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MERRIMACK CONSERVATION COMMISSION
OCTOBER 6, 2014
MEETING MINUTES

A regular meeting of the Merrimack Conservation Commission was held on Monday, October 6, 2014 at 6:30 p.m. in the Merrimack Memorial Conference Room.

Chairman Tim Tenhave presided:

Members of the Commission Present:	Matt Caron, Vice Chairman Michael Boisvert Gage Perry Lauren Kras, Alternate
Members of the Commission Absent:	Councilor Thomas Mahon Robert Croatti, Alternate
Also in Attendance:	Laura Games, PSNH Deborah M. Zarta Gier, CNRP, Sr. Proj. Mgr., GZA GeoEnvironmental, Inc. Dana C. Lynch, Haight Engineering Tracy Tarr, GZA GeoEnvironmental, Inc.

Chairman Tenhave noted Commissioner Lehman's resignation. He appointed Commissioner Kras to serve as a voting member.

Chairman Tenhave reminded the viewing audience to wear hunter orange, and stay on marked trails if utilizing the woods during hunting season. He noted the Commission's website, www.Merrimackoutdoors.org, identifies conservation lands where hunting is allowed.

PUBLIC COMMENT - None

APPOINTMENTS - None

STATUTORY/ADVISORY BUSINESS

1. **Public Service of New Hampshire, Eagle Substation Expansion**
   Review for recommendation to the Planning Board of an application for a site plan to expand the Eagle Substation with fencing and additional substation equipment & control house. The parcel is located on 23 Star Drive in the I-1 (Industrial) and Aquifer Conservation Districts and the 100/500 Flood Hazard Areas. Tax Map 3D-1, Lot 005.

Laura Games, PSNH, stated ISO New England, the non-profit corporation tasked with ensuring the reliability of the transmission and distribution infrastructure for this area, has identified several infrastructure improvements that PSNH needs to make in order to meet projected load requirements for Manchester, Nashua, and Merrimack areas as well as a good portion of New Hampshire. These projects will also meet the required reliability standards as well for transmission infrastructure. One of these improvements is a 345kV to 115kV transformer substation at the Eagle Substation located in Merrimack. A proposed site plan will be presented to the Planning Board. Included will be potential environmental impacts (mostly temporary).

Ms. Deborah Zarta Gier, GZA GeoEnvironmental, Inc., remarked with regard to reliability goals, there is a specific goal that relates to the southern New Hampshire area; by 2017 some of the load requirements would have to be

met. The reliability plan is part of a much larger plan. Quite a bit of this type of work is required throughout Southern New Hampshire. This site is the site of an existing substation that would have to be expanded to accommodate the new equipment.

Mr. Dana Lynch, Haight Engineering, provided copies of updated plans. He noted the original Eagle Substation was constructed in 2012. It is located at the end of Star Drive in the I-1 Industrial zone. The original station will be expanded in the same format as far as pad preparation, including modest re-grading and the addition of stone layers to provide a level of appearance, work area, and to keep vegetation growth to a minimum within the location of the transformer. The site has been graded accordingly.
The change to the plan is the addition of a distribution line that runs around the perimeter of the station. Currently there is a line that runs around the perimeter of the station; however, it runs right through where the proposed expansion is located. They are basically extending around the northerly perimeter of the expansion area. It will continue to have an 8' chain link fence around it, same security system, and same access.

The existing drainage system has been expanded to accommodate the new area. The drainage system collects surface runoff that migrates to the perimeter of the station (slight pitch from center to sides), brings it around in drainage swales, and directs it to a detention basin. Sheet 7 of the drawings is a site grading plan. The darker contour lines identify the re-graded swale around the perimeter of the expansion area. The existing drainage culvert has been relocated to get it away from the proposed propane tanks that will serve the control building for the expansion area. They have modified the drainage culvert, e.g., pushed away from stations; however it remains in the same swale network that brings all of the drainage around the perimeter to the southwest corner. In the southwest corner of the existing substation there is an infiltration detention area. That was originally designed to accommodate all of the flow increases, and allows them to dissipate into the ground. They have been able to design the system and the drainage containment so that they are not changing the detention basin characteristics as far as available freeboard. During a 50-year storm the pond will fill, but will leave a foot of freeboard. For all practical purposes there is no change in the drainage patterns.

They met with the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) regarding the Alteration of Terrain (AoT) Permit. An amendment to the original permit will be submitted (expires in March of 2016). An updated permit will reflect the expansion area and the new drainage system. The perimeters of that design have been reviewed, and NHDES is in agreement that they continue with the proposed approach.

Mr. Lynch stated the project was before the Commission as it is within the Aquifer Protection District, and input/recommendation of the Commission to the Planning Board is required.

Commissioner Perry questioned what would be within the perimeter line that has been added, and was informed it will be poles located around the perimeter. Each pole is labeled DIST with a number after it (distribution poles). It will be an aerial run. Commissioner Perry questioned whether it would be outside of the non-disturb area of the shoreline protection area. Mr. Lynch responded a portion of the project will fall within the 250', and the pole relocations will fall between the 150' natural wood buffer and the 50' primary building setback. It was noted the poles would be wood pole structures (not above 50' tall). No additional grading would be required to support them. There are five structures within the protected shoreland, and it cuts over across the north side of the substation where there are four additional structures. When asked if they would all be guyde in, the response was they would not require that kind of support.

When asked about temporary impacts, Mr. Lynch stated they would be related to the disturbance resulting from construction equipment maneuvering around the site perimeter getting the swale areas constructed and stabilized, and in the installation of the poles. It was noted a regularly used ATV area is located within the protected Shoreland area along the line where the distribution and transmission lines are located. The areas of the swale and grading would be grassed at project completion. Mr. Lynch stated the permanent disturbance is contained within the fenced area.

Vice Chairman Caron questioned the amount of slope stabilization mat that would be utilized. Mr. Lynch responded the expectation is it would not be necessary to use a great deal. It is expected to be used on some of the sections of the swales that are a little deeper and perhaps around the perimeter of the existing detention basin to avoid any sediment contaminating the bottom of that as it does serve as an infiltration area.

When asked, it was stated a transformer is proposed as part of the current project and another anticipated in the future (not required as part of the 2017 need). They are filled; have secondary oil containment systems built in.

When asked if the swale would be able to contain any leak, Ms. Zarta Gier stated the secondary containment would accommodate all of the liquid. It is consistent with the same type of transformers currently onsite.

Chairman Tenhave asked, and was informed the propane is used for climate control within the control building. There are two existing tanks and two additional tanks proposed for the second building.

Chairman Tenhave commented, as he previously relayed, the Commission reviews the general construction and how water is managed with the intent to see water managed on the property, and not increase runoff. The Commission also looks at snow and deicing. He questioned how that is addressed at this time. It was stated the access road is plowed, and the yard area cleared. However, there is no chemical use. When asked if the area around the equipment is addressed, the response was typically snow is not removed from that area. If access is required, the area might be cleared. The area is accessed approximately once monthly. It is gated at the railroad crossing, therefore PSNH personnel are required to be present to provide access and get across the railroad crossing.

Chairman Tenhave spoke of fertilizer use. Sheet 8, Item C, 3 speaks to application of hay or straw. The Commission's preference is straw. It was requested, reference to hay be changed to straw in all instances it appears. Item D, 1 states in part "Apply fertilizer at a rate of 600 pounds per acre of 10-10-10." It was noted the Commission's preference is for low-phosphate, slow release nitrogen. However, given the intent of the seeding and the proximity to the river, the preference would be for no phosphate. Chairman Tenhave noted the Commission has begun requesting applicants follow the advice of the New Hampshire Cooperative Extension and test the soil. If there is no need for phosphate or nitrogen then don't apply it. The same recommendations would be made with regard to the notations listed under Item E - Permanent Seeding. My. Lynch stated a note would be generated that specifically addresses the recommendations of the Commission.

When the question of when the project would commence was raised, the response was there is site preparation desired during the winter months; however, it is believed the project itself will be phased and take place over a six-month period. Chairman Tenhave commented on the need to maintain silt fencing. It was noted GZA would follow the project through construction and ensure Best Management Practices (BMPs) are used and maintained throughout construction.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Visit with GZA
Commission to receive an update from our contractor working on our Beaver Management Study.

Tracy Tarr, GZA GeoEnvironmental, Inc., provided handouts including a detailed summary (attached) of the field data. Utilizing the priority areas identified by the Commission, GZA totaled activity type in terms of what the problem was, have rated the priority for management based on impacts to residents and nearby development, have identified areas of difficulty with management in terms of access, activity level this year, surrounding land use, rare species data gathered from the Natural Heritage Bureau to identify potential impacts with certain management options, previous management, and suggested management type and whether it is believed immediate action is required. As requested, ten (10) priority sites have been identified. Ms. Tarr noted the summary could be provided in GIS data layers.

Ms. Tarr spoke of the Town's long and extensive background with involvement of multiple departments in addressing beaver activity. Thousands of dollars have been expended trying to address complaints and impacts on infrastructure.

Ms. Tarr commented on the biology of beaver; they construct their own shelters out of sticks and mud. They use dams to make their ponds. They don't only use the dams to make ponds, but actually to increase food sources. By damming up a pond they create habitat for things like Water Lily and Pepper Weed. Those are plants they eat for most of the summer. In the growing season they can eat and depend highly on aquatic plants in the pond, but then have to store food for the winter. They will construct food caches near the lodge where they will store their preferred food sources such as Aspen and Willow plants. They will go under the ice in the winter and pull from that pile.

Those beaver dams create sub-ponds within a larger stream system. By making dams they create sub-colonies. A single stream has many reaches of potential beaver territories. Water is a means for transporting trees used for making dams. Beavers live in family groups called colonies. Sizes can range from 5-12 with a lot of variability.

There is always a breeding pair. A pair can have a liter of 2-12 young (average 4) each year. When reaching 2-3 years of age they become breeding adults and are kicked out of their natal colony. Every year there are beavers looking for other homes. That family unit has a specific size because there is only so much food in the colony. It is a very specific/structured family unit. Kits in their first year actually become active members of dam construction. As a result, you can have a dozen beaver working on a dam overnight.

Dam construction results in upland loss. Merrimack has a very specific problem with septic system failure where yards are built right next to the stream. Chronic culvert blocking can result from beaver dams requiring increased cleaning of culverts. The financial impact is a result of trapping, beaver pipe installation, culvert screens, and maintenance in general, which is difficult to calculate.
Beavers also have potential positive benefits. They create large marsh complexes utilized by rare turtles including the State endangered Blanding's Turtle. They enhance heron rookeries and support approximately 75% of the native wildlife by creating wetlands for other species. The plan seeks to maintain those important habitats and avoid unintentional impacts to rare species and other natural features.

GZA completed a GIS database assessment, the output of which is the plan. They conducted a field assessment where they categorized all beaver activity use within 35 priority areas. The intent is to discuss recommendations and help the Commission develop a monitoring plan for the future.

For the GIS database GZA utilized existing natural resource data as a starting point. From there they took existing granite data including aerial photography, topography data, land cover, national wetland inventory, and hydrography data to develop the model. The Fish & Wildlife Service have looked at high habitat suitability for beavers, which is information used as a starting point to tailor a model for Merrimack. GZA looked at stream length, land cover type, slope, water body conductivity to streams, and wetland conductivity to streams. Each of those layers was assigned a point. As an example, a stream that is at least .8 kilometers attached to a large water body gets ranked higher in the database as it is known beavers will more likely use those areas. If that wetland is also near appropriate land cover, e.g., a fixed forest, that also bumps it up in the model.

All of these things were used to develop the three colors. By using the model they were able to map low, moderate, and high-suitability areas. This work was done independent of the known problem areas. As part of the field assessment, they looked at the 35 areas in a variety of ways, e.g., foot, canoe, and by drone (primarily over water bodies). They also utilized an iPad to map beaver dams and food caches and other known items in the field. That has been overlapped in the database. The map will be used for management recommendations. They have mapped 2014 points. If new dams are found, that data can continue to be added to the model over time.

They also developed a site specific data sheet to map problem areas in the field (copies provided). Of the 35 assessed areas, 34 were modeled as high-habitat suitability. There is a high correlation between areas mapped in red or pink with a potential problem area. One was modeled as moderate habitat suitability, but it had no activity this year. Thirteen areas were considered moderate to high priorities for management. Three of the areas are considered really high priorities based on known landowner issues this year; clear damage to both Town and private infrastructure.

Four major devices are recommended, and commonly used. GZA reviewed literature to see what has high success rate, is cost effective, relatively easy to maintain, etc. The devices are intended to limit future maintenance, flooding and property damage, and promote co-existence with beavers (reduce need for trapping and protect important features).

Some of the general approaches to beaver conflicts in many areas are trapping, dam removal, and repeated culvert maintenance. Items to be considered are formal water level control devices specifically designed for the site and grates or exclusion devices to keep beavers from culverts. Once the devices are successful the goal is to prevent the need for constant maintenance.

Ms. Tarr stated GZA would discourage complete dam destruction without considering other measures. Beavers are known to return the same night a dam is broken and rebuild it within 24 hours. Also discouraged would be significant alteration of dams; lowering water by a foot could trigger dam construction by the beavers in another part of the pond, and trapping as a primary tool without looking at water control devices. It is necessary to keep in mind beavers disburse from other ponds annually. Just relying on trapping does not resolve the problem.

Over-trapping can actually stimulate breeding at a younger age, which is common with animals. Live trapping sounds better, but what it often leads to is relocating the problem. It can also result in injured animals. Beavers are highly territorial. Moving an adult beaver to an existing colony will result in the beaver being attacked.

A beaver deceiver is a culvert fence. They are oddly shaped, particularly the trapezoidal. The deceivers exclude beaver from plugging the culvert, but still allow water to go in. Some people use a design that allows enough room for beaver to get in the culvert so they don't cross above the road, but not enough where they could drag a tree or stick in.

A double filter system has a fence at the inlet of the structure and another with a pipe extension. It is a second option if the beaver deceiver isn't adequate, but it requires additional materials, is more expensive to build, more complicated, e.g., if there is a flood there are more places for trees to lodge, etc. It potentially exceeds State threshold for wetland permitting. It has more potential to affect the hydrologic capacity of the culvert, which is not desired.

Solutions for beaver dams are ways to control water where you want the water without allowing the beaver to flood above the accepted level. These are more successful when you can allow the pond to have a minimum of 4' of water so it is not completely freezing. If you want to maintain an area as a beaver pond you have to think about that minimum distance.

Some devices are called flexible pond levelers. The idea is that the inlet is protected by a round fence, which can be about 6' in diameter, is not near the dam (pipe is about 20' long). Water is coming in not where the beaver is wanting to dam (where they are hearing water). By keeping it underneath the water and protecting the fence, it prevents the beaver from damming it and allows for control of the water. GZA is recommending flexible pipe, which provides more ability to locate the pipe where desired. The elevation of the flexible pipe can be altered as the water level changes.

Another type is called a Clemson Pond Leveler. Literature suggests it is only effective in small watersheds. The width exceeds the State ratios for permitting. It is not a preferred device, is not as versatile, is more expensive, and complicated. An example of what you would not want to do is placing many pipes in a culvert; it might effectively prevent damming, but would not allow turtles and fish to go through, reduces the ability of the culvert to take water during a flood, etc. The desire is to maintain the width of the culvert. Also undesirable are hanging culverts as they have negative effects for fish, turtles, etc.

In reaching a recommendation, GZA looked to choose structures that avoid limiting wildlife passage, avoid limiting culverts, avoids excessive erosion, are expensive, and difficult to maintain. Speaking to the recommendations, Ms. Tarr referred to the Plan Summary.

Area 11, Hitchin Post Lane, is an area where there is a dam in conservation land, but it is located adjacent to potentially impacted residents. It is a site where there is an active wood lot. If the dam rises it would potentially affect the residents. That is one where a flexible pond leveler could assist in maintaining the desired water level.

Area 12 is described as a detention pond, e.g., basically a pleasant pond having a two-culvert structures where someone has placed a grate to try to combat the plugging by beaver. This is an area where a beaver deceiver is recommended. Chairman Tenhave remarked he had been told those beaver had moved on. Ms. Tarr responded when there a month or so prior she witnessed tracks.

Area 15 is on Continental Boulevard and Joey Road. There are two nearby activity centers with very high activity, e.g., multiple dams, food piles, damming by the culvert. This is one where flooding isn't quiet in the yard, but if the dam were larger it could. It would be a good location for a flexible pond leveler. Chairman Tenhave noted this area is one where there are multiple dams that are on private property as well.

Area 16, Lyons Road, is a case where there was no damming this year, but there is clearly a grate and past activity. If activity were to increase it would be a good location for a beaver deceiver to help maintain the culvert. Upstream there is a large dam that, as it grows, could potentially flood the maintained areas of the school. It is also really high, and is impounding a lot of water. That is a location where the Commission may wish to consider maintaining the water at a certain level.

Area 17, Mast Road, is more concerning as there is an active dam on the edge of the road. If the dam were suddenly released it could potentially flood the road. It also has a nice pole sticking right in it. It is a case where

GZA recommends controlling the water level. There are nearby culverts that have had past issues with damming. Once those were used again, consideration might be for the use of beaver deceiver devices. The dam is of the greatest concern at this time.

Area 22, Greens Pond Road, is a water supply area. There is a grate that is maintained. One of the 6' round fences would be an easy retrofit for the area to eliminate the need to continually return to dig out the area. There are dams downstream, which have prevented flow. If those became a concern later, those devices in the dam could help. The round fence would be a simple fix to help reduce management.

Area 23, Naticook Road Extension, has experienced some pretty serious plugging this year. Beaver deceivers would help get the damming ability away from the culvert, and be an easy fix. Chairman Tenhave commented it is the trapezoid shape that provides that advantage. Ms. Tarr remarked it is. She commented you don't want it so straight that it is easy for them to dam and then connect the dam to the banks further out. They basically want to dam where they hear or feel running water.

Area 30, Wildcat Falls Trail SW Pond off Hemlock Drive is a storm water pond. It appears more Muscrat related; is a lot of cattails jammed into the outlet structure. One of the beaver deceiver devices with a smaller mesh would help keep animals out of the structure. Although there are Blanding's turtles and rare species nearby they would not classify this area as ideal habitat.

Area 18, Mayflower Road, is one of the high priority areas. There is a sewer line that is a dam, an inlet that is constantly plugged, and an overflow outlet that is constantly plugged. When looking from the sewer line there is a dam that is constantly maintained by beaver. There is also tree damage. There are quite a few structures that could help alleviate the problem. There are existing devices, but they are not the most ideal. Recommended for this location are a flexible pond leveler and round fence in the dam, a beaver deceiver specifically sized for the overflow inlet (check with Dam Bureau before altering what is technically what they consider a dam), tree guards on residential trees to help protect further damage, and trapping prior to installation to accustom beaver to the new water level.

Ms. Tarr commented when beavers are used to a certain water level that family group will want to maintain that water level. Regardless of devices, they might do everything they can to get at that water level. Research recommends trapping before the devices are installed, but once installed you generally don't have to do trapping again. Commissioner Perry questioned the existing lodge noting the structures inside are based on the water level. He questioned whether a returning colony would pick up any clues as to where the water level should be based on the lodge. Ms. Tarr responded research has indicated if you do pre-trapping most of the time the new beavers accept the new water level.

Area 20, Carrie Drive/Madison Lane; there is an existing dam. If repaired and beavers started getting back into the dam where there are old pipes, it would be a good case for a flexible pond leveler. It doesn't seem to be the primary dam this year, but it is certainly another constriction point that beavers might choose in the future. This is a really dense network where trapping is believed necessary because of septic issues on the site where houses are located close to the stream and any increase in water level impacts residents.

Area 35, Mitchell Woods/Profile Drive is connected too, and seems to be the primary area for dam construction. It is a very large dam elevating water levels in the area. It is a classic example for a flexible pond leveler. It is impacting residents. This might be one of two areas where the Commission may wish to consider rotational trapping. Ms. Tarr commented the Town has lots of conservation properties where beaver activity and flooding don't impact anyone. There are a lot of areas where such measures don't have to be considered.

With regard to permitting requirements, Ms. Tarr stated the landowner is able to destroy beaver dams, install beaver pipes or beaver fences as long as machinery doesn't enter the water, and not filling or dredging in or near adjacent surface water. You do it in a gradual manner so you don't have a sudden release of erosion and sediment. You can have no more than 3 temporary pipes in your beaver dam and the largest pipe can't be any more than 15". It was noted the flexible pond leveler generally has 10 or 12" pipes as opposed to the Clemson pond leveler, which is a much larger pipe system. When asked about the temporary structures, Ms. Tarr noted the law does not state they have to be removed. She stated the distinction would be something that would be easily removable, e.g., no concrete foundation, etc. When asked specifically about dredging/sediment that occur with hand removal, Ms. Tarr stated, if you are not using a machine such as an excavator and using care, you are compliant with the law.

Speaking of costs and benefits, Ms. Tarr stated costs would depend upon whether utilizing existing labor such as Town staff or hiring someone, whether utilizing retrofits or building, etc. There are specific companies that this is all they do. You can also purchase the structures and sub the work out to general contractors. Research suggests the pond levelers generally are in the $1,300 range per pipe, and often recommend two per dam. Ms. Tarr commented Virginia has had a lot of problems with beaver, and in one paper they average they were spending about $21,000 per site on preventative maintenance, road repairs, and beaver trapping. Following installation and monitoring of the sites (they trapped prior but not after) they were spending about $20 per site/per year to clean out the structures.

With regard to ongoing work, Ms. Tarr stated once GZA receives the Commission's input, discussions could begin regarding schedules and plans, priorities, how to do a long-term monitoring plan, and implementation.

Speaking with regard to how the Commission might use the model, Ms. Tarr stated it could be incorporated into the existing GIS system, which would allow management costs to be tracked over time. If editing the work order system to add in a number area code for each of the sites, costs per site could be easily tracked. With the model, future problem areas could be anticipated. It can also be used to identify conservation property priorities, e.g., areas that have high habitat suitability and could reduce maintenance costs long term for the Town by protecting those areas. When working with residential subdivisions, if they have homeowners associations, the Commission might recommend provisions for beaver management.

Although it is understood the Commission wished to address ten (10) sites this year, which might be a bit aggressive, it was suggested the Commission consider the two main problem areas as a first shot. It was noted if the Commission has preferences for the type of labor or whether or not the desire is for pre-built structures, GZA could engage potential contractors to provide cost estimates. Commissioner Perry stated he would meet with Adam Jacobs, Operations Manager, Public Works Department, to be made aware of his preferences. Chairman Tenhave commented he believes the Commission may have been a bit aggressive with the original plan of addressing a number of issues this year. He spoke of the timeframe required for the process to be undertaken, e.g., bidding, etc.

Realizing this effort will extend into next year, he questioned how that would impact GZA. Ms. Tarr responded "That is fine, we will just monitor next year. It is no problem at all." She added it is definitely better to plan on the front side and do good projects rather than rush it. Ms. Tarr stated GZA could provide the Commission time to review, and return at another meeting. When asked, Ms. Tarr stated GZA would provide contact information that could be utilized in the Request for Quote (RFQ) process.

Chairman Tenhave remarked he had believed the direction of the Commission, for this meeting, would be to accept the information GZA would present, and that the Commission would spend the bulk of its next meeting discussing the information provided and reaching consensus on how to proceed. Commissioner Kras requested a copy of the actual presentation.

Chairman Tenhave questioned whether GZA was able to spend time in the Horse Hill Nature Preserve noting an evolving structure closer to the Watson property. Ms. Tarr noted what was budgeted was expending a few hours in each problem area. Vice Chairman Caron remarked in the area near the White Pine Swamp is a dam where there were pipes that are now sticking straight up in the air. Ms. Tarr stated aerial information would be left and would identify if the area was GPS located. She remarked if an area that was not problematic, GZA did not spend time there. She added there is a small portion of the budget remaining, which will allow GZA to go back and look more specifically at the problem areas.

When asked, Ms. Tarr stated the database is currently housed on GZA's server; however, once complete, will be provided to the Commission. Chairman Tenhave requested Ms. Tarr speak with Kyle Fox, Deputy Director, Public Works Department, to see if the software utilized is compatible with the Town's software. Ms. Tarr noted GZA is able to read the Town's data, which indicates the reverse would also be true.

NEW BUSINESS

1. **Annual NHACC meeting**
   Commission to discuss the upcoming annual meeting of the NH Association of Conservation Commissions (http://www.nhacc.org/annualmeeting44/) to decide on who will attend as well as how to cover the expense.

The Annual Meeting will be conducted on November 1, 2014 at the Laconia Middle School between the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 3:45 p.m. Chairman Tenhave noted monies within the Town budget ($400) for seminars, education, etc. Chairman Tenhave, Vice Chairman Caron, and Commissioner Boisvert stated a desire to attend. Commissioner Perry stated he is trying to adjust his schedule to allow for attendance. Commissioner Kras commented, if her schedule allows, she will attend.

Chairman Tenhave noted a reduced rate being offered to teachers and students. The Commission was in agreement it would be desirable to send an e-mail notification to schools to ensure they are aware of the educational opportunity. Commissioner Perry agreed to forward the information.

Chairman Tenhave stated his belief there is an open position on the Board, and that elections will take place at the start of the meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS

- Invasive Spraying project at Brookside Drive

Chairman Tenhave stated Mike Powers, Bay State Forestry Service, performed the spraying the prior Wednesday. The morning of the spraying temporary signage was posted to inform the public of the activity. The signage was removed shortly after dark. Chairman Tenhave commented he and Mr. Powers had concerns with the weather conditions. Although he prefers it to be slightly damp, pouring rain doesn't do any good at all. Mr. Powers has stated he believes he got 90% of what he wished to get done before the heavy rain came in. He believes it only needs to be on the plant for a short period of time in order to be able to be absorbed.

Mr. Powers also addressed items at 8 Brookside Drive. He worked out an arrangement with the abutter at that location who was very appreciative of his efforts. Mr. Powers did express concern, because of the rain, some of the areas may have to be retouched; however, it is known there is a need to go back in regardless, given the extensive nature of the situation.

The permit came through; however, with a stipulation that requires a two-day notice to the State to inform of spraying taking place near the water. Mr. Powers chose not to do some of the items located near the water to avoid violating the permit. The permit was processed through one of Bay State's offices in Massachusetts. It had not been realized a two-day notice would be required to conduct the spraying. The permit is valid until the end of the year. Foliage and other issues may come into play. Chairman Tenhave suggested, knowing there is the need to re-enter the area, it may be best to tackle that at that time.

Work performed was not in the area of concern to the resident who had informed the Commission of health concerns. The gentleman who had made the Commission aware of concerns regarding bees was contacted and informed of the spraying. Commissioner Perry had researched the chemicals and learned they did not pose a danger to the bees.

Chairman Tenhave stated his opinion the Commission should wait until spring to see what appears. Commissioner Perry questioned whether there are any visual inspections that can be performed to identify the success of the effort. Chairman Tenhave commented Mr. Powers has stated it takes a week or two before the effects of the herbicide can be seen. Given the time of year, it is likely the effects will not be clear until spring.

- TAP Grant Letter in Support of Town Center Trail Work

Chairman Tenhave noted he had forwarded to the Commissioners a copy of a grant letter he wrote in support of a TAP Grant for the Town Center trail work. The letter basically stated what the Commission has supported in the past. The letter was required to accompany the grant application.

- Trail Stabilization Project at Grater Woods

Chairman Tenhave informed the Commission he has been in communication with Mr. Powers regarding this, and was informed all of the material was brought onsite a few weeks ago. The hope was the equipment needed to do the brush hog work would arrive today as well as any excavators or other machinery needed, and that the work would be executed this week. Mr. Powers has been coordinating the efforts with Matt Shevenell, Business Administrator, Merrimack School District.

- Mitchell Woods and the MVD Well

Chairman Tenhave remarked the Merrimack Village District has been before the Commission on a number of occasions to discuss the new well they wish to place in Mitchell Woods. He was contacted by Jill Lavoie, Admin. Manager/Water Quality Support, regarding a process to follow. They would like an easement placed on the property (Commission parcel as well as the one under the Trustees) that speaks to what can and cannot be done on the site. He directed them to Paul Micali, Assistant Town Manager, to address the legal issues. Once that work is completed, the issue will come back before the Commission for a recommendation.

Commissioner Perry spoke of a forestry project conducted in Mitchell Woods 20+ years ago, and commented there are now a good many trees all of the same size. He questioned if that is an area where work should be performed. Chairman Tenhave stated his belief the last timber project was done in concert with the Trustees for Watkins Forest. He stated the Forester could be asked to look at the area and provide a recommendation. Commissioner Perry commented the area has been mowed. The gate is in bad shape, and is the entrance to that location. There is a tree farm sign that is obscured by vegetation. He commented the area is pleasant and has good trails although it does not provide access to parking. Chairman Tenhave noted any revenue generated by a forestry project on the Trustees' property goes to a special fund. None of that revenue could be utilized to offset trail building, etc. The majority of the property is within Watkins Forest. Chairman Tenhave suggested Commissioner Perry could contact the Trustees to ascertain whether or not there is any interest.

- Piscataquog Land Conservancy Regional Trust

Chairman Tenhave informed the Commission Simon Thomson put Chris Wells, Executive Director of Piscataquog Land Conservancy Regional Trust, in contact with him. He read into the record an excerpt from a letter received from Mr. Wells:

"After 11 years at the Forest Society, I recently became the Executive Director of the Piscataquog Land Conservancy, a regional land trust based in New Boston that serves the communities just to the north and west of Merrimack including the Town of Bedford. I reached out to Simon today, now former member of the Merrimack Conservation Commission, to inquire about whether PLC might be of assistance to Merrimack in achieving its land conservation objectives. Merrimack is one of several towns immediately south of PLC's current service area that still has significant natural resource lands." Further on he states if the Commission has an interest he would be happy to sit down with one of more members to see what that interest might be and how we could work together.

Chairman Tenhave responded to Mr. Wells that once he had the opportunity to make the Commission aware of his letter and could determine the level of interest, perhaps an informal meeting could be arranged.

Chairman Tenhave suggested this could be of assistance in helping the Commission achieve the goals of land acquisition/easement activities that are of interest to the Commission. Vice Chairman Caron offered to meet with Mr. Wells. He commented he has reached out to several conservancy organizations that simply do not cover Merrimack. Commissioner Kras offered to participate in the discussion noting she has worked with Mr. Wells in the past. Commissioner Perry stated a desire to be involved.

- Grater Woods Sub-Committee

Commissioner Perry stated the Sub-committee conducted a work day a few weeks prior. During that effort a few bridges were fixed and a few catwalks constructed in the area of Brickyard to make it more passable (some additional work necessary). He spoke of the level of motivation of the members.

- Mapping

Vice Chairman Caron commented over the past several years a great deal of discussion has occurred regarding mapping, but the work has not been done. He suggested acquiring an iPad and equipping it with the ICMTGIS software Ms. Tarr spoke of as a way of getting some of this work done. When asked if that is something the Commission could acquire, Chairman Tenhave stated his belief it is. Commissioner Kras noted the availability of free applications that could also be utilized. She stated if data could be provided to her she would be willing to expend the time necessary to combine it into something that would be usable on GIS (downloadable layers).

Vice Chairman Caron spoke of the amount of time spent at sites whether by members of the Commission or sub-committees, and suggested if such a device were available, it could be provided to individuals who could be tasked with walking the trails and continuously uploading information.

Chairman Tenhave spoke of a volunteer who gathered the information for the Horse Hill Nature Preserve. That information was forwarded to the Nashua Regional Planning Commission (NRPC). The volunteer also gathered GPS coordinates for all of the poles/trail markers and began gathering GPS data points for benches, etc.

Chairman Tenhave suggested the Commission should come to consensus on the format/appearance of all maps so that consistency can be achieved. Commissioner Perry questioned whether the information gathered by the NRPC can be accessed by the Commission. Chairman Tenhave responded there is an electronic link (website). The information is contained within shape files, and could be given to anyone.

Commissioner Perry offered to speak with Ms. Tarr, identify the equipment she is utilizing, and pass the information along to Commissioner Kras to consider the compatibility of that software with other applications that may be available at little or no cost.

- Wildcat Falls

Chairman Tenhave informed the Commission of being contacted by an organization that is looking to do some projects and is interested in Wildcat Falls. That information was forwarded to the Chair of the Sub-Committee. Vice Chairman Caron informed the Commission the sign purchased for Wildcat Falls, warning of the danger of swimming in the waterfalls, has been hung. When asked, he stated the finish on the sign to be shiny and the graphic reflective. He believes it to be hung high enough to avoid damage from spray painting.

- Observation Deck at Grater Woods

Vice Chairman Caron stated Scout Benjamin Parker, who put the observation deck up off of Beebe Lane, has provided three gallons of water seal for the deck. The intent is to plan a date for members of the Grater Woods Sub-Committee to apply it.

PRESENTATION OF THE MINUTES

Merrimack Conservation Commission. . . . . August 18, 2014

MOTION BY COMMISSIONER TENHAVE TO ACCEPT AS PRESENTED
MOTION SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER PERRY
MOTION CARRIED
5-0-0

Merrimack Conservation Commission. . . . . September 15, 2014

The following amendments were offered:

Page 2, Line 1; replace “en” with “end”
Page 5, Line 14; replace “propped” with “proposed”
Page 6, Line 7; replace “she” with “Bedford Design Consultants”
Page 6, Line 35; replace “Mr.” with “Ms.”
Page 7, Line 36; replace “dies” with “dives”
Page 12, Line 42; replace “day” with “Friday”

MOTION BY COMMISSIONER TENHAVE TO ACCEPT AS AMENDED
MOTION SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER CARON
MOTION CARRIED
4-0-1
Commissioner Kras Abstained

PUBLIC COMMENT – None

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Chairman Tenhave noted the Commission's agenda for its October 20, 2014 meeting is light, and the bulk of the discussion will be around beaver management. He stated a desire for the Commission to reach consensus on Mayflower, e.g., what action to take with regard to actions to be taken as well as water levels. He requested he be made aware if there is additional information Commissioners believe is needed to come to a decision.

Commissioner Perry requested he be made aware of any additional information Commissioners desire on the beaver project itself. He stated a willingness to participate in site walks should that be desired. Commissioner Boisvert questioned the number of abutters that have expressed dissatisfaction with the water level. Chairman Tenhave commented on a public hearing conducted on May 20, 2013, at which several members of the public were heard from.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION BY COMMISSIONER CARON TO ADJOURN
MOTION SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER KRAS
MOTION CARRIED
5-0-0

The October 6, 2014 meeting of the Merrimack Conservation Commission was adjourned at 8:37 p.m.

Submitted by Dawn MacMillan