



# Town of Merrimack, New Hampshire

Community Development Department

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Planning - Zoning - Economic Development - Conservation

## MERRIMACK CONSERVATION COMMISSION

MARCH 19, 2018

### MEETING MINUTES

A regular meeting of the Merrimack Conservation Commission was held on Monday, March 19, 2018 at 6:30 p.m. in the Merrimack Memorial Conference Room.

Chair Gage Perry presided:

Members of the Commission Present:    Matt Caron, Vice Chair  
   Michael Boisvert  
   Cynthia Glenn  
   Gina Rosati  
   Tim Tenhave, Alternate Member (arrived at 6:39 p.m.)  
   Councilor Jackie Flood

Members of the Commission Absent:

Also in Attendance:                        Jack Elliott, 42 Perry Road, Bedford  
   Paul Berry, 50 Marty Drive, Merrimack

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PUBLIC COMMENT - None

PUBLIC HEARINGS - None

APPOINTMENTS - None

STATUTORY/ADVISORY BUSINESS - None

NEW BUSINESS

1. Eagle Scout Project presentation - Jack Elliott

Chair Perry noted Scout Elliott has presented the project before the Grater Woods Sub-Committee. The location of the project is within the easement the Commission maintains for the School District. It is his understanding, given the location, there is no requirement for the proposal to go before the Town Council. He is awaiting a response to the question of whether the project would have to go before the School Board. It may be a matter of simply informing the School Board of the activity.

Scout Elliott stated the project would be located between the Link Trail and the School Loop Trail (overlooking the pond). He provided photos of an existing observation deck, which he hopes to replicate. Benches will be included as part of the observation deck.

Scout Elliott was informed he could coordinate with Councilor Rosati regarding access to the site, should coordinate with the school to be aware of other planned activities, e.g., soccer games that could result in the parking lot being full, and that the work should be done over a weekend.

Scout Elliott spoke of having learned of a friend who received financial support from the school for a community service project and indicated he would be contacting the Principal at his school to see if that avenue is available. Other fundraising efforts will include a Krispy Kreme fundraiser and/or bake sale. Total project cost is anticipated to be \$550-\$600. Should fundraising efforts exceed the need, remaining funds will be donated to the Commission.

Vice Chair Caron asked, and was informed pressure treated lumber would be utilized. He questioned if cutting would occur onsite. Scout Elliott stated the wood could likely be cut at the purchase location. Vice Chair Caron noted, if cutting onsite, he would like to see a tarp utilized to capture the sawdust, which could then be taken offsite. That would address the concern of sawdust that could run off the hill and into the water.

Councilor Flood requested the Town be informed of the date(s) for fundraisers to be able to support and publicize the event(s).

Commissioner Tenhave questioned if a plaque or something similar would be placed on the structure, suggesting one might indicate that the structure was constructed as an Eagle Scout project, identify the Troop, etc.

## **2. HHNP - consideration to purchase mud signs**

Chair Perry noted the Chair of the Horse Hill Nature Preserve (HHNP) Sub-committee has submitted a request for reimbursement for the cost of six (6) mud signs. A photo of the sign was shared with the Commission.

**MOTION BY VICE CHAIR CARON TO REIMBURSE PETER MIKOLAJCZUK NINETEEN DOLLARS AND EIGHT CENTS (\$19.08) FOR THE COST OF SIX (6) MUD SIGNS PURCHASED FOR THE HORSE HILL NATURE PRESERVE. FUNDS ARE AVAILABLE IN THE HORSE HILL NATURE PRESERVE FUND  
MOTION SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER BOISVERT**

### **ON THE QUESTION**

Councilor Flood remarked she was unaware there is a separate fund for the HHNP and questioned if the same is true for other properties. Chair Perry responded it is not. The HHNP Fund was established when the property was first purchased as individuals were interested in donating directly to that site. When asked, she was informed the balance is approx. \$1,000.

**MOTION CARRIED**

**7-0-0**

Vice Chair Caron commented on there not having been a snowshoe race this year, which is an event that contributes to the HHNP Fund.

***There being no objection, the agenda was adjusted to take up Public Comment.***

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Paul Berry, 50 Marty Drive, Merrimack, spoke of having been informed Merrimack has a packer for cross-country skiing. He went on the website trying to find information on this, but his efforts were unsuccessful. He questioned if the Commission has one, and, if so, where it is being utilized.

Vice Chair Caron responded the volunteer force, New England Mountain Bike Association, owns a trail groomer called a SnowDog, which is a snowmobile track that drags a sled or groomer. It is used at the HHNP and Wasserman Park. Typically, all trails are groomed. The cross-country skiers likely get the most benefit out of it. When asked if he has a specific area he would like groomed, Mr. Berry stated a willingness to volunteer to be of assistance in the effort.

***The Commission returned to the regular order of business.***

### **3. ARM Funding for the Grater Road bypass construction**

Commissioner Tenhave stated Aquatic Resource Mitigation (ARM) Funds are being released this year (were not last year). The NHDES has targeted 9 separate areas around the State for distribution of funds. Their website provided information on how and why funds are obtained, how to apply for a grant, etc. Having reviewed the information, he learned of the need to submit a pre-proposal by April 30<sup>th</sup> if seeking grant funding. The Commission had talked about the emergency access road in Grater Woods that the Public Works Department (PWD) is putting plans together for.

The last time a project of this nature was done (Red Maple Trail), the Commission expended upwards of \$60,000 - \$70,000. This project is expected to be a similar if not greater cost. Commissioner Tenhave stated his belief, given the criteria associated with the grant funding, he believes the Commission would be positioned well for consideration. The area of wet is the only emergency access. The project needs to be done to avoid further damage. Preference is given to projects having municipal approvals. When discussing installing the gates and closing the road, the project was brought before the Town Council, and supported. This is the next logical step in that process, and he feels confident there is municipal approval. The Town Engineer is doing the engineering work, which results in funds in kind being received.

Commissioner Tenhave noted the pre-proposal can only be 1,200 words in length. He does not believe it to be very involved. He is uncertain of the total cost of the project, and what the request should be.

When asked, he stated his suspicion there are limits to the amount that can be requested; however, added that the fund has been used to purchase large parcels of land. There is approx. \$3 million for the Merrimack River area. Since the program was not run last year, there is two-years' worth of funding that could be allocated.

He explained Grater Road is a Class VI road that used to go all the way down to Wilson Hill Road. A portion was closed because it traversed through a beaver pond and wet area. That emergency access

road is still needed, and the desire is to construct a roadway that is outside of the wetland. Doing so would provide for good emergency access on the west side of the property.

When asked if the engineering work has progressed to the point of being able to identify cost, Commissioner Tenhave stated he has spoken with the PWD, and informed the project was postponed because of the emergency bridge work that had to be done last year. It is believed, with the extra intern help anticipated this year, that the department can have the engineering work completed by the end of the summer. Dawn Tuomala, Deputy Director/Town Engineer, has committed to providing a project picture/proposal material that would show the outline of what is desired to be done in the area.

Commissioner Tenhave questioned the will of the Commission relative to moving forward with a pre-proposal and subsequent funding request/application or wait until the next cycle/year when the engineering work could be complete, quotes obtained, etc.

Commissioner Rosati questioned if the option exists to seek funding this year, and if successful, retain the funding until the project is ready to move forward. Commissioner Tenhave was uncertain of whether grant funding could be held for any length of time. However, noted awards are not granted until September. He would think the funds could be retained for some period. Councilor Flood spoke of her experience with grant funding for Watson Park noting the timeframe for expending the funds was upwards of 4 years.

Chair Perry stated a desire to pursue it in the current year, particularly given the likelihood of an increased amount of available funding.

Commissioner Tenhave stated if the pre-proposal is approved it is merely approval to submit a grant application. There would be no commitment of funding at that time. Applications are reviewed by a board, and final approval comes from the Governor's Executive Council.

The Commission discussed that the cost could be between \$65,000 and \$150,000. Chair Perry suggested the PWD be asked to provide an educated guess as to what the expected cost would be.

Commissioners Rosati and Boisvert agreed to work towards pre-proposal submittal. A draft pre-proposal will be placed on the agenda for the Commission's second meeting in April.

Chair Perry informed the Commission of having signed the Meridian contract to begin the assessment of the Fields Farm parcel.

OLD BUSINESS - None

OTHER BUSINESS

Commissioner Rosati asked if the Commission wished to discuss the highway project. Chair Perry suggested a review of the information to identify where impacts could occur would drive the discussion. Commissioner Tenhave stated his belief it is yet another step in the lengthy process before getting to the work of widening the highway. There are multiple wetland crossings and bridges will have to be replaced.

It may impact the State portion of Wildcat Falls. It might be the final thing that clears the way, when the project completes, to allow the Commission to take some level of control of that property. The last that was discussed, the State indicated it was not interested in a donation or allowing the Commission to manage the property until the widening project is complete.

*The item will be added to the next agenda of the Commission.*

- Sub-committee Updates

No sub-committee meetings have taken place since the last Commission meeting.

### PRESENTATION OF THE MINUTES

Merrimack Conservation Commission. . . . . March 5, 2018

*The following amendments were offered:*

Page 2, Line 8; replace “green Snowpro” with “Green SnowPro”

Page 4, Line 14; replace “115” with “15”

Page 6, Line 17; replace “structures 112 and 113” with “poles 12 and 13”

**MOTION BY COMMISSIONER ROSATI TO ACCEPT, AS AMENDED**

**MOTION SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER BOISVERT**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**6-0-1**

*Councilor Flood Abstained*

### COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Tenhave noted the process to change Chapter 111 would be before the Town Council at its meeting on Thursday.

Tuesday, March 27<sup>th</sup> is the Merrimack Village District Town Meeting at 7:00 p.m. at the James Mastricola Upper Elementary School.

Councilor Flood informed the Commission she will be resigning from her position on the Town Council. Councilor Flood was thanked for her service to the Commission and the community-at-large.

### ADJOURNMENT

**MOTION BY VICE CHAIR CARON TO ADJOURN**

**MOTION SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER GLENN**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**7-0-0**

*The March 19, 2018 meeting of the Merrimack Conservation Commission was adjourned at 7:35 p.m.*

Submitted by Dawn MacMillan