

## **Conservation Commission Public Meeting Minutes, February 24, 2016**

Present: Bob Keating, Tim Copeland, Dan McAuliffe, Brad Jones, Bill Kenny, Bill McCarthy, Donna Jensen. Also, Paul Deschaine, Town Administrator; Tavis Austen, Town Planner; Dena Stern, Public Education Liaison; Ms Katherine Breslin, resident; Mr Robert Hillery, resident

### **Public Session**

The public session was called to order at 7:00pm.

### **New Business**

#### **May Education Event**

Dena Stern was in attendance to discuss the upcoming conservation educational event, "Soil and Water Quality Information Session," scheduled for Thursday May 5, 5:30pm at the municipal center. Jeremy DeLisle of the UNH Cooperative Extension will discuss soil testing, while Sue Sylvester of Absolute Resource Associates in Portsmouth will discuss water quality testing.

#### **5 Whittaker Drive**

Robert Hillery of Whittaker Drive was in attendance to discuss the conservation land off of Union Road, which is a deeded conservation to the Town of Stratham from the Bartlett development. Mr Hillery horseback rides on adjacent lots #68 and #64 on the town map, but wanted to receive permission to ride on the conservation land. Mr Hillery promised to leave no trace, including picking up horse waste with a wheel barrow as necessary. Copeland moved, and Elwell seconded his motion to allow horseback riding on the town property at this location. The motion passed unanimously. Deschaine suggested that this topic should be brought up at the next Select Board meeting for acknowledgment by that body.

#### **Willow Pond Conservation Easement**

Kenny noted that he drove by the Willow Pond conservation area, which in its 2016 monitoring report (discussed during the previous Conservation Commission meeting) noted the presence of a fire pit and chairs on the property, as well as tree cutting. Town Planner Tavis Austen volunteered to speak to the Stratham Code Enforcement Officer Mark Morong, so that Morong would approach the adjacent property owner and ask about the activity in the report. Specifically, who build the fire pit? The home owner or individuals from the cluster development? The commission wished that the appropriate party be advised to discuss the report findings with the commission. Deschaine recommended that writing a follow up letter, to create a paper trail, should there be future problems at the site. The commission noted that it wished for stakeholders to enjoy the conserved open space safely and responsibly.

#### **Mailbox: Meeting Minutes**

Copeland moved and Elwell seconded a motion to accepted the January 27, 2016 meeting minutes as written. The motion passed unanimously.

#### **Mailbox: Wetland Utility Maintenance Notification**

The Commission received a Wetland Utility Maintenance Notification from NHDES. PSNH Eversource is servicing its A126 transmission line. Jones and Elwell voiced their concerns regarding the poor state of Eversource tree cutting projects in Greenland. McCarthy suggested asking the company to come to a Stratham Conservation Commission meeting to describe its methods.

#### **Mailbox: RCCD Monitoring Reports 2016**

RCCD monitoring reports were received for 6 properties for which RCCD holds the easement rights: Scullers (4.5 acres); Batchelder pond (8.3 acres); Batchelder parcel (57.7 acres); Wiggins parcel (12.9 acres); Adams parcel (11.4 acres); and Goodrich property (52.6 acres). Keating moved and Copeland

seconded the motion to pay the invoice for the monitoring reports from the land conservation fund. The motion passed unanimously.

#### **Mailbox: SELT Monitoring Reports 2016**

The Commission received SELT reports for 5 conserved properties for which SELT holds the easement rights: Roberts property; Broderick property; Jones High Street property; Scamman woodland property, and Scamman farmland property.

The Broderick property report noted that additional boundary marks would be helpful nearest to the condominiums. In contrast to last year, the tree stand had been removed, and the campsite area cleaned up. The owner noted hearing ATVs in the area.

The Jones property report noted that trash was found and there was evidence of ATV use.

The Roberts property report noted that the property owner had removed mulitflora rose.

The Scamman woodland report noted that trees had been cut by an adjacent property owner. For the identified illegal removal of the trees, the neighbor had also created a wetland crossing on the Scamman's property. The illegal activity had been noted months ago by the Scamman's, and investigations were already underway by the Stratham police, SELT, and the NH DES.

#### **Mailbox: Emery Lane (97 Portsmouth Avenue) NH DES Permit**

A letter of notification was received from NH DES regarding the John Reiss property expedited dredge and fill application. A permit was granted by the agency.

#### **Municipal Updates**

Austen reported that the Planning Board provided Verizon with conditional approval to proceed with installation of a cell tower at the top of the town property off of Bunker Hill Road immediately adjacent to the Foss and Hutton properties. Verizon will construct a dedicated driveway from Bunker Hill Avenue to the tower location and maintain its drainage. The agreement needs town approval at Stratham Town Meeting on March 11. The Commission received a letter criticizing the Verizon tower project from Mr Whitney, one of the residential developers of Bittersweet Drive (IE, the Makris development of 32 Bunker Hill Avenue).

Deschaine noted that residents would be voting on Tuesday March 8 via ballot and on Friday March 11 via Town Meeting for several initiatives including 2 zoning amendments, resident petitions, a request for a \$250,000 appropriation for the Heritage Commission to preserve the Lane Homestead, and \$6 million bond for public water line from Exeter to serve the Gateway business district.

The Commission agreed to discuss the 300th parade and new wetland permit mitigation rules in the upcoming meeting.

At 8:40pm Copeland moved and McCarthy seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday March 9, 2016, 7:00pm at the Stratham Municipal Center.

Respectfully submitted, Donna Jensen, Secretary