

**Town of Grantham  
Grantham Conservation Commission**

**MEETING MINUTES  
May 19, 2014**

Chairman Sheridan Brown called the Grantham Conservation Commission to order on Monday, May 19, 2014 at 7:07 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; Dick Hocker; Connie Howard; David Wood (Alternate); and Caroline Hoen, Clerk

**Absent:** Lindsey Lefebvre

**Members of the Public:** Brooks McCandlish

**ADMINISTRATIVE**

**Approval of Minutes for 21 April, 2014 Meeting**

Chair Brown asked if there were any additions, corrections, or modifications to the draft minutes for the April 21, 2014 meeting. Buchanan requested the following changes: page 3, under “Conservation Commission Strategic Planning/Capacity Building,” line 1, insert the word “of” after the word “possibility”; and on page 4, second line from the top, delete the following sentences: “Buchanan referenced a year-old charge to the Committee from the Town Planning Board specifying the facilitation of a community forum, a community priorities survey and the formulation of a vision for protecting Grantham’s rural landscape. The Planning Board has set aside the sum of \$5,400 to fund these activities.” Brown then asked if there were any further changes to be made.

*There being none, a motion was made by Buchanan to approve and accept the April 21, 2014 Minutes as amended; second by Hocker. There being no further discussion, the motion was put to a vote.*

***Unanimously Approved & Accepted***

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Proposed Forestry Activities at the Flewelling Easement Lot: Brooks McCandlish**

Brown recognized forester Brooks McCandlish to discuss proposed timbering activities at the Flewelling easement property. The easement agreement requires that any timbering follow a plan prepared by a licensed forester and the owners have now requested that McCandlish take charge of the operation. He reported that “Intent to Cut” documents have been submitted to the

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Selectmen that these follow a previous plan he had drawn up in 2009 but were only minimally implemented by the owners. The current focus will be to remove low grade timber for logs and pulp wood in order to create a more favorable environment for the regeneration of a diversified, higher quality forest and improved wildlife habitat. There will be some patch cutting of up to ten (10) acres but these areas will not be visible from the road. Buffer zones along streams and around wetlands will be respected. Every effort will be made to leave old stone walls and cellar holes undisturbed. Fay Road will be used for access. With regard to the weight limit on the Miller Pond Road bridge, McCandlish hopes to work with the Selectmen and the Town engineer on reinforcement measures to safeguard the bridge. He planned to begin work in early June provided the weather is favorable and the bridge issue can be resolved. He estimated that the job would take at least three to four months to complete. McCandlish affirmed that, with a minimum of extra work, the required skidder trails could later be used for hiking or snow-mobiling, provided such activities are allowed by the terms of the easement. McCandlish acknowledged that some piecemeal cutting had been done by the owners after the 2009 plan was submitted but noted that only a small portion had been implemented. When asked if, in his professional opinion, this work had been done sustainably and in accordance with the original plan, he replied that it was “not inconsistent” with the plan but that he had not analyzed the situation in any detail. In terms of volume, far less was cut than the plan allowed for and from areas close to the roads and therefore more visible. He stated that, in any case, he would be operating on other areas of the property and bypassing the Miller Pond vicinity entirely.

Regarding the Miller Pond Road bridge weight limit, Brown explained that the restrictions had frustrated the Commission’s plans for forest maintenance work in the nearby Smith Lot. Since that job represents a fraction of the cutting volume proposed for the Flewelling property, Brown observed that the reinforcement of the bridge could be of mutual benefit. Hocker expressed gratification that McCandlish would be in charge of the Flewelling effort and, before exiting the meeting, McCandlish invited the Commissioners to contact him if they had further questions or concerns.

### **Renewal of Membership in the New Hampshire Association of Conservation Commissions (NHACC)**

NHACC has sent the Commission an invoice in the amount of \$245.00 for the renewal of its membership. Brown noted that the Association has been an important resource for the Commission’s work and recommended the renewal.

*A motion was made by Hocker to withdraw \$245.00 from the Commission’s Operations account to pay the annual fee for membership in the New Hampshire Association of Conservation Commissions; second by Buchanan. . There being no further discussion, the motion was put to a vote.*

***Unanimously Approved & Accepted***

### **Shoreland Permit Application**

Brown announced that a shoreland permit application had been filed with the Commission by Richard and Karla Karash of 23 Shore Road in Eastman to increase the impervious surface area on their property. It was agreed that since the proposed increase was within applicable statutory

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limits, the application should be approved. Brown agreed, however, to do further research on the question.

### **New Hampshire Tree Farm Program**

Brown reported that New Hampshire tree farms are undergoing a third party certification assessment by the American Tree Farm System to a) evaluate the work its members are doing to manage their forests, b) review how the program is working and c) determine if there are areas in which the organization can better help its members. The Grantham Town Forest has been selected at random for an onsite visit by foresters hired as neutral assessors. Hocker confirmed that Grantham's Town Forest is part of this program and that forester Jeremy Turner is the contact. An hour-long assessment visit is proposed between June 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>. Hocker suggested discussing the proposal with Turner who had submitted Town Forest management documentation to the program in the fall of 2013. It was agreed that Brown would do so to determine the appropriate response, taking potential cost and the previous documentation into account.

### **U.S. Department of Agriculture Conservation Grant Programs**

Brown discussed materials sent by the NHACC concerning conservation grant opportunities available from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA.) He described these opportunities as being geared more toward farmland, conservation and wetland reserve programs involving large scale objectives. He observed that the USDA could be a good source of funding for the Commission if and when it takes on a major conservation project. At the present time, however, the Commission does not have an appropriate, competitive project on the horizon that would meet USDA criteria. He concluded that this source of funds should be kept in mind for future endeavors and he noted the important service NHACC was providing by tracking funding opportunities on behalf of its members.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

### **Shoreland Cutting Application**

Dave Wood reported that the shoreland cutting plan filed by Robert and Julie Harris of 2 Turner Brae in Eastman had met Town criteria and had been approved.

### **Update on Town Purchase of Conservation Land Along Route 10 South**

Hocker reported that a problem had arisen regarding the Town's decision to purchase a parcel of land adjacent to Brookside Park along Route 10 South. The Town Administrator has to date been unable to reach an individual who holds the right of first refusal on the property. There has also been some question as to whether the individual who offered the property for sale actually had the right to do so, the property being part of an estate. Hocker estimated that it would take another two months for these issues to be resolved.

### **Open Space Initiative**

Sue Buchanan reported that the Open Space Committee had met on May 1<sup>st</sup> and had determined that professional maps of Grantham's open spaces needed to be drawn up. She asked whether the Conservation Commission would be prepared to pay for this service and Hocker responded that such participation would not be appropriate since the Commission had already put up \$3,000 at the Selectmen's insistence to fund the Committee when it was first formed. A second focus

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for the Committee is the information from a 2005 Town survey soliciting input from the public on conservation issues. The Committee does not currently have the funds to conduct a new survey on its own, but is hopeful the Planning Board might take up the task prior to revising the Master Plan in 2015

### **Planning for Conservation**

#### ***Wetlands Overlay District***

Hocker stated that the Wetlands Overlay District would be forthcoming.

### **Other Board Activities**

- Buchanan reported that the local Boy Scout troop was interested in partnering with the Commission on conservation work projects.
- Wood announced that the perambulation of the Grantham/Plainfield boundary would take place between July and September of this year.
- Regarding the mapping of invasive species in Grantham, Wood reported that he had recently learned of an IPAN IPAN smart phone app that allows the user to log in near a stand of invasives, record the type of plant, record the GPS position, take a picture and then forward the information to a central clearing house to have it verified and posted on a national map/data base. This app has the potential to greatly simplify the mapping of Grantham's invasives which was one of the original goals of the invasives initiative..
- Wood stated that he had not yet met with Selectman Warren Kimball to discuss the bond issue strategy for funding open space purchases. He had, however spoken to open space advocates in the towns of Hollis and Rye. In Hollis, a desirable property was successfully purchased through the bond issue mechanism. In Rye, funds were raised in this way twelve years ago without a time limit and three purchases were subsequently made as opportunity arose. Wood had been advised that it was imperative that the Select Board be committed and the public fully educated on the strategy before attempting to issue a bond.

## **HANDOUTS**

None

## **ADJOURNMENT**

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

*The Commission voted unanimously to adjourn at 8:54 p.m.*

## **NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Grantham Conservation Commission will be held at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, June 16, 2014 in the Jerry Whitney Memorial Conference Room.

Respectfully submitted,

Caroline Hoen,