. She feels that if such a request is made, it will be important to let voters know that a large percentage of last year's amount was unexpectedly needed to assist with mitigation needs for the improvements at the Recreation Park.

Purchase of Hasting's property 208-002

Chair Hocker explained that last week UVLT's Sarah Cavin informed him that she thought the closing on Lot 208-002 should happen very soon. Chair Hocker explained that there was an issue with the back boundary line that took a while to resolve, but that this issue appears to be resolved, and now there is just some additional paperwork that the surveyor needs to complete. Chair Hocker indicated if all goes as planned, closing should occur within the next week. Burgard expressed concern regarding who would be the holder of the mitigation easement on the property, as last she heard, it was suggest UVLT would be the holder, but the owner of a parcel cannot also be the easement holder. She indicated it is likely UVLT has dealt with this issue, but would like clarification. Chair Hocker asked Burgard to talk with someone at UVLT regarding that concern.

APPROVED

****Planning for Conservation –***

Continue Planning for Wetlands Inventory project – Next steps

Chair Hocker indicated that since the last meeting and as of this afternoon, the Commission received two batches of wetland evaluation unit information, with one or more additional batches expected. Letters went out to landowners for the first batch the middle of last week, and none yet for the second batch as they were just received from Dr. Van de Poll this afternoon. Chair Hocker noted that so far, one letter came back as undeliverable, and asked Watts if he has heard anything else. Watts stated that any returns or replies would come back to the Commission through the Town Hall address.

Dixon stated that because evaluation unit information is coming more than two months later than expected, she is concerned about how many volunteers are still available as she has only heard back from two volunteers in response to an email looking for evaluators for the first batch of identified evaluation units. Chair Hocker confirmed to Dixon that his wife and two of her friends, all of whom are trained volunteers, are looking forward to performing evaluations and would like to start with the Lily Pond evaluation unit.

Dixon explained that she has one volunteer who wants to do the Old Route 10 North evaluation unit, and another volunteer who stated that she loves to hike and would like to do more remote units. Dixon expressed her concerns regarding the timing and the number of volunteers that are left to do the work. Dixon suggested that Dr. Van de Poll help. Chair Hocker stated that Dr. Van de Poll stated that he was willing to help.

****Shoreland Protection – Grantham Status***

Chair Hocker stated that he approached our State Representatives at a meeting last Thursday (October 13, 2011) and was told they would send him a copy of the newly adopted revisions to the Shoreland Protection Act. Once that is received and reviewed, Chair Hocker and Town Administrator Newton intend to work on drafting rules pertinent to the Selectmen's enforcement of the amended Act, and the applicable Grantham Zoning Ordinances, in Grantham.

Annual Inspection of Flewelling Easements Property

Chair Hocker explained that the annual inspection was performed October 15th, and given the wet conditions, the primary focus was the area around the Miller Pond Road entrance of the property and the Northeasterly boundary after crossing the bridge. Discussion was centered on potential alternate means of access onto the property contemplated by the current owner. Watts asked who attended the walk. Chair Hocker indicated the attendees himself, Don Miner, Burgard, Selectman Kimball, and Renee Gustafson.

APPROVED

Chair Hocker reminded the Commission that tomorrow evening, October 18, 2011, there would be a meeting with all interested parties to discuss issues, and hopefully work toward solutions, relating to the Sherwood Forest property and Flewelling Easements on that property.

OTHER BUSINESS

HAND OUTS

41st annual mtg., NH Association of Conservation Commissions

ADJOURNMENT

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

The Commission voted unanimously to adjourn at 8:20p.m.

NEXT MEETING

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

Respectfully Submitted,

Jessica Smith

Grantham Conservation Commission, Clerk