

## **Conservation Commission Public Meeting Minutes, June 8, 2016**

Present: Allison Knab, Bob Keating, Tim Copeland, Donna Jensen, Bill McCarthy, Brad Jones, Joe Lovejoy.

Also, Town Planner, Tavis Austin, resident Kathleen Breslin, Unitil Forestry Supervisor, Chris Moultrou, and Unitil System Arborist, Sara Sankowich

### **Public Session**

The public session was called to order at 7:05pm.

### **Mailbox, May 25 Meeting Minutes**

Copeland moved and McCarthy seconded a motion to accept the May 25 meeting minutes as written but with the date corrected. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Mailbox, NHDES**

The Conservation Commission received the NHDES permit application for the Bill Beddingfield property; subsequently, Knab signed the permit for expedited review as voted by the commission on May 25.

### **Unitil Storm Resiliency Program**

Chris Moultrou, Unitil Forestry Supervisor, and Sara Sankowich, Unitil System Arborist were in attendance to discuss the Unitil Storm Resiliency Program, initiated in 2011 after widespread power outages in New Hampshire and Massachusetts during 2008. This program, which has been approved by utility regulatory bodies in the state, is designed to create "ground to sky clearance" within 10 feet of power lines composing Unitil "primary circuits." Two such circuits, one following Heights Road to Guinea Road and a second near Winnicut Road, will involve the removal of 290 and 439 trees, respectively.

Unitil has hired a vendor (ACRT), which will work with property owners to mark and identify trees to cut, to prune, and to leave "as is." Tree cutting is scheduled for September.

The new 10-foot clearance way will be maintained by the utility company approximately every 5 years.

Unitil is experimenting with the use of Cambistat™ [paclobutrazol], a tree-growth suppressant, in instances where tree cutting is not wanted, ill advised, or impossible. Unitil uses the chemical application with permission from tree owners.

Breslin had a number of questions for the Unitil representatives.

1. Why does Unitil not perform tree identification and cutting work using local contractors, rather than an out of state company? The company representatives stated that Unitil did not have the internal human resources and wished to engage companies who specialized in this type of work.
2. Who will perform the cutting? The Unitil representatives stated the work had not been put out to bid yet, so no contractor has been hired to perform the tree cutting and pruning on this project.

There was discussion of the poor job done in Greenland last year to maintain town utilities. It was stated that Eversource, not Unitil, was involved in that unsightly Greenland work.

Copeland stated that Unitil should be commended for its efforts to minimize electrical outages during storms through more aggressive maintenance of trees adjacent to lines. Lovejoy commented on the fantastic workers that restored power in town following the 2008 storm.

**Stratham Hill Park Trail Expansion**

Since the last meeting, Knab spoke with Seth Hickey regarding expansion of trails in the park, specifically creating a new trail off of the Lovell Road Trail. Hickey stated that the Stratham Hill Park /Stratham Town Forest Management Plan Committee had not received the management plan from the forester hired to complete it--Charles Moreno. During the last Conservation Commission meeting, individuals were curious about what the plan said in relation to trail expansion.

The site walk scheduled by the SHP association for June 10 was cancelled.

**Municipal Updates, Upcoming Conservation Commission Meetings**

Knab provided permission for UNH researchers to attend the June 22 meeting to discuss wetland setbacks with the commission. She will not be at the meeting.

Pursuant to comments made by Peter Wiggin during the May 25 meeting, Knab will contact Dory Wiggin to arrange for her to speak with the commission regarding wetland setbacks in July.

Copeland moved and Keating seconded a motion to adjourn at 8:26 pm. The motion passed unanimously.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday June 22, 2016, 7:00pm at the Stratham Municipal Center.

Respectfully submitted, Donna Jensen, Secretary