

# APPROVED

## Grantham Conservation Commission

### MINUTES

SEPTEMBER 19, 2016

300 ROUTE 10 SOUTH, GRANTHAM, NH

MEETING CALLED BY	Chairman David Wood
TYPE OF MEETING	Regular Meeting of the Conservation Commission
FACILITATOR	Chairman David Wood
NOTE TAKER	Nikki Arsenault
BOARD ATTENDEES	David Wood, Richard Hocker, Dennis Ryan, Laura Nagy
MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC OR OTHER BOARDS & COMMITTEES	Selectman Sheridan Brown

Chairman David Wood called the Grantham Conservation Commission to order on Monday, September 19, 2016 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.

#### APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES FOR AUGUST 15, 2016 MEETING

<b>DISCUSSION</b>		
Chairman Wood asked if there were any additions, corrections, or modification to the draft meeting minutes for the August 15, 2016 meeting. Wood noted that he made a number of minor grammatical corrections that he will send to Nikki. Under "Cost Elements" under Bridge Construction, the section should be updated to reflect that "additional monies should come from lumbering in the Smith lot in the Fall. Also, with regard to paying Turner, "Turner would take his commission from the sale" should be added to this section. Further down the page in this section, the minutes should be updated with the following statement, "...the design of the logging roads to best facilitate the installation of trails subsequent to the logging operation. It was agreed that Turner should present his plan to the Commission for review prior to initiating the operation."		
<b>CONCLUSIONS</b>		
There being no additional changes or additions to the minutes, Chairman Wood noted that he would entertain a motion to approve the August 15, 2016 minutes as amended.  A motion was made by Nagy to approve the August 15, 2016 minutes as amended by the Commission; second by Hocker. There being no further discussion, the motion was put to a vote.  <b>Unanimously Approved &amp; Accepted</b>		
<b>ACTION ITEMS</b>	<b>PERSON RESPONSIBLE</b>	<b>DEADLINE</b>
Meeting minutes for August 15, 2016 will be updated as indicated above.	Nikki Arsenault	09/26/2016

#### PROPOSED CHANGE TO MEETING MINUTES

<b>DISCUSSION</b>	
Following information received from the Town Administrator, Wood noted that GCC's meeting minutes must be completed in draft form within 5 business days. Wood proposed that the Commission decide if they would like the draft minutes at that time or if the Commission would like Chairman Wood to look at them first and then send them to the Commission. The Commissioners preferred immediate receipt. Wood also proposed a change in the format of the minutes, one in which it would be clearer to see action items. Nagy noted that this type of format was good for action items and that she has been on other committees where this format was helpful. Wood continued that the third column can be used for the decision made on any given topic. Wood asked Selectman Brown what his thoughts were on the topic. Brown answered that being sure to follow RSA 91:A was the most important guideline; as long as the rules therein were being followed, the format itself did not matter too much.	

# APPROVED

<b>CONCLUSIONS</b>		
The Commission decided to adopt the new meeting minutes format.		
<b>ACTION ITEMS</b>		
Meeting minutes will be updated to reflect a new format, starting with the minutes for this meeting. Nikki will draft a new format for the Commission to review prior to the due date of this meeting's draft minutes.	Nikki Arsenault	09/26/2016

## OLD BUSINESS – SMITH LOT

<b>DISCUSSION</b>		
<p>Hocker noted that the Miller Pond bridge completion date is set for the end of September; Selectman Brown then announced that they are finished; the Board of Selectman are scheduled to visit on Wednesday of this week for their closeout visit. There will then be some State paperwork to complete before the bridge is considered to be officially completed and open. Wood questioned what the load limit is, and Brown replied that he was unsure but could find out for the Commission. Wood questioned if Hocker has been in touch with Jeremy Turner. Hocker noted that he invited Turner to the next Commission meeting via email; he further contacted Turner's secretary but has not yet heard back either way. Turner did indicate that any work on the Smith lot would need to be done once the ground is frozen. Hocker continued that the value of chips is currently so low, that it may not be worth removing chips for sale, rather chipping would be done on the lot and chips would be added to the trail pack. Hocker noted that branches and trash trees become chips. Hocker continued that his primary concern with regard to the Smith lot is the number of very mature white pines on the lot; leaving these trees could present problems in the future, including blow-downs and fire hazards.</p>		
<b>CONCLUSIONS</b>		
Hocker agreed to email Turner to ask him to attend the next Commission meeting. Wood questioned if Turner could also address the issue of the chestnut groves, and Hocker agreed that this was part of what he is hoping Turner will address.		
<b>ACTION ITEMS</b>		
Follow-up with Jeremy Turner to ask him to attend the next regular meeting of the Grantham Conservation Commission with a forest management plan.	Richard Hocker	ASAP
Follow-up with Jeremy Turner regarding the chestnut grove, including finding low or no-cost trees and where they will best be located in the Smith Lot.	Richard Hocker	ASAP

## TOWN TRAIL MAP / GEOCACHING AT BROOKSIDE PARK

<b>DISCUSSION</b>		
<p>Town Trail Map – Wood noted that he and Ryan attended a Trail Finder training session last week. Wood had hoped that the Eastman trails' GPS coordinates had been moved over to the system prior to their meeting, but as of yet they have not. It appears as though it will be reasonably easy to input data into the system. He and Ryan both have passwords, and they should be able to now input the description of the Grantham trails. Both the Society for the Preservation of NH Forests and the Blue Mountain Snow Dusters have pdf maps on the web; Wood has asked if they will provide the specific GPS coordinates for uploading to Trail Finder. Wood noted that it is possible to use a Garmin or download an app to a smart phone to complete this task; Brown noted that while it is not free, the app iHike is one example of an app that can be used for this purpose. Wood added that the app he is currently using is called MyTracks on his phone. Ryan noted that he thought the training session went well; it will take some time to implement, including text creation for each trail, proof-reading of the created content, the addition of features, photos, and intersections. Wood added that GCC would ultimately have the final look before the content goes live.</p> <p>Geocaching at Brookside Park – Wood announced that Anne Langsdorf attempted to put the new cache at Alligator Rock, but because the Rock is only 49 feet from the current cache at the park, Geocache will not allow the new cache to be placed there. The new cache must be placed at least 50 feet from any other cache.</p>		
<b>CONCLUSIONS</b>		
Anne has reached out to Geocache to figure out what to do.		
<b>ACTION ITEMS</b>		
Obtain GPS coordinates of Grantham trails	Wood and Ryan	none

# APPROVED

Anne will report back to GCC regarding the new cache.		
---	--	--

## SHORLINE CUTTING APPLICATIONS

DISCUSSION		
<p>Nagy noted that they are caught up for shoreline cutting permits; there have been at least 6 permits received since John Larrabee has come on board. Chairman Wood noted that he took a look in the GCC filing cabinets and wondered if copies of these permits actually need to be kept in the GCC files, given that they are kept in other files in the building. Nagy noted that she would like to keep a spreadsheet to keep all of this data organized in one place.</p>		
CONCLUSIONS		
<p>It was decided that the spreadsheet agreed upon above would be managed by Nagy and Larrabee and that they would both keep copies of this document in electronic format so that it can be accessed as needed. Hocker added that he believed that as long as the documents are being kept intact in the main office, GCC shouldn't have to keep copies in the files.</p>		
ACTION ITEMS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE
Create an Excel document as discussed above to compile the shoreline cutting permit applications; work with other Commission members to figure out how to share this document.	Laura Nagy	Next meeting
Follow up with the Town Administrator to iron out the details of discarding duplicate documentation.	Laura Nagy	Next meeting

## NEW BUSINESS – REIMBURSEMENTS

DISCUSSION		
<p>Hocker noted that the bronze plaque was delivered on the 16<sup>th</sup>, it is in place, and it cost \$165. Nagy noted that she continues to receive compliments about the progress and work completed at the park; several people with disabilities have been able to visit and enjoy the park.</p>		
<p>Wood noted that he has a request for reimbursement in the amount of \$102 for the food that went to the Brookside Park ribbon cutting ceremony; the unused portion of this food was donated to the Grantham Food Pantry.</p>		
CONCLUSIONS		
<p>A motion was made by Ryan to approve the reimbursement of Hocker in the amount of \$165; seconded by Nagy. There being no further discussion, the motion was put to a vote.</p> <p><b>Unanimously Approved &amp; Accepted</b></p> <p>A motion was made by Nagy to approve the reimbursement of Wood in the amount of \$102; seconded by Hocker. There being no further discussion, the motion was put to a vote.</p> <p><b>Unanimously Approved &amp; Accepted</b></p>		
ACTION ITEMS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE
None at this time.		

## NEW BUSINESS – HASTINGS / SHAGOURY LAND ADJACENT TO BUTTERNUT POND

DISCUSSION		
<p>Hocker announced that he walked the Anderson Pond connector trail, and it was evident that Hastings plans to use this trail to access the timber between Anderson Pond and Rolling Hills. It was logged off in 1994; he sees Hastings carving a skidder trail and harvesting trees. Wood noted that a cutting application is on file and everything is being done by the book. Eastman has no interest in purchasing the Hastings lot. Wood noted that Fish and Game is interested in purchasing the adjacent Shagoury lots; together they would create a very large section of conservation land. Chairman Wood added that the Hastings property improvements (a cell tower) for the lot (206-002) are currently appraised at \$265k and the land is assessed at \$308k. Wood continued that he would imagine that after the harvest of trees, that the land value should be reduced and asked if the GCC should try to precipitate an action with Fish and Game or another local organization to go after this land? Selectman Brown noted that any of these groups will look for fundraising dollars from the community. Hocker added that there is some money left in the land conservation fund. Hocker suggested contacting Steve Walker for his feedback since he is already involved in the Fish and Game acquisition. Selectman Brown noted that with regard to the cell tower, the buyer would be buying an encumbered piece of property. Brown also suggested contacting his replacement, Thain Allan, on the Ausbon Sargent committee regarding the topic of resources and land acquisition.</p>		

## APPROVED

Hocker asked Brown if there was any way that when financial reports regarding fund balances are available, if the GCC could receive this information. Selectman Brown noted that the Selectmen receive financial reports once per month and Hocker asked that a copy could also be sent to the GCC at the same time.

<b>CONCLUSIONS</b>	
--------------------	--

It was agreed to approach Steve Walker and Thain Allen for advice regarding purchase of the Hastings lot. Brown will explore a routine submission of finances to the GCC.

ACTION ITEMS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE
Contact Steve Walker	Chairman Wood	Next meeting
Contact Thain Allan regarding the Ausbon-Sargent committee	Chairman Wood	Next meeting
Send GCC fund statements, preferable once per month	Sheridan Brown	Next available issuance of statements

### NEW BUSINESS – GRANTHAM HEALTH FAIR

<b>DISCUSSION</b>	
-------------------	--

Grantham Health Fair – October 15, 2016 from 9:00 a.m. until noon – Dave Beckley asked if the Grantham Conservation Commission would be willing to have a presence at the fair. Wood asked if anyone would be available on this Saturday to man a table regarding the recreational opportunities available via the GCC. Ryan agreed to do this but noted that he would be more comfortable going with someone who has manned a table before. Brown noted that the primary responsibility would be to explain what GCC does and would not likely require trying to recruit new members.

<b>CONCLUSIONS</b>	
--------------------	--

ACTION ITEMS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE
Contact Dave Beckley at 759-9390	Dennis Ryan	ASAP
Set up a table with presentation board, Brookside maps, brochures, etc. at the Grantham Health Fair on October 15 <sup>th</sup> .	Dennis Ryan	10/15/2016

### NEW BUSINESS – FLEWELLING WALK DATE

<b>DISCUSSION</b>	
-------------------	--

Chairman Wood announced that the Flewelling walk date is set for this Thursday, September 22<sup>nd</sup>. The purpose of the walk is to report back to the State that the lot has been monitored; this is a task that must be completed yearly. Wood will also take his GPS so that they can find the coordinates. Selectman Brown added that it might also be helpful to GPS the location of the pins. Wood noted respectfully that it might be best to have the surveyors do this task so that the data is accurate. Selectman Brown added that it would still be helpful; Wood noted that if they are able they will pick up way points.

<b>CONCLUSIONS</b>	
--------------------	--

The Commission decided that the time for the walk will be 8:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. and any available GCC members will meet at the turn-off point at the base of the Miller Pond Bridge.

ACTION ITEMS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE
None at this time.		

### NEW BUSINESS – BOND AUTHORIZATION / PAY-TO-THROW PROGRAM

<b>DISCUSSION</b>	Discussion ensued regarding potential areas of focus for the GCC in the coming months; four options were considered.
-------------------	--

1) Warrant Article – Bond Authorization – Chairman Wood noted that the Town of Grantham cannot currently make a commitment to

# APPROVED

purchase land until there is a Town commitment of the funds. That requires a Town meeting and delays the negotiation. Other NH towns have passed warrant articles authorizing the Selectmen to issue a bond for land purchase if specified conditions are met.

2) Pay-to-Throw – Wood noted that reducing the volume of trash going to landfills is a conservation effort appropriate for GCC consideration. Wood noted that, although there is a net cost to recycle waste, recycling still saves roughly 60% of the cost of dumping trash. One of the primary concerns with the Pay-to-Throw system is that there may need to be additional space available at the transfer station for recycling; composting of kitchen waste would require further extensive modification. Other downfalls include the potential increase in trash on the roadside and also a potential for angry residents at the implementation of this type of program. Although recycling might ultimately lead to a savings for the Town, the resulting tax relief is likely to be small.

3) Trail Work at GVS – Nagy mentioned that given their last visit to the Commission, it didn't seem as if they required a large amount of assistance from GCC. Hocker agreed and also noted that he saw the GCC's role more as advisors for this project.

4) Improvements at Miller Pond - Because a conservation easement already exists on the Flewelling lot, GCC might consider improvements to the eastern side of Miller Pond to make the property more useful to the community. Improvements might include the construction of a foot bridge north of the current car bridge, improvements of the trails, clearing of the dam, renovation of the lean-to and creation of a beach for swimming.

Brown noted that the current bridge project at Brookside has created a very favorable and positive response; having said that, there are still lingering negative feelings over the prime wetlands issues that took place. He believes there would be reluctance for people to get strongly behind a bond this year given that the Master Plan is still not done as the Selectmen agreed to give the Regional Planning Commission another month. They will also be heading into budget season and their initial budget numbers need to be in soon. The Capital Improvement Plan committee is not yet able to meet due to the Master Plan not being done and there are also structural issues that need to be addressed. He also suggested that there be an outside entity driving the PR for the bond. For these reasons it may be best to but off the Bond for this coming year. Brown added that with respect to the rare instance that a piece of property would become available with only short-term notice, there is possibility for a potential emergency Town meeting via a petition from Supreme Court. Hocker asked what it would take to get a bond on the warrant. Selectman Brown noted that the Selectman can add it as one of their warrant articles or the Selectmen can add it as a bond article. Wood added that the language can be borrowed from other towns who have gone through the process. Brown added that having a campaign plan would be helpful, noting budget deadlines, etc., planning backwards as needed to pull all the elements together.

With regard to Miller Pond improvements, a critical issue is the location of the boundary of the 5 acre portion of the Flewelling lot adjacent to the garage and home. Wood questioned if something should be done to build relationships with the property owners of the above mentioned lots. Nagy questioned if trail improvements can be done and it was noted by Wood that Steve Walker would know the answer to this question. Wood questioned if a surveyor should be hired to determine if the pin is where it belongs, and Brown answered that it would be important to ask a surveyor how much it would cost. Nagy questioned if the issue of cooperation has been addressed with the land owner and Hocker answered that this has not been addressed with the land owner within the last few years. Hocker continued that the location of the pin is very important. Wood noted that it may be a good idea to use the money in the fund to have this done by a surveyor. Selectman Brown noted that the problem is that the bounds description is not clear; perhaps it's best to try to initiate this conversation with the land owner. Selectman Brown added that the conversation could begin with the fact that the owner is trying to sell and therefore would avoid legal problems by having a clear indicator of the property boundaries. Nagy asked if Selectman Brown would be willing to initiate this conversation and he agreed.

## CONCLUSIONS

Wood summarized the consensus of opinion that:

- GVS – wait for them to request assistance.
- Pay-to-Throw - abandon interest for now
- Bond – establish a time-line of actions required to bring a warrant to Town Meeting in 2018. .
- Miller Pond / Flewelling lot – Approach Steve Walker for advice; initiate contact with owner.

ACTION ITEMS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE
Seek advice from Steve Walker	Chairman Wood	ASAP
Initiate conversation with land owner.	Selectman Brown	TBD

## NEW BUSINESS – UPDATES FROM SELECTMAN BROWN

### DISCUSSION

Brookside Park – a complaint was received by the Board of Selectman of a dog on a long leash that was out of control. Is there a potential for additional signage or for the GCC to further consider or keep an ear out for this? Regarding the signs, Wood noted that there are two signs that need to be re-made and Wood questioned if a sign should be made regarding "keep dogs under control" and Selectman Brown said he would like to defer to the Commission on this one; he further questioned if the bulletin board at the base of the trail might be a good place to remind people that there is a leash law.

At the end of Miller Pond Road – who owns the property that is the two parking spots (and the culvert that abuts the Town Forest)? Brown questioned if there has ever been an interest in improving this property and Hocker added that this could be something done

# APPROVED

by the Roads crew, i.e. tree removal, hard pack, and grading. Hocker noted that the Town Forest fund could be used for this purpose.

Brown – formal trail adoption process – benefit of trail maintenance group – a free way to increase the liability shield for people maintaining the crew. Brown is pulling together a bulleted list and will share this with the GCC once the list is complete.

## CONCLUSIONS

## ACTION ITEMS

## PERSON RESPONSIBLE

## DEADLINE

Obtain list of steps for the formal trail adoption process.

Selectman Brown

TBD

## NEW BUSINESS – UPCOMING EVENTS

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

Benefits of Pollinators presentation – held at the Wilmot Community Association's Red Barn – 6pm this Thursday – RSVP to Kristy Heath at 526-6555.

Ausbon-Sargent round table – October 20<sup>th</sup> 6:00p.m. – 8:00p.m.

## ADJOURNMENT

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

***The Commission voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 9:07p.m.***

## NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Grantham Conservation Commission will be held at 7:00 p.m. in the Jerry Whitney Memorial Conference Room on Monday, October 17, 2016.

Respectfully submitted,



Nikki Arsenault