



# Town of Merrimack, New Hampshire

Community Development Department

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Planning - Zoning - Economic Development - Conservation

## MERRIMACK CONSERVATION COMMISSION

JANUARY 27, 2014

### MEETING MINUTES

A regular meeting of the Merrimack Conservation Commission was held on Monday, January 27, 2014, at 6:32 p.m. in the Matthew Thornton Room.

Chairman Tim Tenhave presided:

Members of the Commission Present: Matt Caron, Vice Chairman  
Thomas Lehman  
Gage Perry  
Simon Thomson  
Councilor Thomas Mahon

Members of the Commission Absent: Ron Davies  
Robert Croatti, Alternate  
Lauren Kras, Alternate

Also in Attendance: James N. Petropulos, P.E., Hayner/Swanson, Inc.

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Chairman Tenhave informed the public of a Site Walk conducted by the Planning Board the prior Saturday, which four (4) members of the Commission participated in. He noted no Commission business was transacted during that time.

Chairman Tenhave informed the Commission and the public Item #2 under Statutory/Advisory Business has been postponed until the Commission's March meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT - None

APPOINTMENTS - None

### STATUTORY/ADVISORY BUSINESS

#### **1. Home Health & Hospice Care and Fredrick L. Grubbs (applicants/owners)**

Review for recommendation to the Planning Board of an application for a site plan proposing to construct a 26-space parking lot with related site improvements. The parcel is located at 210 Naticook Road in the R (Residential) and Aquifer Conservation Districts. Tax Map 2B, Lot 324-2-1.

James N. Petropulos, P.E., Hayner/Swanson, Inc., informed the Commission, about ten years ago, zoning relief was received to locate the hospice facility in amongst some back land of a residentially zoned area. The abutters are residences along Naticook Road as well as a few on Christina Road. The current facility is comprised of ten units and an administrative area. Access is from an approximate 25' wide driveway which leads in between homes from Naticook into a tear shaped one-way drop off area and parking for both staff and visitors (about 17 spaces). A stormwater basin accepts flow from the paved parking lot.

During certain time periods throughout the year the facility experiences issues with parking. Not wishing to disrupt the serenity of the entrance or introduce parking in the back of the property (where land is lower), they have worked with the property owners of Lot 353 and have the opportunity to purchase about 10,000 sq. ft. of the back lot in order to construct a 26-space parking lot.

Lot 353 would remain a conforming lot. Proposed is a simple dead-end parking lot (13 spaces on each side). There would be a 6' cedar stockade fence located on the north side of the parking lot. The property has sandy soils. The intent is to reintroduce new water into the basin. An as built survey and calculations of the basin have been completed, and identify the basin was oversized as part of the existing facility. There has never been a history of stormwater problems in the area. Runoff outlets in the southeasterly direction to a small wetland, which crosses Continental Boulevard in a culvert and makes it way south into Pennichuck Brook. Chairman Tenhave noted it crosses through Commission property.

There is no storage of any unique materials inside of the facility. When asked, Mr. Petropulos stated it is believed the area can be maintained through close plowing and sand. When asked, Mr. Petropulos stated he is familiar with the University of New Hampshire (UNH) Green SnowPro Training and Certification program. He spoke of a prior application for which the Planning Board put in place, as a condition of approval, a requirement for the facilities staff within the company in question to partake in such training. Commissioner Lehman spoke of recent legislation, RSA 489-C, which reduces liability protection for certified applicators. Mr. Petropulos stated he would pass the information on to Home, Health & Hospice.

When asked, he stated the basin would not be changed. There is parking and curbing in the area, but not a whole lot of re-grading in the basin itself. The volume that currently exists is not being altered at all. Chairman Tenhave noted the plans indicate the addition of a new pipe off the proposed parking lot. Mr. Petropulos stated the area would be curbed and a small headwall would be put in place so that runoff is captured in a catch basin.

When asked about new plantings, Mr. Petropulos stated there would be a few trees along the southerly edge of the parking lot. A small 5' shoulder would be planted with lower shrubbery to soften the view. Fencing will remain and be maintained.

The consensus of the Commission was for a communication to be forwarded to the Planning Board mentioning the UNH Green SnowPro Training and Certification Program.

2. **KJB Ventures, LLC. (applicant/owner)** – Review for recommendation to the Planning Board of an application for site plan review to construct a proposed one-story, multi-tenant 8,060 sq. ft. professional office (Medical) and retail commercial building. The parcel is located at 4 Dobson Way in the C-2 (General Commercial) and Aquifer Conservation Districts. Tax Map 3D, Lot 003-03.

***Postponed until March meeting.***

OLD BUSINESS - None

NEW BUSINESS

1. **Discussion of Grater Woods Signage and related projects**

Commission to discuss various ways to construct signs for Grater Woods and potentially authorize expending funds to get the signs in place early this year.

Vice Chairman Caron stated the issue of consistent signage has been discussed for over a year. The desire is for the smaller more recognizable trail markers to be more consistent throughout the different properties. In particular, Grater Woods has a trail system where certain uses are allowed/disallowed on particular trails. He suggested the Commission determine the type of signage to be used on its properties and place an order so that sub-committees could begin posting during the winter months.

Vice Chairman Caron spoke of online research he has conducted with Voss Signs, which is the supplier the Commission has used previously. Unfortunately a great deal of their standard signage has changed. Custom signage can be considered. When making a custom sign it becomes cost prohibitive, e.g., a 7" x 10" sign with the wording "Snowmobiles Prohibited" absent of any photo is \$7.29 ea. A custom sign including the wording, and a photo with a cross through it, is priced at \$21.50/ea.

Vice Chairman Caron spoke of visiting a local sign shop that constructed signs out of aluminum pieces with a foam core. The materials allow for the core to compress and push the sign out as the tree grows and prevents it from becoming embedded in the tree. He provided examples for the Commission to view. The business has since closed. However, the owner introduced him to Classic Signs, Inc. out of Amherst, NH.

Commissioner Thomson questioned the types of signage being sought, and was informed the priority for the Grater Woods Sub-Committee is signage noting areas of "wheeled vehicles prohibited".

Vice Chairman Caron remarked costs increase when utilizing pictures on signs. He suggested a sign could simply state "Motorized Vehicles Prohibited" and the trails could be signed in areas where there are no motorized vehicles allowed. That would satisfy that category. Utilizing yellow signage would provide for high visibility in the majority of seasons. When asked, he noted the recommendation was not to change the green sign posts located at the HHNP and Grater Woods, but to add to them. One of the solutions for adding to that is on the trail. Within the Grater Woods Stewardship Plan (Plan) are proposed colors and shapes for each trail type. In addition, if choosing to utilize the aluminum signs, the name of the trail could be written with permanent marker. The signs also come in a rip free vinyl, which he believes weathers better than the aluminum and is also consistent with some of the existing signage at the HHNP. The material would be purchased in rolls and Classic Signs could cut it into the desired shapes.

Commissioner Lehman questioned whether signage should delineate trail class, and stated his opinion most users would not understand the difference between the trail categories. He suggested a small sign with a photo with a line going across it would more clearly identify the undesired/prohibited activity. Vice Chairman Caron noted the Plan identifies that trails will be marked in a certain way and that information is displayed in the kiosks. If that is no longer the desire, there is a need to change the Plan. If the desire remains, it is necessary to order the appropriate materials and follow through with marking the trails. Commissioner Lehman commented he believed the Plan could be adapted over time as needed.

Vice Chairman Caron remarked, at minimum, it is necessary to move forward with identifying prohibited activities and complete the installation of the arrow signage. Arrow signs have been posted at the HHNP, need to be completed at Grater Woods, and posts are necessary for Wildcat Falls. Commissioner Thomson commented it is a good discussion to have, and he will encourage sub-committee members to review the Commission's discussion. Understanding sub-committee members are not fans of posts for that property (wish for something smaller) he has left up to them the direction they wish to head in.

Commissioner Perry stated he would be inclined to make it known that is how the Commission marks its trails. Vice Chairman Caron remarked the posts at the HHNP are dimensional lumber 4x4s. When you buy a 4x4 post you are getting a 3.5x3.5 post. Vice Chairman Caron noted there would be 4-5 posts and he would urge the sub-committee to utilize the signs/posts.

Vice Chairman Caron stated there to be available some signage for "Motorized Wheeled Vehicles Prohibited", which has been utilized at the HHNP (off of Naticook Road under power lines). They are white with a red border. He remarked having the wording on the yellow backer would be a good deal more recognizable. Commissioner Lehman suggested signage that simply displays a photo with a line going through it. He believes the same results can be achieved with a simple photo as opposed to wording. He remarked the desired effect is to identify allowable uses and location.

Chairman Tenhave echoed the desire is for signage that articulates prohibited uses and designate trails. Commissioner Lehman stated his agreement. He did not believe it necessary, at this time, to identify the category of the trail. He suggested numbers could be placed on signage along the trail and used with an online map to identify location. Vice Chairman Caron commented he is not aware that people are getting lost at Grater Woods at this point; however, believes having markers along the trail would be very helpful. He remarked there are long-time users of the trails that are used to going in a particular direction abandoning the actual direction of the trail. If the trails are clearly marked, users are more likely to follow them. He reiterated what is stated in the Plan should be consistently followed.

Commissioner Perry questioned whether colors and shapes were incorporated into the Plan, and was informed they were. Commissioner Lehman reiterated the Plan can be amended/adapted if a more appropriate approach is identified. He commented during the process of creation of the Plan it was continually noted amendments could be made. Chairman Tenhave remarked, at this time, no one has suggested a better approach for which the majority of the Commission is in agreement with; therefore, he is of the opinion the Commission should move forward in accordance with the Plan:

**Category A – All Users** - Designated with Yellow Rectangular markers

**Category B – Walking Trails** - (non-motorized) Designated with Light Blue Triangular markers

**Category C – Special Use** - (non-motorized) Designated with Red Circular markers  
**Category D – Special Use** – (motorized) Designated with Orange Square markers

Commissioner Thomson commented, as a user, he is unlikely to view the online map; however, if the kiosks provide colored maps indicating the category and trail markers he would find that useful. Vice Chairman Caron stated a desire to utilize the same markers at the HHNP (on small stakes). It was suggested small white markers (arrows) should be the standard used to identify loop trails.

The smaller markers would be colored shapes and signage identifying prohibited uses; generalized wording, e.g., “motorized vehicles prohibited” to limit the number of signs required. Another example would be “motorized wheeled vehicles prohibited” identifying the use of snowmobiles is allowed.

Chairman Tenhave reminded the Commission, if the anticipated cost will not exceed \$3,500 the purchasing policy does not require a formal posting of a Request for Proposal. There is the need for the Purchasing Agent to request quotes from various companies in the area.

The consensus of the Commission was for quotes to be requested on price points (up to 1,000 ea.) for 4x4 yellow rectangular, light blue triangular, red circular, orange square and white square markers as well as signage with the following wording: “Motorized Vehicles Prohibited”, “Motorized Wheeled Vehicles Prohibited”, and “Private Property Beyond This Point”. The preferred material is reflective (yellow) aluminum with foam core. Vendors should be requested to provide additional options if cost savings could be achieved through alternative sizing and/or material(s), e.g., standard stock.

Commissioner Lehman commented D Trails are generally intended to be of a size where a large vehicle could not travel on it, which would eliminate the need for particular signage indicating prohibited uses. Commissioner Perry agreed the largest issue desired to be addressed at this time is motorized vehicles on non-motorized trails. The type of wording for signage on the other two trails could be considered further at a later date.

## **2. Annual Seedling Giveaway**

Commission to discuss and authorize the purchase of seedlings for our annual seedling giveaway purchased through the State Nursery (<http://www.nhnursery.com/uploads/Spring2014%20Seedling%20Catalog.pdf>).

Commissioner Perry informed the Commission options are getting slim and the winter survival package is no longer an option. As there is not the ability to mix and match, an option for consideration is going with another standard package (wetlands package). They will all be native species, and should there become a need for a substitution, it would be with another native species. Pricing remains the same. The wetlands package contains Arrowwood, Black Chokeberry, Silky Dogwood, Wetlands Rose and Winterberry Holly.

Commissioner Perry remarked the Blue Spruce and Black Walnut are the two trees recommended as a means of providing a hardwood. Last year was all fir. Last year’s growing season was not as grand as hoped. As a result, some of the trees are a little younger this year, e.g., can only get a 1 year tree in Walnut, etc. The cost is slightly higher than that expended last year (\$320.00 for approx. 400 plants).

Commissioner Perry informed the Commission Eber Currier has volunteered to conduct the seedling giveaway and allow use of his facility.

**MOTION BY COMMISSIONER THOMSON TO APPROVE THE PROPOSAL FOR THE 2013/2014 SEEDLING GIVEAWAY AS AMENDED TO IDENTIFY PURCHASE OF THE NATIVE SPECIES PACKAGE, WETLANDS PACKAGE, BLUE SPRUCE, AND BLACK WALNUT**  
**MOTION SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER CARON**  
**MOTION CARRIED**  
**6-0-0**

## OTHER BUSINESS

Items of note include:

Winter Carnival, Saturday: February 22, 2014 Noon – 3:00 p.m.

Chairman Tenhave informed the Commission of official notification received for the Winter Carnival. Vice Chairman Caron and Commissioner Perry volunteered to set up a table. Sub-committee members will be queried on their interest in participation.

- Review of the annual visit with the Town Council on 1/9/2014

Chairman Tenhave stated his opinion the presentation went well. Good responses were received from and gratitude expressed by the Council.

Councilor Mahon reiterated the Council is pleased with the progress and level of activity the Commissioner has undertaken over the past year.

- Right-To-Know Training Reminder

Commissioners were reminded of upcoming training.

- Thank You card for Charlie Hamilton (resigned from HHNP Sub-Committee)

A card was passed around for signature.

- Chairman's Upcoming informal meeting with Matt Casparius (new Parks & Recreation Director)

Chairman Tenhave informed the Commission of an informal meeting he has scheduled for Friday, January 31, 2014 with the new Parks & Recreation Director.

The Commission was informed of receipt of an invoice from the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests. There being no objection, the invoice will be processed.

Chairman Tenhave noted PSNH has applied to NHDES to start work on clearing along their transmission system. Commissioner Perry questioned whether PSNH might be amenable to allowing students to witness such a clearing project. Chairman Tenhave remarked it has been 5-10 years since the Gilmore Hill Memorial Forest had a clearing project performed. He stated his belief the intent is for that area to be cleared every 10 years, and suggested that might be an educational opportunity.

Another communication received was from the New Hampshire Association of Nature Resource Scientists inviting conservation commissions to become members (\$20 cost).

The Berry Conservation 4H Camp is looking to see if the Commission might be willing to sponsor scholarships to their camp. It was noted that exact line item was removed from the budget; however, that does not preclude the Commission from expending some of its funds for that purpose. Chairman Tenhave stated his impression the group is looking for bodies to provide scholarship monies for them to disseminate. He suggested it might be useful for the group to provide information on individuals wish to utilize such scholarship funding.

Chairman Tenhave noted receipt of the latest version of Town & City.

PRESENTATION OF THE MINUTES

Merrimack Conservation Commission. . . . . January 6, 2014

*The following amendments were offered:*

- Page 4, Line 31; replace the word "this" with the word "that"
- Page 4, Line 29; replace the words "younger trees" with the words "older seedlings"

**MOTION BY COMMISSIONER LEHMAN TO ACCEPT AS AMENDED  
MOTION SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER CARON  
MOTION CARRIED**

**5-0-1**

*Commissioner Thomson Abstained*

PUBLIC COMMENT - None

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Perry spoke of e-mails received from the Nashua Regional Planning Commission (NRPC) referencing the scheduling of an environmental engineering class on green buildings. He spoke of green initiatives working their way into buildings and building code, and commented it is something the Commission will be effected by eventually.

Chairman Tenhave noted the Commission's next agenda would include discussion and creation of a template for use in forestry plans as well as a draft Request for Proposal (RFP) to address beaver.

He stated he would contact Bay State to identify the last time activity occurred at Gilmore Hill, and what the commitment was regarding a maintenance schedule.

Chairman Tenhave reminded the Commission and public there will be only one meeting of the Commission in February; February 10<sup>th</sup>. Councilor Mahon noted he would not be able to be in attendance.

ADJOURNMENT

**MOTION BY COMMISSIONER PERRY TO ADJOURN**

**MOTION SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER CARON**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**6-0-0**

*The January 27, 2014 meeting of the Merrimack Conservation Commission was adjourned at 8:14 p.m.*

Submitted by Dawn MacMillan