



Town of Merrimack, New Hampshire

Community Development Department

6 Baboosic Lake Road

Town Hall - Lower level - East Wing

Planning - Zoning - Economic Development - Conservation

603 424-3531

Fax 603 424-1408

www.merrimacknh.gov

MERRIMACK CONSERVATION COMMISSION MONDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2023 MEETING MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER -

A Meeting of the Conservation Commission was called to order on Monday November 13, 2023 at 6:30 pm in the Matthew Thornton Room.

Steve Perkins, Chair, presided:

Members of the Commission Present:

Tom Martinson, Alternate Member
Karis Welsh
Andrew Duane
Ellen Kolb
Gage Perry
Danielle Melanson, Alternate Member

Members of the Commission Absent

David Trippett, Alternate Member
Andy Hunter, Town Councilor
Eric Starr, Vice-Chair

Also Participating:

- Kimberly Berger, 22 Queens Way

Chair Perkins designated Commissioner Martinson to sit in as a voting member for Vice-Chair Starr.

PUBLIC HEARINGS - None

NEW BUSINESS –

- Volunteer for HHNP Subcommittee, Kimberly Berger – *Submitted by Ellen Kolb*

Commissioner Kolb introduced Kimberly Berger to the Commission. Ms. Berger submitted a letter of interest last month and the Chair of the Horse Hill Nature Preserve (HHNP) Subcommittee met her. Commissioner Kolb briefly went over the letter of interest. She then recommended that the Commission support Ms. Berger's request to join the subcommittee. Ms. Berger then gave a brief explanation of why she was interested in serving on the Subcommittee. She explained that she has lived on Town for 5 years and frequently utilizes the HHNP property as she lives right in front of Watanic Bowman entrance to the property. She visits almost daily to walk her dogs, bike, and run and is interested in helping the effort to preserve the property.

Chair Perkins asked how large the HHNP subcommittee was. Commissioner Kolb responded there are four members who can make it to all meeting and a couple of others who want to continue serving though it is not possible for them to make every single meeting. She noted it would be helpful to have someone so familiar with the property on the subcommittee. Chair Perkins questioned the term end date for this position. Commissioner Kolb noted she believed it would be June 30, 2025.

Motion by Commissioner Kolb to appoint Kimberly Berger to the Horse Hill Nature Preserve Subcommittee as a full member with a term expiration of June 30, 2025.

**Seconded by Chair Perkins
Motion Carried
6-0-0**

- **Discussion regarding an open membership slot on the Souhegan River Local Advisory Committee (SoRLAC)**

Commissioner Kolb is a member of the Lower Merrimack River Local Advisory Committee which is very similar to SoRLAC. She explained that SoRLAC is a body that serves under the NH Department of Environmental Services (NHDES). Members are nominated by sending a letter of interest to the Town Council who makes recommendations to the Nashua Regional Planning Commission (NRPC) for confirmation of membership. SoRLAC is responsible for monitoring and making recommendations for developments along the Souhegan River which are within a certain distance of the shoreline. Meetings are typically held quarterly or when there is a site plan that needs to be reviewed.

While the committee has no veto power on its own, its reports to the NH Department of Environmental Services on projects are part of the DES process for monitoring and approving projects. SoRLAC would like to have representatives from each town along the river corridor, and there is a vacancy for Merrimack. Commissioner Welsh asked if anyone from Merrimack could apply. Commissioner Kolb confirmed this was true.

No vote was taken. This agenda item is to raise the visibility of the publicly-posted position. Members of the public who are interested are urged to send a message to the Town Managers office. This opportunity was posted on the Towns website already. Commissioner Duane asked if this item could be posted on the Merrimack Outdoors website. Commissioner Kolb said it was a public posting about a public position so it would be appropriate to post.

- **Vote to approve funds for the 2024 NHACC (NH Association of Conservation Commissions) membership dues in the amount of \$1,050**

The recent NHACC annual conference was attended by Commissioners Duane, Kolb, Melanson, and Welsh. Chair Perkins asked how the conference went, and the commissioners each found it valuable. Commissioner Melanson cited the groups that had display tables at the conference, some of which had information about working with youth groups and summer camps, which was insightful. Commissioner Duane mentioned meeting commissioners from other towns, some of whom are dealing with the same challenges as are found in Merrimack. As for other NHACC programs, Commissioner Kolb said she had attended a multi-session NHACC program on wetlands identification and management.

Motion by Commissioner Kolb to approve the payment of NHACC dues out of Fund 51 in the amount of \$1,050.00.

**Seconded by Commissioner Duane
Motion Carried
6-0-0**

- **Parking at Beebe lane cul-de-sac – *Submitted by Steve Perkins***

The Grater Woods subcommittee is requesting that two parallel parking spots be delineated at the end of Beebe Lane at the Grater Woods trailhead. The subcommittee would like to use signage before resorting to painted parking spots. Chair Perkins said he assumes there is no cost for these items as the Town probably has a stock of signs. Commissioner Perry commented if the Town does not have any, the subcommittee would like to purchase signs from Amazon for \$20.00 each. Chair Perkins said the real question was whether or not the signs could be placed at this property. There have been some parking issues with other Conservation Commission parcels in the past.

Commissioner Perry noted the subcommittee has spoken with neighboring property owners who are willing to allow parking signs to be placed along the edges of their property. This way the signs will be visible from the cul-de-sac. Chair Perkins said this was probably a simpler approach. Commissioner Perry said it would be great if the Town places the signs because they could potentially enforce parking at that point. Commissioner Martinson said it would be more helpful to paint parking lines. Commissioner Perry agreed this would be helpful if they were allowed to, but they

wanted to try using signs first because it required less maintenance. Chair Perkins to email the Town with a request for two signs for Beebe Lane cul-de-sac. If the Town does not have any, Commissioner Perry confirmed he will purchase them.

Motion by Commissioner Perry to have Commissioner Perkins email the town on behalf of the Conservation Commission seeking purchase of two signs for Beebe Lane, or to permit Commissioner Perry to spend not more than \$60.00 to buy and install the signs. No fund was specified.

**Seconded by Commissioner Welsh
Motion Carried
6-0-0**

***Staff later determined the correct fund for the above motion was fund 53.**

- **Kiosk maintenance and refresh – *Submitted by Steve Perkins***

There's a problem with dog owners not cleaning up after their pets as they walk along Conservation owned trails. New signs are needed at Conservation property kiosks reminding people to remove pet waste. Commissioner Duane noted that at Wildcat Falls, he's noticed that lighthearted reminder signs in the kiosk are more effective than those with severe language. Chair Perkins said that the local Fish and Game conservation officer might have the needed signage. Commission consensus was to have subcommittees consider signage for their respective properties reminding pet owners to carry out pet waste using their own bags. There was a discussion of whether all the subcommittees have access to kiosks or if there are locks on them. Subcommittees can determine this.

- **Souhegan River Trail Update – *Submitted by Ellen Kolb***

Commissioner Kolb said that the Town recently held a groundbreaking ceremony at Watson Park for the new Souhegan River trail that will eventually connect with Wildcat Falls. She commended the Town Center Committee for its persistence in getting this project going.

OTHER BUSINESS –

- **Update on the HHNP bridge replacement – *Submitted by Steve Perkins***

At the last Conservation Commission meeting, there was a report from HHNP of a bridge damaged by equestrian use. The bridge replacement has been completed.

- **Update on the MCC social media initiative – *Submitted by Karis Welsh***

Commissioners Welsh and Duane have been working on objectives for the Merrimack Outdoors website (the Conservation Commission website, an information hub) and the Conservation Commission Facebook page (to foster education and involvement). Commissioner Welsh is working on a social media post schedule, and she is writing posts to be used in the future. She will eventually

ask subcommittees to provide photos and information on upcoming projects. The Facebook page has been created but is not yet used. Town Media Coordinator Nick Lavallee is a co-administrator for that page. Commissioner Perry asked about Facebook pages that are not Conservation Commission-managed but are about Conservation properties. Can we do anything about them? Has Mr. Lavallee looked into that? Chair Perkins said that he has had no reply about that yet. Commissioner Duane asked if Facebook has a “verified account” feature, and Commissioner Welsh said no. We can only write on the page that it is the official Conservation Commission page.

Commissioner Duane is working on website updates. He needs to write some code for the site in order to update it, and he needs information about who is managing the site and its domain now. He asked about the approval process for making any posts. Commissioner Perry replied that there is no formal approval process. Posts on the site by MCC do not need Town approval. Commissioner Duane also pointed out that the link to the site’s contact form appears to be broken. Commissioner Perry said that the site had been created by Wetherbee Creative, with the work paid for by the Commission. Commissioner Duane said he would consult Community Development for more information about who is handling the back end of the site at this time.

Commissioner Welsh would like to collect more material for the Facebook page over the next few weeks before using the page actively. Commissioner Duane said he’d like for users (members of the public) to be able to submit photos to the website and Facebook page, and that prompted a discussion of the need for a Terms of Use statement, a privacy policy, and possibly other legal disclosures. Commissioner Duane suggested consulting an attorney for the town via the Town Manager for appropriate language.

- **Annual presentation to the Town Council – *Submitted by Steve Perkins***

Chair Perkins will make the annual MCC presentation to the Town Council this week at its November 16 meeting. All commissioners are welcome to attend. His overview of the Commissions work in the past year includes the Seedling Giveaway, participation in the Winter Carnival, review of plans for the Planning Board, dredge and fill permit review for NHDES, maintenance of the Conservation Commission website, and participation in NHACC conferences and workshops. He has photos to include with the report.

To report on goals for the coming year, he received reports from Conservation Commission subcommittees. The NRPC refreshment of Conservation trail maps is still pending. The Commission also intends to work on Fields Farm access, management of invasive vegetation, approval for a student representative on the Conservation Commission, trail signage, social media planning, and e-bike management. Commissioner Kolb suggested that he tell the Council that the

Commission would be pleased to work with Merrimack's state representatives to follow any legislation that might affect e-bike use on trails.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES –

Motion by Commissioner Kolb to approve the October 9, 2023 Conservation Commission minutes with the following amendments.

Page 3, Line 86 replace comma after “Aquifer Conservation District” with a period

Page 5, Line 189, change abbreviation of Wildcat Falls of “WFCA” to “WCFA”

Page 5, Line 189 change “submitted and” to “submitted by”

Motion Seconded by Commissioner Perry

Motion Carried

6-0-0

ADJOURNMENT –

Motion to Adjourn by Commissioner Duane

Motion Seconded by Commissioner Perry

Motion Carried

6-0-0

The November 13, 2023 meeting of the Conservation Commission was adjourned at 7:27pm.