



Town of Merrimack, New Hampshire

Community Development Department

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Planning - Zoning - Economic Development - Conservation

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MERRIMACK CONSERVATION COMMISSION

MAY 16, 2016

MEETING MINUTES

A regular meeting of the Merrimack Conservation Commission was held on Monday, May 16, 2016 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
Cynthia Glenn
Gage Perry
Gina Rosati, Alternate
Councilor Jody Vaillancourt

Members of the Commission Absent:

Also in Attendance: Ryan Friedman, Sr. GIS Planner, Nashua Regional Planning Commission
Sara Siskavich, GIS Manager, Nashua Regional Planning Commission
David Sanderson, 13 Vernon Avenue, Amherst
Greg Michael, Esq., Bernstein Shur

The Commission currently has open positions; 1 full-time and 1 alternate. Individuals interested in serving on the Commission should contact Becky Thompson in the Town Manager's Office.

The Memorial Day Parade will begin at 11:00 a.m. on Monday, May 30th.

PUBLIC COMMENT - None

APPOINTMENTS

1. Visit from Nashua Regional Planning Commission – GIS Dept.

Commission to discuss a proposal received from the NRPC GIS Department to help the Commission with making better maps and related items.

Sara Siskavich, GIS Manager, Nashua Regional Planning Commission (NRPC), spoke of the scope of work submitted last month relative to the NRPC providing GIS services to the Commission.

The project would take the multitude of map products on the Commission's website and unify their look and feel, give them a similar brand, and impose some consistency with the amount of detail on the maps. Ms. Siskavich stated she and Ryan Friedman, Sr. GIS Planner have done quite a bit of trail mapping and field work related to trails over the years. Some examples of their work were provided to illustrate the breadth of styling that can be done with GIS.

The scope of work consisted of three main components. The first would be to revisit all existing GIS data for the four properties the Commission is interested in addressing at this time. That would entail going out in the field and revisiting the entire trail systems. The project represents a little more intense data collection than what would typically be done with an intern over the summer months. For example, because the display requirements of the data are robust they would want to ensure the spatial accuracy of the trail system is as good as it can be, they would be more detailed in terms of the kinds of features that would be gathered along the trails, e.g., kiosks,

signage, benches, etc. All of that information could be used to enhance mapping. The third piece would be the interactive component. The tools have evolved in terms of being able to publish maps online in a very efficient manner. They would be able to create one map and make it available in a web browser as well as a phone. That could support two audiences; someone who is planning a trip while sitting at a desk and someone who is onsite and wants to use the map for navigation.

The NRPC uses ESRI tools predominantly. All of those use cases are converging to where they can create one map that supports more than one use case.

Ms. Siskavich handed out examples of static pdf maps. The NRPC was able to develop the examples because they have a separate grant to create recreational asset inventory of things like parks, playgrounds and recreational opportunities across the region. They are looking at trail systems as a way to represent recreational opportunity in non-urban type environments.

Displayed for the Commission was an example of a map showing how a user can hover over a trail and all of the attribute information that was tracked in GIS is published. There is control over and one can suppress something that may be incomplete or simply not necessary for a casual audience. It is essentially a basic interactive map viewer, but you can also browse to the URL. If you have the ESRI application for your cell phone you can essentially get a mobile optimized view of the map. The nice thing with the phone is you can enable navigation, and as you traverse along onsite you can see your location. There are menu tools you can toggle on and off using the icons, can change the background map, etc.

Ryan Friedman, Sr. GIS Planner, Nashua Regional Planning Commission, commented there are features where you can click on a point on the map and it will tell you the distance from where you are to that point.

Ms. Siskavich spoke of differences between the mapping done for the Joe English Reservation in Amherst and the Beaver Brook system. The Beaver Brook trails had been GPS'd fairly recently using NRPC's Trimble. When they were walking the trail the navigation was spot on. At the Joe English Reservation it was a little bit of a different scenario.

Commissioner Perry questioned the accuracy of the Trimble versus a phone. Ms. Siskavich responded the Trimble allows the user to do differential correction. Your raw data could be on the order of 20' off. You bring your data back to the office, and there is a very expensive piece of software that comes along with the Trimble that essentially downloads base station information then collects essentially satellite information about where they were, where the positioning was, what were the factors that could degrade the quality of the signal, and then it corrects for all of that. Once you do your differential correction you are on the order of some meter.

Mr. Friedman added what the phone is telling you is you are at the mercy of the phone's GPS; it has nothing to do with how you collected data. The difference there is Trimble versus Garmin or Trimble versus some other \$80 unit. That can be some meter on the Trimble and 20 or 30 feet on a Garmin. When you are out in the field and the trail is not where it is supposed to be it becomes a problem because you can pinch and zoom on the phone and all of a sudden you are looking at on the phone where you are standing and the line that represents the trail that was GPS'd is not on the phone anymore. You can zoom in as far as you want; you are looking for that super accurate level of detail when you are out there and you have lost the directional line.

Ms. Siskavich remarked they are making the assumption they would probably need to go onsite and verify the spatial accuracy of all of the trails. The scope is assuming three days of field data collection (1 day for the larger systems and a half day for the smaller systems).

Vice Chairman Caron questioned how familiar the individual would be with the trail system. Ms. Siskavich responded she believes they will need to find someone on the Commission who is willing to be that bird dog or has enough knowledge to be able to put it down on paper. Ideally it would be someone who is guiding them.

Vice Chairman Caron commented with some of the trail systems there are numerous ways to get there; one is on the trail the Commission wishes to be marked. He questioned the size of the unit. Ms. Siskavich had the unit, and was able to show the Commission. She explained there are some nuances to running the system, and remarked you want an experienced person running it. The NRPC has a few employees that can run the system. Mr. Friedman explained you can determine the settings to configure the device to take a point as you are walking, e.g., every 10 seconds. That setting is important whether you are driving the turnpike or walking on a trail. It collects a point at whatever setting you set it at and in the end it will connect those best points and turn them into a line. If driving in a car and reaching a turning point you want to make sure you are going slowly and the system

is getting a point along that arch. Otherwise it will turn it into a straight line if you get it at the beginning and end and miss the top of the arch. Walking is probably the most accurate because you will catch more locations.

Ms. Siskavich spoke of the added feature of a story map. She provided an example that showed a trail system having classifications of easy, intermediate, or difficult, and an interactive panel that filters based on the extent that you are showing on the map. You can click on a graphical type icon and it will point out where the item is, will provide detailed information (the example provided a link back to the individual website to provide the greatest amount of information on the property). The story map feature is phone compliant; it is an optimized/mobile version when you browse to the link. It would be the same website. It detects what type of device you are using and presents the information accordingly. Ms. Siskavich remarked once all of the information is hosted in the Cloud then it is not that heavy a lift to start putting the other views on the information. She commented that is one of the reasons why they included photography on the list of things to do while onsite. Imagery can be incorporated and can be interactive or could form the margins of the paper maps.

With regard to timeline, Ms. Siskavich remarked she was unsure what was desired or practical. The NRPC can compress the delivery schedule. They would not necessarily get started until after July 1st. It could be that data collection is in the summer, applications over the winter and then paper in the spring, etc. there will be the requirement for some iteration back and forth. They like to get people hands on with the maps, provide honest feedback, etc. That typically takes a few rounds of revision.

Chairman Tenhave noted the Commission has initiated discussions with Ms. Wetherbee around revamping the website.

Commissioner Perry noted the proposal indicates the NRPC agrees to provide hosting for the interactive maps and story maps for one year after which either ownership of the hosted items will be transferred to the Commission/Town of Merrimack ArcGIS Online Organization account, or the cost (without markup) of ongoing ESRI storage (credits) will be passed from the NRPC to the Commission.

Ms. Siskavich responded in order for all of the content to live through the apps it has to live online somewhere; essentially has to be parked in a public facing container. With ESRI they get so much cloud hosting space through their licensing. Anything in addition to the quota is charged on a credit system, e.g., big imaging would be more credits than a small shaped file. As they grow and do more and more of this they will not be able to host all of the apps they are doing for towns. The Town of Merrimack being an ESRI customer also has web hosting space. The most logical thing would be for the NRPC to transfer the hosting over to the Town.

Chairman Tenhave questioned if there is another way to host it or if it is tied to ESRI in order for the apps to work. Ms. Siskavich responded the data will be owned by the Commission, but to run the ESRI apps it expects an ESRI format. There are ways to host data using the Town's ArcGIS server. That is what runs the Town's parcel viewer, etc. Mr. Friedman remarked when you add a photo through the Story map Wizard it gives the option of loading on an ESRI site or you can store them on whatever Google images latest iteration is called as well as other options. With the GIS data the only way to go is through ESRI.

Commissioner Perry noted the \$300 cost cited in the proposal for 3 GPX data downloads, and questioned what data would have to be downloaded. Ms. Siskavich responded the NRPC is an ESRI shop. GPX is an open source format, but their understanding is that in order to broaden the reach of the data collected, it would be desirable to make it available in non-ESRI format being that GPX is that sort of generic interchange file for GPS enthusiasts. The issue is that it is not as simple as press a button on the ESRI software and it dumps out a GPX. There are some variations that have to be gone through to get from SSX format to Trimble into Pathfinder Office, into the ESRI shape file format, and then there is actually freeware, a third-party tool, to get it into GPX. Vice Chairman Caron noted the end user would see it as a downloadable GPX file on the website.

Mr. Friedman questioned if there remains a need for GPX files. He questioned if having the mapping on a phone app would eliminate the need for GPS files for most people. It was explained there are users that are not as familiar with the trail system as others, and because GPX is the open standard, it makes it available for people to use their tool of choice. Someone wishing to download the GPX file into their Garmin and hit the trails can be on their way without having to have app., etc. Phone reception in Grater Woods can be difficult, and there is a need for an offline tool.

Vice Chairman Caron volunteered to be the point person on the trails and with coordinating format/design, etc. Ms. Siskavich stated there could be workshops conducted where they meet with the Commission to provide

samples of the mapping and seek feedback throughout the process. Mr. Friedman commented step one will be in the Commission identifying the features it wishes to be captured.

When asked if the Commission would have the ability to add layers or if it would always have to go back through the NRPC, Ms. Siskavich stated going forward this data will be assimilated into the NRPC GIS. They will make changes to their data model to accommodate the project, but it will also position them to do a similar project down the road for another town. They're essentially committing to a small amount of data maintenance as needed. The Commission could also do it themselves. A copy could be turned over to the Town. The request would be that the Town do editor tracking where if a change is made on the Town's side it is flagged with an editor and a date so the NRPC can see it. She commented once you start going down the road of multiple copies editing at different times it gets more challenging to reconcile in the future. If there is a significant amount of editing that prompts an overhaul to the maps that is where they would likely have to drop the line as far as what is considered maintenance versus a new project.

Chairman Tenhave commented by including the NRPC in this project we provide value for the whole region. It provides for some sort of caretaking at a regional level. He does not see the Town having the GIS capability to work this for a while because there is still a lot of base work the Town wants to do with its limited funding.

Chairman Tenhave commented another desire would be the ability to track maintenance needs through the GIS system, e.g., be able to identify where all of our 5-year-old bridges are.

Chairman Tenhave stated the item would be placed on the next agenda to allow the Commission to engage in a discussion on how to coordinate this effort. By the 2nd meeting in June an answer should be available to provide to the NRPC.

STATUTORY/ADVISORY BUSINESS

- 1. Sanderson, David (applicant/owner)** — Review for recommendation to the Planning Board of a site plan review, to permit the construction of a third residential unit. The parcel is located at 81 Seaverns Bridge Road in the R (Residential) and Wetlands Conservation Districts. Tax Map 3A, Lot 029.

Mr. David Sanderson stated the project to be one of a change of use for an existing structure on his property. The structure is a detached four-car garage. The intent would be to add a floor and turn the structure into his personal residence. The footprint would not change. The project has already been before the Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA) and the Planning Board.

Commissioner Perry asked if the other existing structure would remain, and was informed it would. Chairman Tenhave questioned who delineated the wetlands as indicated on the drawings. Ms. Sanderson stated it to have been Fieldstone Land Consultants, and noted the work was done on 4-11-16. Chairman Tenhave questioned if the wetlands were checked as part of the plan set, and was told the area is all marker taped with blue colored tape and black striped tape with a primary color he could not recollect. Chairman Tenhave commented the reason he asked the question was because of the absence of a stamp or something denoting who was the licensed scientist. The plans were stamped as a land surveyor.

Commissioner Perry noted the plans show a single leach field and septic tank, and questioned if the new house would be tied into that. Mr. Sanderson stated the same company would be designing a new system for the second structure. They are proposing placing the tank in the area near the shed and the leach field to the right of the existing duplex.

Chairman Tenhave questioned the deck, and was told that will be removed from the plans as the Planning Board has stated nothing can touch the setback. When asked, he stated the leach field and septic tank will be outside of the setback.

Chairman Tenhave questioned how stormwater would be addressed. Mr. Sanderson stated there would be no additional runoff. When asked, he stated he currently does not utilize gutters, etc. to capture water. When asked if he is planning on those types of fixtures, he stated if necessary he would. Chairman Tenhave stated his reasoning to be to understand where that roof runoff would go. Mr. Sanderson remarked it currently drips off the edge of the roof, and he had believed that would be fine in the future as well. Chairman Tenhave remarked he cannot tell if the wetland could accept the water or if it needed to be treated, etc. Mr. Sanderson stated the wetland that is behind the garage is basically a seasonal stream. It is about a foot wide right now and in the summer it is dry.

The site will have a well. Mr. Sanderson remarked he has been told the individuals who design the septic will determine where the well will go (75' radius from the leach field).

Commissioner Perry commented he was a little concerned with runoff. Chairman Tenhave stated as long as the velocities are controlled it should be okay. He clarified if a gutter system were created, what you don't want to do is be collecting all of that water and pushing it out a 4' spout and creating a whole new washout. He clarified gutters are fine; you just want to collect that water to stop the velocity. It could be run it into a bunch of rocks, etc. The idea is to get the water so it goes into the ground and replenishes the wells, neighbors' wells, etc. It doesn't do the property owner any good if it is sent down that stream.

Commissioner Perry questioned if the proposed project would include additional paving. Mr. Sanders stated it would not. Commissioner Perry questioned if the area around the garage is grassed. Mr. Sanderson stated he is not planning on removing or planting any trees.

Chairman Tenhave informed the Applicant, as his property comes close to a wetland, if doing landscaping, new lawn, etc. the Commission would suggest he test his soil before spending money on fertilizer to find out if there is the need to fertilize, and if using fertilizer he should consider a low phosphate, slow-release nitrogen formula. If he was close to a stream or something that happened all the time the Commission would suggest using no phosphates. He noted the New Hampshire Cooperative Extension in Goffstown will test the soil for a minimal fee.

The Commission will forward its recommendation that the plans be stamped by the Wetland Scientist.

- 2. Bohler Engineering & Woodspring Suites (applicants) and 4 Executive Park Drive, LLC (owner) –**
Review for recommendation to the Planning Board for construction and site improvements. The parcel is located at 4 Executive Park Drive in the C-2 (General Commercial) and Aquifer Conservation District. Tax Map 4D, Lot 076

Greg Michael, Esq., Bernstein Shur stated he was present to discuss what will hopefully be a commencement and continuation of reuse of the Hilton Hotel site. That hotel was built back in the late '70s, has gone through a number of owners, and has been vacant for 8-9 years. The owners are considering certain possible reuses of that.

The project before the Commission was one of a possible sub-division of the land to accommodate what would be a Woodspring Suites all-suite hotel, four stories in height, located reasonably close, but again observing all setbacks to Executive Park Drive. The project includes the relocation of one of the entrances. Some of the parking would be lifted for grading purposes. The site will be serviced by Town sewer and water. The sewer connection will be redone to ensure there are no issues with it.

Bohler Engineering has taken a close look at the drainage issues. All of the stormwater drainage in the area will be improved; they will be installing new collection areas and treatment that doesn't currently exist off the site.

Attorney Michael noted once some of the pavement is pulled up and a hotel installed, the end result will be an approx. 2% reduction in impervious surface. There will be some greenspace in different areas around the site. Part of the impervious surface will be roof, which is preferred to parking lots. There will be no storage of chemicals.

There will be a maintenance plan for continuation of cleaning and maintenance of stormwater drainage, which does not currently exist on this site. Once the improvements are completed the hotel will reduce the reduction in peak runoff rates currently existing for the site. It is believed there will not be any adverse impact on Naticook Brook.

Commissioner Rosati remarked what is being proposed is a different hotel. Attorney Michael stated a new building would be constructed on a sub-divided parcel that is currently a parking lot.

When asked how the new hotel would impact the required parking should the previous hotel structure become active again, Attorney Michael stated they were subdividing off a piece of the land, and are providing appropriate onsite parking on their parcel for their use in accordance with the regulations. That is what the deal is. The hotel has other areas of parking. That is a different discussion for a different day. The current proposal will meet zoning requirements, parking regulations, etc.

Chairman Tenhave remarked he has reviewed the drainage report, which identifies everything Attorney Michael has indicated. He noted the Town's consultant will review the plans. He commented the old drainage looked like it used to collect and direct all of the parking lot runoff towards Naticook Brook. The proposal would be to put treatment pieces within that. He questioned if it eventually outflows through that same system towards Naticook Brook, and was told it does. In the end there is still some runoff going toward Naticook Brook. However, currently it goes into a pipe and runs straight out whereas with the proposed project water would be collected and treated.

Chairman Tenhave remarked that water system ends up flowing in behind King Kone, runs into Horseshoe Pond, and eventually into the Merrimack River and flows downstream to all of our neighbors to the south.

Chairman Tenhave noted a few areas on the plan where fertilizers were addressed, and reiterated the Commission's preference for soil to be tested, and if fertilizer is needed, that it be a low phosphate, slow-release nitrogen formula. Attorney Michael noted the proposed project doesn't have a lot of grass. They can, however, look over what is used.

When asked about the plans for deicing and winter treatment of the parking area, Attorney Michael stated they have not reached that point in the discussion; the Planning Board typically looks at that closely. He commented presently it is unrestricted. He stated he was not prepared to make a firm commitment on it.

Councilor Vaillancourt commented on being pleased to learn the area is being revitalized, and remarked no matter what is proposed the Commission's recommendations are probably going to be the same. She spoke of wanting to see what is planned for the back side of that. Chairman Tenhave remarked the one good thing is any major reconstruction of that would require upgrading to current standards.

The recommendation of the Commission was that the soil be tested to determine if it requires fertilizer, and if required, that fertilizer be a low phosphate, slow-release nitrogen formula and that no de-icing compounds of any sort be utilized or that the use of de-icing compounds be minimized, and that applicators be Green SnowPro Certified.

OLD BUSINESS

1. NED Pipeline

Commission to have a general discussion on the NED project and any immediate actions it may wish to take.
Discussion to include:

- Current advise from our attorney.

Commissioner Rosati spoke of the 30-day stay granted to Kinder Morgan by the Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities (DPU), which does not expire until May 26th. She stated her belief Liberty has said no, we're not going to take your gas anymore. They are trying to renegotiate with BerkShire to see what is going to happen. It is looking more and more like this is really not going to happen. The reason they don't want to build it is they don't have an electric supplier. If there is no electric supplier they can't pass the tariff onto us. They don't want to pay \$3.1 billion for this pipeline just to send it to local distributors. They want to get it for free and have a big power company pay for it.

Commissioner Rosati stated she is encouraged. She did not rework the letter of need because there is no need at this point. Chairman Tenhave noted the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) is not doing anything; response to representatives was pretty clear that we're not even going to take anything up until after the 26th if at all.

Commissioner Rosati stated her belief what occurs on the 26th will be very telling.

Councilor Vaillancourt commented on the letter the Town of Brookline submitted requesting their \$30,000± back. Commissioner Perry commented it is a very real request. He remarked the Commission spent a good deal of man hours, and money on this issue, e.g., there is a lawyer on retainer, etc. There is a lot of expense to fight things that up front had no face value.

Commissioner Rosati commented we could certainly spend the time and money doing that and it would be just a waste of time and money because we're not going to get anything back, and they know we will not get lawyers involved as it would end up in court for years. Councilor Vaillancourt remarked she thought it was great that

someone put it in writing. She commented so much of what we have done, written, and said is symbolic just to send a message. She believes the sending of a letter is the same thing. She added she was not suggesting the Commission do it, she just liked the idea.

It was noted the Town Administrator in Brookline, Tad Putney, is the Chair of the New Hampshire Municipal Coalition.

Chairman Tenhave commented he liked the idea as well; no real expectations, but it might be worth it. He remarked the FERC has stopped dead. The FERC is funded by the fees they collect to process the application they were provided. If the FERC was funded by Kinder Morgan who says don't spend any more money because we're not going to give you any more money, the FERC stops. Well they got money to do all of the work they were doing, and they are a Government entity, why can't we get some of our funding back? They caused us to do all of this and then took their ball and went home? Commissioner Rosati stated her opinion the way to go would be to file a class action suit against them with all of the towns that have been affected. She suggested groups such as New Hampshire Plan, MASS Live, etc. would be who would spearhead such an effort.

Chairman Tenhave stated his hope one of those groups is considering this or looking into the feasibility of it. Commissioner Rosati stated she could send a message.

Commissioner Perry read a quote of a statement made by Steve Kean, CEO, Kinder Morgan: "With respect to NED.....We worked very hard to get customer commitments on this project. And while many of our LDC customers did sign up, we did not receive enough contractual commitments from electric customers to make the project viable....so we're removing it from the backlog...To be specific, the return on the NED project at the level of commitments that we had would be less than 6% unlevered after tax."

Councilor Vaillancourt remarked unless the application hasn't been withdrawn it could come back. Chairman Tenhave questioned the identity of the other players in the transportation of natural gas that could just pick up this project and decide to go with it. He remarked there has been a lot of public information made available.

Commissioner Rosati commented Seabrook is good for a while. We have a few other nuclear power plants, but she believes if more renewable energy could be brought in that would eliminate the need for more gas power plants.

Commissioner Perry commented it would be interesting to look at how hard the State regulates; you can only have a certain amount of solar, etc. In MA, if you generate excess power you can put it back in the grid, whereas in New Hampshire it is very difficult. There are a lot of regulations limiting people's ability to put power on the grid.

2. Website Update

Commission to discuss next phase in our website update including a proposal from Wetherbee Creative if available.

Chairman Tenhave stated the item would be placed on the next agenda.

3. Ecological Assessment of 283 Continental Blvd

Commission to discuss a proposal from Moosewood Ecological to perform an ecological assessment of the Commission's property at 283 Continental Blvd and a few remaining items from the assessments previously done on our other properties.

Commissioner Perry questioned if the proposal was above and beyond what was initially decided upon, and was told it would be. Commissioner Boisvert questioned if what was being considered is the continuation of monitoring the turtles. Chairman Tenhave stated that to be an option. The way the proposal was broken out was to do the removal of the transmitters as well as calculate turtle density. Mr. Littleton has stated there to be enough data now to scientifically get an idea of what the numbers are for these creatures. Believing that information to be worthwhile, Mr. Littleton was asked to provide a price for the work.

Chairman Tenhave stated his belief the Commission is obligated to remove the transmitters. The Commission agreed. He questioned the will of the Commission with regard to expending more time to collect additional data for the big picture of the environment, being good stewards and helping the overall State in its data collection by

continuing to collect data. He stated his opinion the Commission should at least collect the new set of data as the transmitters are removed.

Commissioner Perry questioned what \$250/day represents. Chairman Tenhave responded it represents deciding how many more surveys the Commission would like Moosewood Ecological to do. They would have to come out with the receivers, locate the turtles, map their location, etc. That is a per day cost for every visit. If the request was for it to be done in spring, summer, fall, etc. Mr. Littleton suggested doing something before mating season to identify where they winter and then find out where they are mating.

Commissioner Rosati questioned the number of turtles that have transmitters on them, and was told it is between 5 and 8.

Commissioner Perry stated his concern to be the transmitters have about 2 more years' worth of life. If the Commission decides to do this there is the need to be certain to only go about another year to ensure the transmitters can be taken off before they stop transmitting.

Commissioner Boisvert questioned the cost of continued data collection for another year. Commissioner Glenn questioned if the \$3,000 would cover the removal of all of the transmitters even though some will have to be done sooner. Chairman Tenhave stated some of the removals would have to be done now while we can.

Commissioner Perry stated his interest in keeping the transmitters in place to collect data through a mating season. Chairman Tenhave stated his understanding the Blandings mating season is happening now.

Vice Chairman Caron questioned what would be gained that has not already been captured. Chairman Tenhave stated if the transmitters remained on for an entire year there would be some idea of the expanse the turtles cover over a year. Vice Chairman Caron questioned if they have been periodically checked during the time the transmitters have been in place, and was informed there has been no checking since they were completed last fall.

They were put on in July, tracked through the fall, but there hasn't been any spring tracking. If they were to simply remove the transmitters they would have provided information for fall and spring. The option is to cover the cost of additional days in an effort to have information for the fall, spring, and perhaps the summer.

The suggestion was that the transmitters could be checked as soon as possible, which would provide spring data, and if the devices were removed in the summer, three seasons would have been captured.

The consensus of the Commission was to request a day of monitoring be conducted as quickly as possible to identify the spring data, that the transmitters be removed in the summer, and that summer data be captured at that time. It was clearly stated those transmitters that will soon stop working need to be addressed before that happens.

Chairman Tenhave questioned the will of the Commission with regard to the density calculations. Commissioner Perry stated his belief it would be worthwhile to have the information. That would provide for a complete study, which may come in handy in future years.

The consensus of the Commission was to proceed as quoted.

With regard to an ecological assessment 283 Continental Blvd., Chairman Tenhave stated his preference to collect the data on the property. It was noted the property is approx. 13 acres in size. Vice Chairman Caron commented on the amount of money required for such a small parcel. Councilor Vaillancourt remarked this is the area where there are believed to be a lot of birds. Chairman Tenhave noted Pennichuck Brook basically flows through it. Commissioner Rosati spoke of there being a good deal of deer in the area.

Councilor Vaillancourt questioned how the assessment could be scaled back. Chairman Tenhave stated there is some amount of cost just to mobilize onsite. Because this is a much smaller property that cost will be a much higher percentage of the overall activity than was the case with other properties. Another aspect of this parcel is that it is significantly wet. It will be more difficult, in some ways, to collect that data. Mr. Littleton will be relying on others to help him do this; people familiar with going after these kinds of species. His plan was to re-use some of the people he used on the past project.

Commissioner Vaillancourt stated her support; particularly given this property is in the pathway of what could be the NED pipeline project.

Chairman Tenhave remarked the State had given the Town a few opportunities to close on the abutting parcels on both sides of this parcel along Continental Boulevard. That has never been completed, and is something he believes the Commission should look at doing once the potential of the NED Pipeline is put to bed. The assessment would provide insight on the whole area, e.g., spending the money on 13 acres here could provide enough information to interpolate across closer to 30 acres.

Commissioner Perry commented what is more distressful to him is the fact the parcel is attractive simply because of its location, e.g., others may want to utilize the land for other purposes. Chairman Tenhave commented if a rare or endangered species were to be identified on the property anyone looking to do projects in that area would have to deal with that as well. That information would be held by the National Heritage Bureau, and anyone wanting to do a project within a mile of that will be made aware the species has been identified nearby and will have to look for it on their own property.

**MOTION BY COUNCILOR VAILLANCOURT TO MOVE FORWARD WITH THE ECOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT
OF 283 CONTINENTAL BOULEVARD. SOURCE OF FUNDING IS FUND 53
MOTION SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER ROSATI
MOTION CARRIED
7-0-0**

Commissioner Perry noted Mr. Littleton would provide the Commission with shape files on GIS. He questioned where the data would be housed. He questioned if the information could be given to GZA to use as another layer for the existing map. Chairman Tenhave stated his opinion that could be done as long as the Commission could be provided assurances as to controlling who gets access to the data as some of it will be sensitive, e.g., proper agreements would have to be in place.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Gate installation on Grater Woods

Commission to review a proposal from Alpha Tractor Works to install gates at Grater Woods. These gates to be installed at certain trail locations and along the discontinued portion of South Grater Road. May also discuss having Alpha Tractor Works assist with the installation of 2 large signs the Commission has had ready for a few years now but has not had the means to do the installation.

Vice Chairman Caron spoke of having met with a contractor that has installed gates for the Commission previously. They discussed size, shape and location of four gates that would meet the need. In addition to the gates are the posts the gates will hang from and a third post with each gate so that if the Commission did decide a gate could be opened, it has something to support it. The approach was to oversize things so that they would last longer. They went back and looked at the previous gates, made some adjustments, etc. That provided an idea of how the gates are working and some insight into improvements that could be made. They discussed using the same finish/color, markings, etc. so that things remain standardized. Only one of the gates measured to 16'. The remaining three should be 12'.

The external gates would be located at the Amherst Town line and the Commission's property on South Grater Road (where it ends). The internal gates would be in the area of the significant wetland impact. The contractor has said he can put in whatever number of gates you need. Vice Chairman Caron stated there is already access coming from different locations, and the four areas identified would solve the problem being seen; trucks going all the way through and quads going through the wetland.

Vice Chairman Caron noted there is also a proposal from a member of the Grater Woods Sub-Committee looking to improve the road that goes around that wet area. In conjunction with the four gates, that would work well.

Commissioner Boisvert questioned if there is a gate between where Gateway comes in and hits South Grater Road and the wetland, and was told there is. There is another just past the Bender property line.

Chairman Tenhave questioned if more lock boxes have to be secured. Vice Chairman Caron stated his belief he has enough to do these four locations. Vice Chairman Caron stated the quote provided is inclusive of planting the posts, and strategic placement of rocks.

Chairman Tenhave suggested coordinating with the Town regarding signs that would read "road closed" or "dead-end".

MOTION BY COMMISSIONER PERRY TO APPROVE THE QUOTE AS WRITTEN. SOURCE OF FUNDING IS FUND 53

MOTION SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER BOISVERT

MOTION CARRIED

7-0-0

Chairman Tenhave spoke of two signs that were meant to be put up closer to the school (school loop trail sign and Gateway sign). They are 4 x 4 posts; signs that are about 4' tall and 3' wide. The legs and structure are brown. They are triangular at the top, green in the middle with white lettering. They were intended to be installed 4-5 years ago. He provided photos. The Town created them initially. They would be going on school property where the Commission has an easement. Installation would have to be coordinated, and would likely be done when school is not in session. Alpha Tractor Works has the equipment, and the Commission has the relationship with Alpha Tractor. The signs have been exposed to the elements for 4-5 years and need maintenance prior to being installed.

When asked when the work on the gates would occur, Chairman Tenhave stated he would like that to be done more in the drier season. He agreed it would make sense to have the signs installed during the same time period.

Vice Chairman Caron will obtain quotes for actual cost and report back to the Commission at its next meeting.

MOTION BY COMMISSIONER ROSATI TO HIRE ALPHA TRACTOR WORKS, LCC TO PICK UP THE SIGNS FROM THEIR CURRENT LOCATION, REFURBISH THEM, AND INSTALL THEM AT A COST NOT TO EXCEED SEVEN HUNDRED DOLLARS (\$700.00). SOURCE OF FUNDING IS FUND 53

MOTION SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER PERRY

MOTION CARRIED

7-0-0

Councilor Vaillancourt will speak with the Town Manager about signage to be erected on the roads where gates are to be installed.

OTHER BUSINESS

- Update on Land Donations

Chairman Tenhave informed the Commission there are two land donations in the works; one that was approved by the Town Council in March (Tax Map 6B/159), which may be completed later in the week. The second is associated with the Chestnut Hill development. For that there has been no further action.

- Update on HHNP Parking Lot

Chairman Tenhave noted Kyle Fox, Director, Public Works, has been on vacation. There has been a question about access to a water line, which is something he hopes to speak with Director Fox about as he would like to keep the two projects separate. They have to protect the water line as they are doing the activity, which means the Commission needs to identify where it is believed to be. Although the Commission needs to identify where it is, as far as creating an access into that line, that should be a separate discussion and separate activity.

- Update on Grater Woods Target Shooting location and any others we may need to address

Vice Chairman Caron spoke of having been in the area on Saturday, and did not witness any further activity. Commissioner Boisvert spoke of having been in the area on Monday or Tuesday, and stated he did not see any signs of continued activity.

Vice Chairman Caron noted he was out in the area on Sunday and heard shooting. Commissioners Perry and Boisvert both spoke of having been informed of others hearing shooting in the area. Councilor Vaillancourt remarked it is difficult to know where the sound originates. It was noted the sounds of the Greens Pond Gun Club can be heard throughout the Horse Hill Nature Preserve (HHNP). It is pretty far of a distance, but it sounds like it is right there.

- Review of the 2016 Seedlings Giveaway

Vice Chairman Caron stated the event went well; was well attended, and all but a handful of seedlings were handed out. He stated it to have been the best turnout since he has been attending. Mr. Currier even commented he cannot remember a time when the event was so well attended. There were a lot of new people at the event, which was likely a result of the advertising on social media.

- Update on no-cut buffer area along HHNP and Wasserman Heights

Chairman Tenhave stated the Town is taking the lead, and is engaged with the Town's engineering firm to get an idea of what is appropriate.

- Update on encroachment into Wasserman Conversation Area

Chairman Tenhave stated his understanding the Town's engineering firm has reviewed the area, and will soon provide the Town the plan for addressing this. The Town is taking the lead on this as well.

- Update on Anheuser Busch Volunteer Opportunity

Chairman Tenhave commented he has reached out to them, but has not received a reply. He will follow-up. He is uncertain what they are considering. Commissioner Boisvert commented they are located on the river, are a big company, and the boat launch area on the river would be a great project albeit large. It could be a clean-up project, etc.

- Discussion on potential need for a future non-public meeting related to land negotiations

Chairman Tenhave stated his belief there will be the need for a non-public session during the 2nd meeting in June.

PRESENTATION OF THE MINUTES

Merrimack Conservation Commission. April 18, 2016

The following amendments were offered:

Page 2, Line 19; delete "for" after "Board"
Page 3, Line 1; add a comma after "artificial"
Page 4, Line 50; replace "is" with "if"
Page 11, Line 23; replace "existing" with "existed"

MOTION BY COMMISSIONER GLENN TO ACCEPT AS AMENDED
MOTION SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER PERRY
MOTION CARRIED
7-0-0

Merrimack Conservation Commission. May 2, 2016

The following amendments were offered:

Page 2, Line 2; Add "a" before "parking" and "a" before "building"
Page 4, Line 25; replace "hay versus straw" with "straw versus hay"
Page 8, Line 35; put quotation marks around "No target shooting"

MOTION BY COMMISSIONER GLENN TO ACCEPT AS AMENDED
MOTION SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER CARON
MOTION CARRIED
6-0-1

Commissioner Tenhave Abstained

PUBLIC COMMENT - None

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Chairman Tenhave spoke of having received a few letters from the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES). NHDES has approved a wetlands, non-site specific permit at 155 Camp Sargent Road. They have also approved a Shoreline project. The letters will be scanned and distributed to members of the Commission.

An email was received from the NHDES stating they have approved the wetland crossing for the driveway at Wilson Hill Road.

Councilor Vaillancourt stated the Town Council and the School Board were supposed to have a joint meeting on Wednesday the 18th to discuss polling sites. The meeting has been postponed.

Vice Chairman Caron stated the Grater Woods Sub-Committee will meet on the 24th. One of the matters the Sub-Committee will be discussing is the desire of the Right Riders to put in some of the D class trails. A date is being sought for a site walk as the group has a number of the trails laid out. He will advise the Commission of the date chosen. Chairman Tenhave remarked if they are deviating from the use or location that was put into the Stewardship Plan he is of the opinion approval needs to come from the Commission. Vice Chairman Caron stated his belief, based on the flagging he has seen, they will be. The Commission stated agreement any changes being proposed would have to come before the Commission for approval.

Councilor Vaillancourt remarked originally the Stewardship Plan contained proposed trails that hadn't been created. She asked for clarification that is what was being discussed. Vice Chairman Caron responded in the Stewardship Plan a trail might have looked one way, and flagging has them looking differently.

Vice Chairman Caron noted they have flagged a trail and they are riding it. Councilor Vaillancourt questioned if a representative of the Right Riders has attended the meetings of the Grater Woods Sub-Committee, and was told that has occurred. There is a member on the Sub-Committee. Chairman Tenhave remarked they are riding an unapproved trail now. Vice Chairman Caron stated the trail has been there for a long time, and their desire is for it to be made an official trail.

Vice Chairman commented there is one trail the Sub-Committee has been asking them to do, and now they have an opportunity to do it and work with the rest of the Stewardship Plan moving forward, e.g., installing gates, etc. He suggested the priority would be to have them work on that one first. He believes it to be the preference of the Sub-Committee to work with a trail that is needed before a trail that is wanted.

Commissioner Boisvert spoke of having been made aware the walk at Grater Woods over the weekend went well. There were 12 that attended almost all of whom were there for the first time.

Commissioner Boisvert spoke of a backpacking class taking place on Saturday, May 21st at 10:00 a.m. at the Function Hall at Wasserman Park. Registration can be done through the Parks and Recreation Department. Half of the class is learning how to backpack and what to pack and the other half covers the rewards of backpacking.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION BY COMMISSIONER GLENN TO ADJOURN
MOTION SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER PERRY
MOTION CARRIED
7-0-0

The May 16, 2016 special meeting of the Merrimack Conservation Commission was adjourned at 9:24 p.m.

Submitted by Dawn MacMillan