



# Town of Merrimack, New Hampshire

Community Development Department

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Planning - Zoning - Economic Development - Conservation

## MERRIMACK CONSERVATION COMMISSION

JANUARY 23, 2017

### MEETING MINUTES

A regular meeting of the Merrimack Conservation Commission was held on Monday, January 23, 2017 at 6:32 p.m. in the Merrimack Memorial Conference Room.

Vice Chairman Matt Caron presided:

Members of the Commission Present: Michael Boisvert  
Cynthia Glenn  
Tim Tenhave, Alternate Member  
Gina Rosati, Alternate Member

Members of the Commission Absent: Gage Perry, Chairman  
Councilor Thomas Mahon

Also in Attendance:

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### PUBLIC COMMENT

Debra Huffman, 60 Amherst Road

Spoke of the work the Commission has contracted with the Nashua Regional Planning Commission (NRPC) to perform in regard to mapping of Commission properties. She noted the Horse Hill Nature Preserve (HHNP) Sub-Committee was aware the NRPC would be working on maps, and is supportive of that effort. For years the need to standardize the maps has been expressed, and staff never had the time and/or ability to take on that task. She commented she can understand why the decision was made to contract with the NRPC to get that work done. However, she was surprised to discover what was being produced was an entire brochure, not just the maps. She stated a concern with the belief the brochure may have been constructed with a proprietary sort of design tool. It does not look like a Microsoft Word document that anybody could update.

Commissioner Tenhave stated it to be a Microsoft program, and noted it was laid out so that the Commission has a starting point. It was never intended for the NRPC to be doing all of the updates. The only updates the Commission will contract with the NRPC to take care of are map changes.

APPOINTMENTS - None

STATUTORY/ADVISORY BUSINESS - None

### OLD BUSINESS

1. **The 25th Annual Winter Carnival** will be held on Saturday, February 25th from 12:00 - 3:00 p.m. at Wasserman Park.

Commissioner Rosati volunteered to man the booth. Vice Chairman Caron offered to assist, if available. He noted, historically those manning the booth had in their possession maps that could be distributed, and were able to discuss with attendees the attributes of the properties. He suggested it to be a good opportunity to get the new maps in front of the public. Commissioner Tenhave stated his belief they would not all be ready for distribution. Vice Chairman Caron suggested if there were available a single map that could be enlarged to identify how the new maps will look, that could be displayed.

Commissioner Tenhave stated Sara Siskavich, GIS Manager, NRPC, has indicated she could make a large map that could fit in the kiosk without having to change anything; resolution is good enough. He suggested business cards could be handed out with the website address highlighted. They could suggest interested individuals visit the website as a location to obtain current maps and, when available, the new brochures.

Vice Chairman Caron commented there have been years when the weather was favorable and there was large attendance and other times when the weather was not so favorable and attendance was low. He spoke of the planned activities, and suggested Chairman Perry may wish to have a map of the Wasserman Park trails available.

Commissioner Glenn indicated she may be able to attend for a few hours. She suggested copies of the beaver management brochure also be available for distribution. Commissioner Tenhave suggested copies of an updated map of all Commission and open space properties in Merrimack are printed and available.

## NEW BUSINESS

### **1. Environmental Impact Questionnaire**

Commission to discuss letter sent by Quantum Construction Consultants, LLC requesting information regarding the Darrah Bridge.

Commissioner Tenhave noted Quantum Construction Consultants (QCC) is the engineering firm that is overseeing the replacement of the Bedford Road Bridge. As part of that project, they will end up elevating the roadway and the span will be a lot longer, which will allow better flow for Baboosic Brook. There is an older bridge that also used to span Baboosic Brook on Bedford Road, and is known as the Darrah Bridge. That bridge is still in place, and is also constricting the path of Baboosic Brook. The two bridges together have led to flooding in the past. In 2006/2007, they caused tremendous flooding and erosion of upstream properties as well as overflow over the top of the road.

Because the Darrah Bridge has been found to be historically significant, they have requested a number of organizations provide comments. The bridge is apparently one of the last remaining concrete encased steel beam structures in the State, which is what makes it historically significant. The questions and the Commission's responses are as follows:

1. Are there any existing or proposed community or regional plans that might have a bearing on this project?

**The Commission is not aware of any.**

2. Are there any natural resources of significance in the vicinity of this project? (e.g. prime wetlands floodplains, rare species, etc.)

**Refer to the Community Development Department for detailed information. The Conservation Commission is not aware of any rare species in the project area.**

3. Are there any cultural resources of significance in the vicinity of the project? (e.g. stonewalls, cemeteries, historical or archeological resources, etc.) Please note that a Phase I Archaeological Survey indicated that the project area was not archeologically sensitive. QCC is aware of the "Darrah Bridge" that is eligible for the National Register. Please note that Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act offers those that possess a direct interest in historical resources, including Town officials, Historical Societies, and Historical Commissions, an opportunity to become more

involved in an advisory role during project development as “Consulting Parties”. Those interested should contact QCC.

**The Commission is not aware of any cultural resources of significance in the vicinity.**

4. Are there any public parks, recreation areas conservation lands, or wildlife/waterfowl refuges in the vicinity of the project? Have Land & Water Conservation Funds been used in the project area?

**Refer to the Community Development Department for the maps of that area.**

**The Commission is not aware of any Land & Water Conservation Funds having been used in the project area.**

5. Are there any locally or regionally significant water resources or related protection areas in the project vicinity? (e.g., public water supplies, wellhead protection areas, aquifer protection districts, etc.)

**Refer to the Community Development Department for wellhead and aquifer protection districts in Merrimack.**

**Baboosic Brook is a State protected brook.**

6. Are there any water quality concerns that should be addressed during the development of this project? (e.g. stormwater management, NPDES Phase II, impaired waters, etc.)

**Follow Best Management Practices to minimize disruption of the streambed.**

7. Are you aware of any existing or potential hazardous materials or contaminants in the vicinity of the project? Are there asbestos landfills or asbestos containing utility pipes located within the project limits?

**The Commission is not aware of any in addition to the ongoing water issues relative to PFOAs and the Saint-Gobain property.**

**The Commission is not aware of any.**

8. Do you have any environmental concerns not previously noted (e.g. noise impacts, farmland conversion, etc.) that you feel QCC should be aware of for this project?

**Refer to the Community Development Department.**

9. Will the proposed project have a significant affect upon the surrounding area? If so, please explain.

**The project will have a positive effect as it will relieve any backup of water during a flood situation as was seen in 2006 and 2007.**

10. QCC is aware of Japanese Knotweed, Morrow’s Honeysuckle, Tatarian Honeysuckle, and Purple Loosestrife in the project area. Are you aware of any additional existing roadside populations of non-native invasive plant species in the project area?

**The Commission is not aware of any.**

## **2. Website Maintenance Contract**

Commissioner Tenhave commented on prior discussions of quarterly updates to the website, and contracting to have that done in order to keep the website new/refreshed. The Commission had been of the opinion approx. 3.5 hours/quarter would be needed. This will require a member of the Commission to put out calls to members of the Commission the month leading up to the quarterly update requesting input on updates. That work will have to be assembled and provided to Wetherbee Creative in order for them to have a body of work to work from. Wetherbee will look at the body of work and respond that it can be

done in the 3.5 hours allotted, what could be done in that timeframe, or, if a major change, if the work should be separately contracted.

Were there a desire to recode the website, the fee amount would provide about an hour's worth of recoding, e.g., there would be set-up work required, etc. Commissioner Tenhave stressed the Commission would pay for the 3.5 quarterly hours whether or not utilized. Approving the work would be another responsibility of the Commissioner who takes on this responsibility.

Commissioner Tenhave stated he could likely make time for the first few updates just to get in the rhythm and work out what that rhythm is like, but his schedule would not permit him to continue that effort. Commissioner Tenhave noted Commissioners wishing to have access to make simple changes can be provided that access. Wetherbee is looking for a year-long commitment with regard to the contract.

Commissioner Rosati indicated a willingness to connect with the members of the Commission to gather requested information/changes; however, questioned how information would have to be formatted for submission to Wetherbee. She stated a desire to work alongside Commissioner Tenhave in the hope that the work could be transitioned to her over time.

It was suggested there could be a standing agenda item on website updates.

**MOTION BY COMMISSIONER CARON TO APPROVE THE ONE-YEAR CONTRACT WITH WETHERBEE CREATIVE FOR QUARTERLY SUPPORT OF THE COMMISSION'S WEBSITE AT A TOTAL COST OF ONE THOUSAND FORTY DOLLARS (\$1,040.00), AND TO AUTHORIZE COMMISSIONER TENHAVE TO FINALIZE THE NON-MONETARY DETAILS OF THE CONTRACT ON THE COMMISSION'S BEHALF. FUNDS ARE AVAILABLE IN FUND 53  
MOTION SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER BOISVERT  
MOTION CARRIED  
5-0-0**

#### OTHER BUSINESS

- NRPC: Maps

Commissioner Glenn noted the HHNP Sub-Committee discussed the map and brochure, and has provided some recommended changes. Commissioner Tenhave suggested minor wording changes could be forwarded to Vice Chairman Caron (copying the Commission) for submission to the NRPC.

Commissioner Glenn questioned some of the items as they pertain to the desire to keep maps/brochures consistent, e.g., contact information specific to the particular sub-committee with regard to who to contact if interested in a particular event on the property, etc. Vice Chairman Caron suggested that language would likely be beneficial to have on the website and/or posted in a kiosk. Commissioner Tenhave commented he is not sure he would want to dedicate space on the brochure for such a statement.

One of the comments received was there cannot be topography lines and streams on the map as it would make it busy. It was stated there is the belief the map under-represents the water levels of the various ponds on the property. With regard to the photo on the front, the Sub-Committee would like to see photos of the HHNP that were submitted by users. They asked if the photo could be changed, and if so, if it could be changed seasonally. Commissioner Tenhave stated the Commission owns the brochure and could make changes if so desired. The Sub-Committee suggested conducting contests whereby users of the properties are asked to submit photos.

The Sub-Committee questioned if the size of the lettering could be increased. Commissioner Tenhave stated it to be close to the word size on the current map. Commissioner Rosati suggested utilizing a bold font would allow the name to stand out more. Commissioners Boisvert and Glenn spoke of how visually pleasing it is to have the photo take up much of the page. Commissioner Tenhave commented he would hate to see the letters get any larger; the value is in the photo.

Commissioner Glenn had spoken with the Sub-Commission about the idea of having the maps enlarged for the kiosks. The Sub-Committee requested additional enlarged maps as there is the desire to provide the same to the Fire Department, Police Department, and one to utilize during meetings. Commissioner Tenhave stated GPX files will be available, and can be put into any mapping tool desired. He would prefer to provide the Fire and Police Departments a link to the Commission's website, which provides the map and the GPX files. Those departments understand the kind of tool they need, and the Commission should show them where the information can be found so that they can then generate it the way that best suits their needs. With regard to the Sub-Committee wishing to have an enlarged copy, the Commission can try to work that out within the current contract. He noted to use it at a meeting someone would need to hold it. The maps will change over time. It may be easier to utilize a room with a projector so that the map could be displayed on a screen, etc.

With regard to the actual map, Commissioner Glenn noted the suggestion to remove the box that identifies the HHNP relative to its location within Town. The Sub-Committee was of the opinion it takes up space and provides little help to users. Commissioner Boisvert commented to someone going online wanting to know where the parcel is it would be useful, but on a printed map at the kiosk it is less useful. Commissioner Tenhave stated it to be a pretty standard inclusion in maps/plans. He commented he would tend to agree with the request, except that it is not covering or taking the place of anything else. If that situation changes, it can be revisited.

A desire was stated that the lower box (segment lengths) be moved down to avoid covering the names of roads. Commissioner Tenhave suggested it could be swapped with the compass. The Commission agreed.

The Sub-Committee noted the trail identified as the Fat Cat Trail on the map has been officially approved as the Plummer Trail. Vice Chairman Caron stated they are two different trails. The Plummer Trail is the trail that was constructed this fall, and is not yet identified on the map. The new one is the black trail that goes up to the summit. That is what was talked about calling the Plummer Trail. He questioned if the desire was to rename the Fat Cat Trail the Plummer Trail to make the Plummer Trail go from top to bottom. Commissioner Glenn stated that to be the case. Commissioner Tenhave noted that would result in Plummer trail having 3 points, which may be confusing. The Fat Cat Trail has a start and an end, and then the little black addition has a start and end, and they are not the same. He questioned if there is one piece that is not readily used and should stay as a black connector, and was informed there is not. Commissioner Glenn will revisit the issue with the Sub-Committee.

The Sub-Committee suggested moving the elevation and names of hills into the key (red or yellow triangles to differentiate). Commissioner Boisvert stated a desire for that information to remain on the map. Commissioner Tenhave stated he is used to seeing that information on a map. Vice Chairman Caron stated agreement with his colleagues.

Commissioner Glenn questioned if the unnumbered post markings were marked with asterisks as a result of the desire to understand where all of the posts are. Vice Chairman Caron provided the example of the kiosk next to post 9; it is a kiosk, but doesn't have a number on it so it is marked with an asterisk.

The Sub-Committee recommended that the font size be lowered on all of the trails except the main loop trail. A member also commented the color was a concern; white making it almost invisible. She questioned if it was put in white because it is blazed white. Commissioner Tenhave stated that to be correct. Vice Chairman Caron suggested thinner lines depicting trails might be helpful to show detail. Commissioner Tenhave suggested the request could be made so that the Commission could gain a visual of how that would be.

The bridge should be shown further east (closer to the point). It was noted that is a GPS marked location.

It was suggested the location of the Lastowka well be identified. Vice Chairman Caron stated agreement.

It was suggested the powerlines be darkened to stand out more. Commissioner Rosati commented the powerlines are a big landmark. The consensus of the Commission was for those to be darkened.

The Sub-Committee indicated the White Pines Swamp Trail should be curved at the bottom, but the map shows it as straight. Commissioner Tenhave responded he is confident the information collected is what

is shown on the map. Perhaps during collection it was believed the trail ended sooner than it did. For a long time that trail was not maintained. Vice Chairman Caron commented it only goes to sort of out in back, and a lot of people would go down and look at the view of the swamp. It also goes over to the Bowmen property, which is off of Commission property. He questioned whether it would be appropriate to send people off our property. Commissioner Tenhave suggested it be raised with the NRPC so that they can re-check the data.

The Palmeri Trail was never an official trail, and as a courtesy to the neighbors, was not previously placed on a map. Commissioner Tenhave stated that to be accurate, and added a kiosk was never placed there either. Vice Chairman Caron noted there is a green sign up. The consensus of the Commission was to remove the trail from the map.

The Sub-Committee requested the connector trail (under powerlines; not an official trail) between Rocky Trail and Old Kings Highway be removed as that is the area of turtle nesting. The Commission agreed with the removal from Loop Trail to Rocky Trail (sandpits). The connector from Old Kings Highway to Loop Trail should remain.

Commissioner Glenn spoke of there being both a Blodgett Hill Bypass and Blodgett Hill Summit, and the Sub-Committee's desire that both be listed. The Commission suggested that be added when the description is available.

On the online map, the Blodgett Hill Summit Trail shows the trail wandering off Commission property. The accuracy of that was questioned. Commissioner Tenhave questioned if, when going up, it goes to the left or right side of the stone wall, and was informed it stays on the right side. He indicated that to mean it is on Commission property. They have tried to superimpose them onto the map to the best resolution they have, but when you start blowing them up the resolution goes out the window. That issue was discussed with the NRPC. Vice Chairman Caron suggested that may be helped by the shrinking of the line font.

Commissioner Tenhave noted the Wildcat Falls Sub-Committee would meet the following day. He has not yet received any feedback on that map.

Vice Chairman Caron stated the only feedback he received from the Grater Woods Sub-Committee was great looking map, can't wait to see it finished.

It was agreed the fonts for the trail lines on all of the property maps should be reduced in size.

Vice Chairman Caron spoke of feedback requested by the NRPC; areas like the HHNP and Grater Woods have a good many of the sign posts numbered. On the Fitness Loop at Wasserman Park, the fitness stations are numbered (metal placards). If numbered on the map it might be confusing for a user of the HHNP that is looking for a sign post with a number on it. One suggestion made is to have dots/asterisks at each point and then have a key numbered 1-20, which lists what fitness activity is there, and simply say they are numbered counter-clockwise. Commissioner Tenhave suggested it to be worth trying, and looking for feedback.

Vice Chairman Caron questioned installation of a kiosk at Wasserman Park noting the area where it would be anticipated is the parking lot belonging to the Parks & Recreation Department. There is the need to consult with Parks and Recreation. There is a large kiosk in the center of the residence parking lot, which is currently empty. Commissioner Tenhave stated the need to better manage that property, and perhaps put a team together to drive things. It may be that a map is not posted anywhere outside of the website. A map box could be placed at the entrance to Quarry Trail.

When asked about logging along Naticook, Commissioner Tenhave responded there is not enough area there to log. He was interested in having the forestry study done to find out what is there, e.g., if there is value in doing anything. In the middle of the property, and especially where the stream wanders its way through, there are a lot of downed Pines, which would need to be cleaned up if the intent were to enter the area with machinery to do work.

Commissioner Tenhave noted the map the NRPC created and the map that has been promoted for Wildcat Falls are very different. There are a number of trails on the NRPC map that are not promoted on the current map. Some of the trails are on State property.

Vice Chairman Caron remarked there was a great deal of conversation about the maps, specifically Wildcat Falls, on a new Facebook page called Merrimack Outdoors. There are a lot of members, and it is a pretty active page. However, it is not affiliated with the Commission in any way. He suggested there may be the need to include a statement on the Commission's website indicating the Commission is not affiliated with the Facebook page. Commissioner Tenhave noted the same thing occurred with Wildcat Falls. That was popular for a while, and he is uncertain if that is the case any longer. Vice Chairman Caron stated that to have occurred with the HHNP as well. The Grater Woods Sub-Committee created a Facebook page to get ahead of that.

It was noted the Facebook page for Wildcat Falls has included information on Commission meetings, generated attendance at Sub-Committee meetings, etc. There were requests for maps, and links provided from the NRPC that looked a lot like the four links the Commission was provided for its four properties. Commissioner Tenhave commented that is too bad as those are not official.

When asked if the originator(s) should be asked to post a disclaimer, it was suggested it simply be left alone; if it brings people on the property that is really what the Commission wants. Commissioner Tenhave commented he would have hoped there would have been more collaboration, but it is okay.

- Duck Boxes

Vice Chairman Caron stated there to be no update to provide. The ice is not safe enough to do anything there. Commissioner Boisvert commented there were two days a few weeks ago where the ice was good. He used that time to check two boxes above the cul-de-sac pond at Grater Woods, and found there were eggs (hatched) in one. Vice Chairman Caron commented what is typically done is the door is opened, the container swept into another container, the number of egg shells counted, and the new fill placed. The filling would be discarded so that animals would not find it.

That was done for a number of years, and last year weather conditions were not conducive resulting in approx. half of the boxes being addressed.

- Seedling Give-Away

Vice Chairman Caron noted the invoice was received. The suggestions provided at the Commission's last meeting were put in play.

- Monthly Events

Commissioner Glenn stated she brought the issue up at the meeting of the HHNP Sub-Committee. Ms. Huffman graciously offered to contact the other sub-committees to look to coordinate, e.g., which months each wished to utilize, etc. The question of whether waivers are necessary was raised, e.g., would events be considered to be Town sponsored events if advertised by Parks and Recreation, etc. It was noted no waivers were obtained for previous events conducted. The suggestion was made that Tim Thompson, Director, Community Development, be asked.

- Sub-Committee updates

Commissioner Glenn stated she mentioned the flooding from beaver lodges at the meeting of the HHNP Sub-Committee. They indicated they had cleaned up before. It is likely more debris has just washed down. A new trail cannot be built until spring. When asked if there were any suggestions of what could be done until then, the suggestion was made to close it off.

A member of the Sub-Committee spoke of HB97 relative to the use of drones. The thought was that the Commission should be aware of the Bill should there be a need for a policy on drones on Commission property at some point.

Commissioner Tenhave reiterated the Wildcat Falls Sub-Committee would meet the following day.

Vice Chairman Caron stated the Grater Woods Sub-Committee met the prior week. They reviewed the draft map. A member of the public in attendance was a member of the Facebook page/abutter to Grater Woods, who hopefully will become a member of the Sub-Committee. The Sub-Committee also discussed the existing trail that will be improved with the bridge that construction began on in early winter (across from Bambi Trail into the Classroom). Because of the conditions this year, they were able to see some different water flow they were previously unaware of, which will likely change the routing of the boardwalk to get to the bridge.

The Sub-Committee discussed replacing the classroom itself. For whatever reason, this year pretty much every bench has failed. He commented 11 years of untreated wood is probably a pretty good lifespan. When rebuilding it that will be taken into consideration; will likely be treated wood or something even more permanent. The Sub-Committee is engaged in preliminary discussion of what to foot them with; whether to use concrete where just the top could be replaced in the future. There is more to be considered, e.g., whether that work would be done in conjunction with the School District.

#### PRESENTATION OF THE MINUTES

Merrimack Conservation Commission. . . . . January 9, 2017

*The following amendments were offered:*

Page 2, Line 28; insert a comma after "acceptable"  
Page 3, Line 52; replace "She" with "Commissioner Glenn"  
Page 4, Line 55; the sentence should begin "It is now"  
Page 5, Line 25; replace "January 7<sup>th</sup>" with "January 17<sup>th</sup>"  
Page 6, Line 20; delete ",flooded,"

**MOTION BY COMMISSIONER GLENN TO ACCEPT AS AMENDED**  
**MOTION SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER CARON**  
**MOTION CARRIED**  
**5-0-0**

PUBLIC COMMENT - None

#### COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Tenhave stated there to be one meeting of the Commission in the month of February (due to the holiday). He suggested it would be worthwhile for the Grater Woods Sub-Committee and the Commission to consider a forestry examination conducted of the new properties on Grater Woods along with some of the existing properties near new properties. It may be that consideration should be given to conducting a forestry project now that South Grater Road has been improved to accommodate the forestry project that is currently ongoing. One of the concerns previously expressed was that it would be very expensive to make the road updates and make it usable for forestry.



Commissioner Tenhave suggested whatever forestry is deemed necessary could be done prior to developing the properties for trails, etc., and it may be that some of the revenue could be used to construct the much needed bypass road. Commissioner Tenhave stated there will be no Aquatic Resource Management (ARM) grants this year. He suggested the topic could be placed on the agenda for the Commission's next meeting.

Vice Chairman Caron remarked that came up in the meeting of the Sub-Committee as they discussed the current forestry operation. If the purchase can be broken up into the four parcels, the parcel west of Grater Road was logged maybe 3 years ago and the 2 smaller parcels are in wet area, which really only leaves the one along Wilson Hill.

Commissioner Tenhave commented when discussing this four years ago, before owning the new parcels, it was noted there were potential forestry activities that needed to happen in the area of the Homestead parcel. There is also some forestry work that should be considered in the area of Millipede and Centipede Trails at Grater Woods.

Commissioner Rosati spoke of her experience with fundraising activities, and of discussions she had with Commissioners Boisvert and Tenhave with regard to her starting a fundraising effort such as Friends of the Merrimack Conservation Commission. She spoke of some potential fundraising opportunities that could be considered, and questioned the will of the Commission. Commissioner Tenhave responded he believes the fundraising aspect is worthwhile, but also the educational potential. Commissioner Tenhave suggested she perform some additional research, and come back before the Commission with a more formal proposal.

#### ADJOURNMENT

**MOTION BY COMMISSIONER GLENN TO ADJOURN**  
**MOTION SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER TENHAVE**  
**MOTION CARRIED**  
**5-0-0**

*The January 23, 2017 meeting of the Merrimack Conservation Commission was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.*

Submitted by Dawn MacMillan