



# Town of Merrimack, New Hampshire

Community Development Department

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Planning - Zoning - Economic Development - Conservation

## **MERRIMACK CONSERVATION COMMISSION ANNUAL MEETING MONDAY, JULY 11, 2022**

A meeting of the Merrimack Conservation Commission was held on Monday, July 11, 2022 at 6:30pm in the Matthew Thornton room.

Steve Perkins, Chair, presided:

Members of the Commission Present:

Mike Boisvert, Vice-Chair  
Michael Drouin  
Ellen Kolb  
Andy Hunter  
Eric Starr  
David Trippett

Members of the Commission Absent:

Cindy Glenn  
Gage Perry  
Gina Rosati

Also Participating:

Marc Gagnon, Danforth Road, Horse Hill Nature Preserve Subcommittee Chair

Chair Perkins designated Commissioners Drouin and Trippett to sit in as voting members.

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**PUBLIC COMMENT** - None

**PUBLIC HEARINGS** – None

**STATUTORY/ADVISORY BUSINESS** - None

**NEW BUSINESS** -

- Purchase of materials to construct a 12-foot bridge at Wildcat Falls Conservation Area on North Loop trail

Vice-Chair Boisvert presented this item on behalf of Andrew Duane, Wildcat Falls subcommittee chair. Reeds Ferry Lumber provided the subcommittee with a quote of \$275.85 for materials. However, Mr. Duane is seeking a limit of \$325.00 for the project to account for

material price increases. The Commission's consensus was that material costs are likely to increase between now and when the materials are actually ordered. Mr. Duane will work with Reeds Ferry Lumber to coordinate delivery, and Commissioner Perkins will notify the town regarding the opening of a gate to access the site.

**MOTION BY VICE – CHAIR BOSIVERT TO ALLOCATE FUNDS NOT TO EXCEED \$325.00 FROM FUND 53 FOR MATERIALS FOR RECONSTRUCTION OF THE NORTH LOOP BRIDGE IN THE WILDCAT FALLS CONSERVATION AREA.**

**SECOND BY COMMISSIONER DROUIN**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**7-0-0**

- Winter maintenance and salt use policy

Commissioner Perkins reported on a draft document from Kyle Fox, Department of Public Works director, to be voted on by the Town Council at an August Council meeting. If the Conservation Commission has feedback, they can present it to the Town Council for their consideration. The policy addresses low salt/no salt roads, and calls for Green SnowPro training for DPW employees.

- Eversource work at Horse Hill Nature Preserve (HHNP)

Chair Perkins briefly explained that the Commission hopes to get a more definitive timeline of the project. Marc Gagnon, chair of the HHNP subcommittee, spoke to the Commission to report on the project. Electric utility Eversource is resuming a project to replace power line towers along the right-of-way that passes through HHNP. Several years ago they did phase 1 of the project which included work done on the east and west ends of HHNP. Towers over the wetlands including Long Pond are now being replaced.

Mr. Gagnon mentioned that it appears that currently, Eversource has only been accessing the site through the right-of-way. He explained that they cleared the trail, built a road, and built two platforms for cranes. He continued that no one on the HHNP Subcommittee, Conservation Commission or in Town seemed to have been notified that the project was resuming. He mentioned some concerns regarding not receiving notification. There was no timeline of how remaining work would be completed or when and it was unclear whether or not Eversource had prepared a logistical plan for work.

He mentioned seeing individuals on the Loop Trail, which is cut off because of the project, not paying attention to Eversource signs and not respecting that the trail is a dead end. He created signs coming back from the trail junctions letting individuals know the trail was closed until further notice. He also brought up concerns about the project possibly impacting wetlands in the area. He questioned if there is any way to clear up communication channels with Eversource so the Subcommittee can be more proactive in these types of situations.

Commissioner Kolb brought forward an announcement on the town website, dated April 2022, regarding Eversource work off Peaslee Road, which did not specify HHNP. She pointed out that while Eversource might have done all it was legally obliged to do to give notice of the project, the Commission was left in the dark about the project's effect on HHNP. Mr. Gagnon said that the Eversource work might provide opportunities for improvements within HHNP, but without better communication, no one from the town knows what to expect.

Chair Perkins and Vice-Chair Boisvert brought up previous work completed a few years ago at Grater Woods and HHNP. He commented that at the time there had been ample communication between Eversource and the Conservation Commission. Mr. Gagnon remarked that the first phase of the project at HHNP had been in an area where there were not trails or many wetlands, so the work had minimal impact on the Conservation Commission.

He mentioned the work previously completed had been good, but now it has started to affect the most popular trail on the property and a work schedule would be helpful. He spoke of a few places that Eversource may use to access the middle sections of the property, but stated that it's hard to plan ahead for trail maintenance and access without more information.

#### **OLD BUSINESS -**

- Rock/Barrier placement at Sklar Waterfront Park

Following the Commission's special meeting at Sklar on June 20, 2022, Chair Perkins asked the town's attorney to review the deed to the property in order to clarify whether a proposal for work at Sklar is in accordance with deed restrictions. The attorney advised that it is his interpretation that vehicle parking and boat trailer parking at Sklar would violate Section I, page 3 of the deed. Further, the driveways and parking area would require soil disturbance, which would arguably violate section E on page 2 of the deed.

After getting feedback from the Town Attorney, the Conservation Commission probably overstepped on the expansion of the parking lot. The deed also outlines that any of the access road the Commission had contemplated would also be inconsistent with the deed. Chair Perkins mentioned the first thing to do would be to make a motion to reconsider the original motion which passed and had accepted Layout plan 2 for Sklar. Anyone who voted on it originally can also vote to reconsider the motion. Commissioner Drouin asked if it's not possible to expand the parking lot, would individuals still be able to park in the parking lot. Chair Perkins mentioned he thinks this should be part of the motion reconsideration discussion.

**MOTION BY COMMISSIONER PERKINS TO RECONSIDER THE COMMISSION'S APRIL 4, 2022 VOTE ON THE FOLLOWING MOTION, WHICH ON THAT DATE WAS APPROVED 7-0-0 AND STATED: "ACCEPT SKLAR LAYOUT PLAN 2, TO BE REVISED WITH BOULDERS MOVED FROM EXISTING NORTH/SOUTH TO PREFERRED EAST/WEST AT THE END OF THE PARKING LOT BY RIVER, AND OTHER BOULDERS TO BLOCK SOUTH RAMP ONTO TOWN PROPERTY BY THE**

**BOAT RAMP TO BE APPROVED BY THE TOWN MANGER.”**

**SECOND BY COMMISSIONER TRIPPETT**  
**MOTION CARRIED**

**7-0-0.**

Vice-Chair Boisvert noted that there was a parking lot there previous to the April 4, 2022 motion. The Commission has to decide what they will gain by closing off the parking lot, or if it should be closed. He continued that there are other places to park, but they may still be in violation of the deed. Chair Perkins mentioned they need to vote on a motion to reopen the discussion for further deliberation.

**MOTION BY COMMISSIONER KOLB TO REOPEN THE DISCUSSION TO  
RECONSIDER THE APRIL 4 MOTION.**

**SECOND BY COUNCILOR HUNTER**  
**MOTION CARRIED**

**7-0-0**

Commissioner Drouin cautioned that if the deed doesn't allow parking at Sklar, and is mostly the same as the deeds for all other Conservation properties, limiting parking could endanger parking at all other properties. Commissioner Kolb said she wasn't sure about that without looking at the deeds side by side. Restrictions may apply to only one property or all, depending on the will of the people who had donated the land. Therefore, parking arrangements may vary. Chair Perkins noted he thinks the Sklar property is quite unique and that many other properties have paved parking lots. Vice-Chair Boisvert mentioned HHNP may be a similar deed as he believed that the parking lot is on the property. Chair Perkins and Commissioner Kolb referenced Wildcat Falls having some similar deed restrictions which prohibit widening of the parking lot, however this may be because of wetlands, not a deed restriction.

Commissioner Drouin asked if there had been complaints about the parking at Sklar. He felt they may be pursuing something they shouldn't at this time. Chair Perkins noted that if this was putting the Town at risk by acting in a way that is inconsistent with the deed they had signed, it could cause issues. Chair Perkins spoke about the Commission's obligation to conduct themselves in accordance with their oath and the property's deed. The Commission is also working with other likeminded philanthropic folks to possibly purchase properties. These individuals may wish to place deed restrictions on the land, so it's important to do things the right way. Vice-Chair Boisvert said that he had spoken with Mr. Sklar of Manchester, who wants the protections outlined in the deed.

Councilor Hunter asked if the currently existing parking lot near the boat ramp existed at the time of purchase, or if it was created after the properties purchase. Vice-Chair Boisvert responded that it had been an informal, circular area for turning and parking. Chair Perkins noted the Northern loop on Town owned land has always been a parking lot. Commissioner Kolb mentioned taking votes on previous items without having read property deeds beforehand. She

asked for clarification going forward with respect to their mission as a Conservation Commission as opposed to a Parks & Recreation Commission.

She also noted the importance of being aware of the deeds going forward. If reading the deeds means reconsidering past votes, she felt this was appropriate. If the Commission had not moved in the right direction with Sklar, it was not too late to stop. She felt that the way this issue was handled could affect whether properties would be donated in the future, as well as how people view the Commission as stewards of the land in Town. She felt that they should take a look at the deed and make sure any following actions respect deed restrictions.

Commissioner Starr asked what Sklar had looked like before it was deeded to the Commission. Commissioner Boisvert said that the parking area had been the biggest change under Commission ownership; he described its earlier condition as heavily rutted. He noted that cleanup of the property has been significant under the subcommittee's leadership, and that ATV traffic has been significantly reduced.

Commissioner Drouin commented that there is yearly aerial photography that Litchfield takes for each spring for their GIS system. This is a good tool to see changes over time. Commissioner Trippett continued on to state that he felt very torn at having to go to a legal opinion. He feels that it's a nice park which gets a lot of use, but closing down portions of the park that residents pay taxes for could have a negative connotation. His main concern was getting rocks properly placed so he could walk at the property and it still hasn't been resolved. He continued and stated that many individuals are enjoying the property now. Taxpayers have paid for the property and should be able to use it, but the Commission has to go with what's legal under the deed.

Commissioner Drouin said that moving the parking lot was going to cause a lot of trouble. People are going to want to park close to the water no matter what. Currently, they park on the beach (i.e. Merrimack River waterfront), and in various nooks and this change would encourage more of this behavior. He suggested moving the parking lot to the other side of the road, but noted that this would require tree cutting. In his opinion the Commission should leave the property as it is. He suggested asking Mr. Sklar for his input.

Chair Perkins mentioned that changing the deed would be a massive undertaking and would essentially be another closing on the property. Commissioner Drouin mentioned he was thinking more along the line of a letter of financial understanding. Councilor Hunter remarked that he feels Commissioner Trippett hit the nail on the head. The Town Attorney reviewed the deed and gave his legal opinion. For the Commission to not listen to his advice would defeat the purpose of the Town retaining Legal Counsel.

He thinks there's only one right thing to do, to abandon the parking lot expansion where it is. He noted that the suggestion to move parking to the other side of the road could be a good option. Even though some trees would have to be cut, his understanding is that this is part of land that is Town property. Perhaps a plan could be worked up to use Town property for parking. This would allow close parking and access to the water and would also follow deed restrictions. He

felt leaving the parking as it is, now that they are aware a restriction had been broken, was not an option. Signage could be a good parking management tool.

There was some talk of keeping the current area used for parking open while a transition is made to new parking. Chair Perkins remarked that he knows the work had been done with the best of intentions, but feels that rather than waiting, they should take action now. Commissioner Kolb mentioned that the Commission, as well as the Town Manager, should be prepared for the possibility of resident complaints.

The Town Manager will be the one to get the complaint phone calls, he should be able to say that the land was bought with taxpayer dollars and is being used in accordance with the way the land was conveyed to the Conservation Commission. The discussion also briefly touched on looking at property restrictions more closely in the future. This could impact the Conservation Commission's decision to buy certain parcels.

**MOTION BY COMMISSIONER KOLB TO ACCEPT SKLAR LAYOUT PLAN 2, TO BE REVISED WITH BOULDERS MOVED FROM EXISTING NORTH/SOUTH TO PREFERRED EAST/WEST AT THE END OF THE PARKING LOT BY RIVER, AND OTHER BOULDERS TO BLOCK SOUTH RAMP ONTO TOWN PROPERTY BY THE BOAT RAMP TO BE APPROVED BY THE TOWN MANGER."**

**SECOND BY COUNCILOR HUNTER  
MOTION DENIED**

**0-7-0**

**APRIL 4, 2022 VOTE ON SKLAR PLAN 2 IS THEREBY RESCINDED.**

Commissioner Drouin recommended a two-phase approach for the property in light of the vote. In phase 1, block off the paths to the woods to discourage ATV use. Proceed to phase 2 later this year, blocking off the access points to the South of the existing parking area. This would allow the Commission time to figure out what's going on with the parking area. He checked on the NH DES website and confirmed that boulders, gates, and fences are exempt from shoreland protection permits.

When questioned by Vice-Chair Boisvert, he mentioned there were enough boulders on site to get this work done. Vice-Chair Boisvert requested clarification on what would be blocked. Commissioner Drouin stated the barrier on the loop which is already in place would stay. He continued that this plan would also add some boulders near the boat launch.

Chair Perkins and Vice-Chair Boisvert and Councilor Hunter disagreed with a two-phase approach, saying that the town attorney's opinion on the Sklar deed means that they need to fix problems sooner rather than later. Councilor Hunter and Vice-Chair Boisvert felt it best to close off the parking area for now. Commissioner Drouin stated they could complete work within the month. They have the boulders and Mr. Twardoski is willing to assist in placing them. Councilor Hunter noted that if for some reason, Mr. Twardoski was unable to complete the work, they should get authorization from the Town Manager to have DPW assist them.

Commissioner Drouin asked about re-vegetating the existing Sklar parking lot after it's blocked off. He commented that the soil there is unfit for growth. Discussion touched on possible plants that could be placed on the site. Chair Perkins said that when the Commission places their annual seedling order from the state nursery in November, seedlings for Sklar could be part of the order.

**MOTION BY COUNCILOR HUNTER TO APPROVE A PLAN TO MOVE THE ROCKS TO THE SOUTH SIDE OF THE SKLAR PARKING LOT TO BLOCK ACCESS TO THE FOUR ENTRANCES INTO THE TRAILS, TO MOVE ROCKS TO BLOCK THE NORTH BOUNDARY OF THE PARKING LOT ON THE PROPERTY BOUNDARY, AND TO PURSUE A DISCUSSION WITH TOWN OFFICIALS ON USING TOWN PROPERTY FOR PARKING.**

**SECOND BY CHAIR PERKINS  
MOTION CARRIED**

**7-0-0**

- Grater Woods Blanding's Turtle project

Chair Perkins stated the research project, which took three years, has been completed. The Commission previously authorized up to \$5,000 for this project. They recently made the last payment installment. There were three turtles that couldn't be found last year, however, the last two transmitters have been found and removed by the researcher. Going forward, the Commission made a motion to cease funding the research project. Chair Perkins briefly went over feedback received from the researcher.

#### **ANNUAL MEETING OF THE COMMISSION -**

- **Review Merrimack Conservation Commission rules of procedure**

The Commission looked at a draft of Rules of Procedure, presented by Chair Perkins. Chair Perkins gave a brief background and explained that there were previously rules called By-Laws, which will now be called Rules of Procedure. The changes to existing procedures are being proposed to bring MCC procedures into line with Rules of Procedure adopted by the Planning and Zoning boards. This document is more robust and provides clarification to some areas of the by-laws that were vague. A few changes were highlighted in the Commission's discussion.

Article I was largely unchanged. Article II included a lot of new language and provides clarity regarding the Commission's mission, annual reporting and open space. Article III covers the procedure and requirements for a site visit or anytime the Commission is doing something on private land.

Regarding Article III:G (3), Commissioner Perkins noted that timelines for responding to wetlands permit applications might require special meetings of the Commission. He noted that Article IV:E prevents an alternate Commission member from being seated in place of the ex-officio from Town Council in the latter's absence.

Chair Perkins will follow-up on whether or not an alternate can sit in for an ex-officio member at a subcommittee meeting. He stated that the reason an alternate can't replace the Town Council Ex-Officio member at a Commission meeting is because they were elected and a member of the Commission has only been appointed by the Town Council. Chair Perkins also spoke of rules going over officer responsibilities, attendance, and prohibitions against meetings on Sundays and Holidays.

Article IX sets May as the month for the Commission's annual meeting, to be consistent with other town boards. The Commission must go over the Rules of Procedure at the Annual Meeting, but can revisit them by placing them on the agenda at other meetings throughout the year. The attendance provisions in Article IX do not apply to subcommittees.

Discussion touched on which month was best to hold the Annual Meeting. Considering many individuals go on vacation during the summer, there was a general consensus it would be best to have the meeting during May which is a bit less busy. Having the Annual Meeting in May would also keep things consistent with the Planning and Zoning boards.

The discussion covered voting, records and administrative procedures, requirements for subcommittee meeting minutes. Commissioner Drouin questioned Article II, duties and responsibilities and if the Commission has an index of wetlands. Chair Perkins replied that the index was prepared by GZA GeoEnvironmental Inc. for the town a couple of years ago. Chair Perkins said he would send a copy of the index to the rest of the Commission. Commissioner Drouin suggested a share drive for the Commission to be able to access documents such as the wetlands index. Commissioner Kolb added, there may be information on the Town website, if there is it would be helpful to share the link amongst the group.

Chair Perkins also spoke of the most efficient way to appoint new subcommittee members and whether they should talk about this at Commission meetings, or just receive a letter with the interested individual's intent to join a subcommittee. Commissioner Drouin felt a recommendation from a current subcommittee member was enough. Vice-Chair Boisvert expressed interest in having interested individuals come to a meeting to meet the Commission. The Commission agreed it was a good idea to have some type of brief interview process to meet new subcommittee members.

**MOTION BY CHAIR PERKINS TO ADOPT THE RULES OF PROCEDURE AS DRAFTED**

**SECOND BY COMMISSIONER TRIPPETT**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**7-0-0.**

**ANNUAL ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON, VICE-CHAIRPERSON, AND SECRETARY-**



**MOTION BY COMMISSIONER BOISVERT TO NOMINATE STEVE PERKINS TO SERVE AS CHAIR FOR ONE YEAR. CHAIR PERKINS ACCEPTED THE NOMINATION, NOTING HE HOPED THE COMMISSION WOULD BE READY FOR A CHANGE AT NEXT YEAR'S ANNUAL MEETING.**

**SECOND BY COMMISSIONER KOLB  
MOTION CARRIED**

**6-0-1**

**ABSTAINED: CHAIR PERKINS**

**MOTION BY CHAIR PERKINS TO NOMINATE MIKE BOISVERT TO SERVE AS VICE-CHAIR. COMMISSIONER DROUIN NOMINATED COMMISSIONER KOLB FOR THE POSITION; SHE DECLINED TO ACCEPT THE NOMINATION. MOTION TO ELECT VICE-CHAIR BOISVERT**

**SECOND BY COMMISSIONER TRIPPETT  
MOTION CARRIED**

**6-0-1**

**ABSTAINED: VICE-CHAIR BOISVERT**

**MOTION BY CHAIR PERKINS TO NOMINATE COMMISSIONER KOLB AS SECRETARY**

**SECOND BY COMMISSIONER DROUIN**

**MOTION CARRIED: 6-0-1**

**ABSTAINED: COMMISSIONER KOLB**

**OTHER BUSINESS -**

- **Subcommittee updates**

**Sklar** – Commissioner Drouin shared that the subcommittee will have its monthly meeting on July 12, 2022. There have been two resignations from the subcommittee, and there are four applicants awaiting consideration. The Eagle Bluff trail entrance is now blocked and overgrown with Knotweed. The trail sign will be moved to a spot along the Ferry trail.

Cummings Ferry is now fully visible along the Merrimack River shore. Commissioner Drouin shared that the road into Sklar is dusty in this dry weather and questioned if it would pose a PFAS health hazard? No one on the commission was sure. Subcommittee members will mow the property next week as the soil is in the floodplains and things grow quickly. The subcommittee mows the area every few weeks to keep the soil area clear.

Commissioner Kolb commented that she noticed that Commissioner Drouin had posted on Facebook when the subcommittee had done some mowing and was glad to know this work was being taken care of. Commissioner Drouin mentioned that a master plan for Sklar is in the works and when completed, it will include a master budget to include maintenance costs of equipment.

The subcommittee hopes to submit the plan to the Commission for review next month. Commissioner Drouin also shared that the tree survey for the picnic area is almost done and a new kiosk has been installed to replace the damaged one.

Commissioner Drouin confirmed with Vice-Chair Boisvert that the Ex-Officio position for Sklar was vacant. He stated that he would like to nominate Commissioner Trippett. Chair Perkins stated they could do subcommittee elections at the next Commission meeting.

**HHNP** – Next meeting will be in September, possibly earlier. Commissioner Kolb stated that she met with Mr. Gagnon and they did an informal site walk to evaluate some bridges at the property. They also took a look at the work Eversource was completing. She mentioned that the property was very popular, but still peaceful enough to enjoy.

Mr. Gagnon stated that two kiosk repairs were recently completed. He has also made signs for some trailheads and junctions to warn trail users about the Loop Trail interruption caused by the Eversource project. QR codes allowing smartphone users to download a HHNP map are now posted at kiosks and some trail junctions. They've been able to keep up with repairs from winter damage. He mentioned some consistent damage to a bridge caused by horse riding at the property. He communicated with the individual he believes to be responsible via Facebook to caution them that the bridges are not horse capable. He mentioned possibly making a corresponding posting on trails. There is currently not critical bridge damage, unless the horse riding continues to cause damage.

New England Mountain Bike Association (NEMBA) in cooperation with the subcommittee will have a trail workday on Saturday, July 16; NEMBA's insurance certificate has been sent to Community Development. Mr. Gagnon and Commissioner Kolb walked through HHNP on July 10 to confirm maintenance priorities: re-setting loose trail posts at junctions, trimming overgrown vegetation along the entrance from the Amherst Road parking lot, and bridge maintenance. Chair Perkins asked if Mr. Gagnon was still willing to work with any interested Eagle Scouts to complete projects.

Commissioner Kolb told the Commission that the HHNP subcommittee is reluctant to add the Fields Farm property to the subcommittee's responsibilities in the absence of a defined mission. They don't have enough information about the plans already in place for the property or the details of the deed. There are already trails in place that are causing problems with at least one land owner. These issues need be addressed sooner rather than later.

Mr. Gagnon mentioned that if they were going to have the HHNP Subcommittee take on Fields Farms, then the charter should be reviewed and revised. He mentioned Wasserman was also nearby and trail users frequently accessed both properties because of their proximity. It would be helpful to have a goal and intent of the Fields Farms subcommittee before moving forward. Mr. Gagnon also mentioned there were a few citizens interested in possibly joining HHNP Subcommittee. Lynne Wenz, a current subcommittee member, has missed a few meetings. Mr. Gagnon mentioned that according to the charter this could result in loss of a position on the

subcommittee. Commissioner Kolb to reach out and see if Mrs. Wenz plans to stay on the subcommittee.

**PRESENTATION OF THE MINUTES -**

**MOTION BY COMMISSIONER KOLB TO APPROVE THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES DATED JUNE 13 WITH CHANGES AS FOLLOWS:**

Correct spelling of “Gaudette” to “Gaudet”

Page 1 Lines 25

Page 7, Lines 256, 268, 273, 282

Page 8, Lines 295, 304, 310, 315

Page 9, Lines 334, and 350

**SECOND BY VICE-CHAIR BOISVERT**

**MOTION CARRIED 7-0-0.**

**MOTION BY COMMISSIONER KOLB TO APPROVE THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES DATED JUNE 20 WITH CHANGES AS FOLLOWS:**

Page 2, Line 66: correct “Laurie” to “Lori”

Page 3, Line 99: correct “adjuournment” to “adjournment”

**SECOND BY VICE-CHAIR BOISVERT**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**7-0-0.**

**PUBLIC COMMENT - None**

**COMMISSIONER COMMENTS -**

Commissioner Kolb informed the Commission of a UNH Cooperative Extension/NH Fish and Game research study calling on the public to report rabbit sightings by going to the site [nhrabbitreports.org](http://nhrabbitreports.org). The study is to compare populations of New England Cottontails, which are native to the area, and Eastern Cottontails which are becoming more prevalent. There will also be water quality testing of the Souhegan River along sections of Wildcat Falls and the Merrimack River near Sklar. Both are in good shape in regards to E.coli and dissolved Oxygen.

Commissioner Perkins reminded members that subcommittee ex-officio assignments would be considered at the July 25 meeting.

Commissioner Drouin continued to lead hikes for the Merrimack Hike Club, most recently at Horse Hill where trail signs seemed to be too far apart. Hike participants saw Eversource signs and modified their intended route. He would like to guide a hike on the Fields Farm property but was not sure there would be enough parking and would rather not bushwhack.

The Next hike club event will be at Sklar. Requests by the Sklar subcommittee to DPW for tree removal are still pending, although DPW did recently remove a tree near the Griffin Street turnoff onto the roadway into Sklar. Vice-Chair Boisvert said he would remind Lori of DPW about the tree removal requests. A tree has snapped and fallen within the Sklar picnic area.

He shared that the Native Plants Trusts is monitoring populations of lupines in town and collected some seeds for a seed bank they operate. Merrimack Public Library now has passes to the Trust's Garden in the Woods in Framingham MA, donated by Commissioner Drouin. He reported that the Litchfield Conservation Commission has an online ticketing system allowing members of the public to report problems on Commission property, and perhaps Merrimack can consider a similar system.

Litchfield does annual aerial surveys for GIS which captures some Merrimack property as well; this resource is available online but are separate from the NRPC aerials. Commissioner Drouin mentioned chatter on Facebook's Merrimack forums regarding a property; Commissioner Perkins urged against reporting on those forums at public Conservation Commission meetings. Commissioner Drouin additionally noted the increase in milkweed growing at the Sklar property.

Commissioner Trippett said he's grateful for the legal review of the Sklar deed so they can move forward. Councilor Hunter expressed agreement.

**ADJOURNMENT -**

**MOTION BY COMMISSIONER STARR TO ADJOURN.**

**SECOND BY COMMISSIONER TRIPPETT**

**COMMISSIONER DROUIN VOTED IN OPPOSITION.**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**6-1-0**

**MEETING ADJOURNED AT 8:31 pm**

Submitted by Stefanie Brinn