

## **Conservation Commission Public Meeting Minutes, January 11, 2017**

Present: Allison Knab, Pat Elwell, Donna Jensen, Joe Lovejoy, Bob Keating, Brad Jones, Bill McCarthy, Dan McAuliffe, Tim Copeland

Also, Town Administrator, Paul Deschaine, Resident, John O'Brien

### **PUBLIC SESSION**

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

### **Mailbox**

#### **RCCD Monitoring Reports**

RCCD mailed 3 monitoring reports on Stratham-owned conservation easements held by RCCD.

1. Goodrich property easement at 11 Stratham Heights Road (52 acres). Notes from the report included invasive species and debris piles, possibly left by abutters.
2. John Adams property easement at 86 Winnicut Road (11 acres). No concerns noted.
3. Batchelder property easement at 3 Barker Lane (57 acres). Notes from the report identified encroachment on the easement on a location 200 feet by 400 feet. The report included photos of fencing and other materials being stored in the location.

The new owner of the Batchelder property, John O'Brien was in attendance for the meeting. He said the neighbor encroaching on the property is a relative of the prior owners of 3 Barker Lane. O'Brien is also concerned about the encroachment. Knab said that she would ask the Town's code enforcement officer to speak with the property owner.

### **New Business**

#### **ESRLAC Annual Report**

Knab and the commission spoke with Deschaine about including the ESRLAC annual report in the Town's annual report. Deschaine suggested the associated cost of lengthening the annual report publication is a concern, and suggested the Con Com mention the report in its annual report to the Town.

#### **Annual Town Clean Up Day**

There was discussion of Town's annual clean up day. April weather is often cold. With a later date, there may be increased chance of fair weather and larger participants. Keating moved and Lovejoy seconded a motion to hold the Town's annual clean up day on Saturday May 6. The motion passed unanimously.

Jensen noted that new strategies were needed to increase participation in the clean up day. One might be to engage businesses in the Gateway District and other organizations:

1. Exeter Area Car Dealership Association
2. Exeter Subaru
3. Exeter Chamber of Commerce

Knab stated that she would contact the business manager at Exeter Subaru.

### **Old Business**

#### **Municipal Updates**

##### **Cell Tower at Scamman's Home and Garden Property**

The owner of Scamman's Home and Garden has proposed the installation of a Verizon cell phone tower on the property. The Zoning Board of Adjustments reviewed the cell phone tower proposal at its last meeting. In its review, the ZBA could identify no technical reason to reject the proposal. The Planning Board requested that the owner conduct a balloon study to determine the visual impact of the cell tower on the property. Copeland was in attendance for the balloon study and reported the impact was significant. The Planning Board requested proposals for other locations for the tower.

Commission members are opposed to the cell tower's suggestion at that location because it would impact the viewshed of the Scamman's Bittersweet Farm, for which the Town paid \$2.3 million for a conservation easement. Elwell suggested publicizing the tower proposal on the Con Com's Facebook page.

#### **Planning Board Zoning Amendment Proposal**

The Planning Board has filed for a zoning amendment asking for powers to bypass Con Com project review of some land use projects. The warrant article will appear on the March Town ballot:

*o Town Warrant Article – Residential Open Space Cluster Development. To see if the Town will amend Section VIII, Subsection 8.9.a.iii Buffer Area by adding 8.9.a.iii.4 to establish the Planning Board's ability to grant a waiver to wetland/shore land buffer areas upon creation and adoption of regulations establishing criteria to evaluate waiver consideration.*

The Commission's concern with the language is that it doesn't provide criteria to exercise the waiver mechanism.

Commissioners discussed writing its own amendment on the proposed article. The commission discussed filing a citizens protest petition; however, it does not appear to meet the criteria set for protest petitions.

Elwell moved and McCarthy seconded a motion to publically oppose the Planning Board zoning amendment. The motion passed unanimously.

Actions to defeat the article will require other methods from the Con Com.

#### **Nonpublic Session**

Elwell moved and Keating seconded a motion to go into nonpublic session at 8:45pm. It passed unanimously.

#### **Adjournment**

Elwell moved and Keating seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:58pm. It passed unanimously.

#### **Next Meeting**

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday January 25, 2017 at the Stratham Municipal Center.

Respectfully submitted, Donna Jensen, Secretary