

## Conservation Commission Meeting, December 12, 2018

Members Present: Tim Copeland, Pat Elwell, Joe Lovejoy (serving as BOS representative), Allison Knab, Dan McAuliffe

Non-members Present: Billy Allen, Kris Allen, Tavis Austin, Greg Blood, Carla Bretton, Dan Crow, Paul Deschaine, Seth Hickey, Pat Kelly, Michael Tallone

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 p.m.

*Minutes:* Tim motioned, Dan accepted a motion to accept the minutes of November 28, 2018 with a correction in the spelling of McAuliffe and a correction that Chief Scippa has retired, not resigned

### *Mail:*

- RCCD sent a statement of technical review of services in Stratham
- SELT sent a card celebrating the third anniversary of the Zarnoski easement.
- ERSLAC sent its annual report as well as a bill for 2019 dues in the amount of \$200. Allison motioned, Tim seconded a motion to pay the dues out of the 2019 Commission budget. The motion passed unanimously. Paul noted that ERSLAC needs two more Stratham representatives and two alternates.

### *Park Association*

Dan Crow, current secretary and past president of the Stratham Hill Park Association, spoke about the CC and PA working together because of shared interests and membership issues with the Association. He noted that the Association is fiscally strong but has been weak on membership in recent years. They were formed to help shepherd the park, have their meetings once every odd month (before the BOS meeting), and don't make any final decisions around the park without going before the Board of Selectmen. People are considered members if they attend a meeting and do not have to be Stratham residents. Paul noted that they are analogous to an advisory board. In past years the PA has built playgrounds, the natural skating area, warming hut, conducted trail maintenance, and purchased a snowmobile for trail maintenance.

The Association and Commission discussed trying to have joint meetings. It was agreed that the two groups will hold a joint meeting the evening of the second January CC meeting, January 23, 2019. Dan and Bill McCarthy will work on the agenda together. Seth was invited to attend; Colin Lavery would naturally be there as association chair. This will be a trial attempt at holding joint meetings six times a year. Dan was amenable to holding it the night of the Commission meeting and attending the following week's BOS meeting if any requests needed to be made.

### *Skate Park Discussion*

Seth and other members of the Skate Park working group attended to give the Commission an update on the skate park. As background, he started that he had looked at town own properties and provided the CC with a list of these properties. It was decided the best option was in an existing town park. Two test pits were conducted at Stratham Hill Park and one at Steven's Park. The Municipal Center field was considered but vetoed for not being a large enough space and being too close to the parking lot. Drainage will be considered at any site (Rob Roseen has been helping with the project). A contract has been signed with a skate park designer; they will also give input into the site selection. The projected

size of the skate park is 7500 square feet. As \$35,000 was dedicated to the project at the 2018 town meeting, the remaining cost would be \$265,000.

Seth stated he considered usage issues at SHP but believes most of the recent increase in usage is on the trails; he believes the skate park would not affect this. One concern around Steven's Park is the need for a fence around the highway department shed (estimate: \$50K) and visibility for the police. One positive is that there is a middle school bus stop there.

The next step will be for the BOS to decide on a site; the request for funds will then go before the town at Town Meeting. Dan Crow asked if the project was moving too quickly and if the voters should have a say on SHP. Allison expressed concern that a feasibility study did not seem to have been done by an outside expert and that instead the town relied on town staff. Tim questioned the scale and design of the project. The Skate Park group said they were still considering all three sites. The Commission expressed its appreciation for Seth's report and attendance at the meeting.

#### *"Bright Line" Draft*

- Bill had sent a draft of a "Bright Line" statement, which would indicate when the Commission should be consulted on town projects. Joe Lovejoy expressed concern that it was overly vague and could result in the Commission weighing in on town decisions such as roadside trimming. Allison stated that it had stemmed from projects going in at the Park and adjacent lands, and said all work in the adjacent lands should be considered holistically. Paul suggested more of a checklist approach to the "bright line." It was decided it would be revisited when Bill was in attendance and example ideas would be thought of.

#### *Other*

- The Master Plan committee had a survey for the Commission, which was discussed. The Commission feels it uses the MP regularly, especially via the Natural Resources Inventory. One challenge we face is changing regulations and our ability to keep up with them. Mike Houghton suggested the CC consider its vision for the next 10 years (e.g. buffer regulations). Tim also suggested more outreach to younger people in town. Pat will send the responses along to Tavis.
- The Commission discussed writing an article for the Stratham magazine on the clean-up day as well as on compost bin and rain barrel sales. Pat and Allison agreed to work together on the article when the deadline approaches.
- Allison motioned, Tim second a motion to cancel the December 26<sup>th</sup> meeting due to the holiday. The motion passed unanimously.

#### *Municipal/Planning Updates*

- Tavis noted that the Golf Club of New England is planning a transmission line and utility pole that will cross several wetlands during the installation. Tavis has requested that they come before the Planning Board (scheduled for December 19)
- The Granite Bridge pipeline that was to cross through Stratham will no longer be routed through town.
- Tavis is working with Seth about a possible trail at 61 Stratham Heights Road (conserved area, farm). The Commission expressed concern that the trail system not become too extensive.

- Paul said the Barker easement is still at the LCHIP office for their review and has not been sent to NRCS.
- The Commission thanked Paul for all he has done as Town Administrator, as this was his last meeting with the Commission. We will miss his guidance and assistance!
- Tavis noted that the NRI updates can most likely be encapsulated into the Master Plan update

At 9:19 p.m. Tim motioned, Allison seconded a motion to go into nonpublic session. The motion passed unanimously. At 9:31 p.m. Allison motioned, Tim seconded a motion to exit the nonpublic session and seal the minutes The motion passed unanimously.

Tim motioned, Allison seconded a motion to adjourn at 9:31 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.

*Respectfully submitted by Allison Knab, Secretary*