



Town of Merrimack, New Hampshire

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Planning - Zoning - Economic Development - Conservation

MERRIMACK CONSERVATION COMMISSION NOVEMBER 15, 2021 MEETING MINUTES

A meeting of the Merrimack Conservation Commission was held on Monday, November 15, 2021, at 6:30 p.m. in the Merrimack Memorial Conference Room.

Steven Perkins, Chair, presided:

Members of the Commission Present: Michael Boisvert, Vice Chair
Gina Rosati, Secretary
Cynthia Glenn
Michael Drouin, Alternate Member
Ellen Kolb, Alternate Member
Councilor Andy Hunter

Members of the Commission Absent: Gage Perry
Eric Starr

Also Participating: Emma Rearick, Regional Planner II, NRPC

Chair Perkins designated Commissioner Kolb to sit in for Commissioner Perry and Commissioner Drouin for Commissioner Starr.

PUBLIC COMMENT - None

PUBLIC HEARINGS - None

APPOINTMENTS - None

STATUTORY/ADVISORY BUSINESS - None

NEW BUSINESS

- Discuss process to update the Lower Merrimack River Corridor Management Plan

Emma Rearick, Regional Planner II, Nashua Regional Planning Commission (NRPC), provided a PowerPoint presentation (copy attached).

The Merrimack River is a designated river meaning it has a local advisory committee; Lower Merrimack River Local Advisory Committee (LMRLAC). With that committee comes a designated

corridor plan, which is being updated. Ms. Rearick wished to provide the Commission information on that plan and obtain feedback.

The area discussed was the stretch of the Merrimack River starting at the northern border of Merrimack and running down to the Massachusetts border (corridor is a quarter mile on either side of the river).

The existing plan was completed in May of 2008. It was prepared by the NRPC on behalf of the LMRLAC. The plan is a coordinated effort to protect and manage the corridor. It is structured according to RSA [483:10](#). The plan currently includes corridor resources, assessment, and recommended actions to keep the corridor in a good state.

Asked about the Commission's familiarity with the plan, Vice Chair Boisvert noted he has reviewed the plan previously and is looking for input or advice as the Commission has riverfront property it manages.

Ms. Rearick responded she has come across a few individuals who are familiar with the plan, but for the most part it seems it is not something that is widely used. The plan is being updated at this time given its age and federal funding in the form of the Source Water Protection Grant provided through the NHDES. That grant has a drinking water focus, which is relevant in this case because Pennichuck pulls water from the Merrimack River to use as drinking water. They changed their infrastructure so that they can pull from the Merrimack River year round. They are still mixing it with water from the Pennichuck Pond.

The grant agreement is through the end of May. There is the need to have things updated and reviewed by NHDES by that time.

LMRLAC has a steering committee that is providing the NRPC with feedback and guidance. Input is sought from conservation commissions. Ms. Rearick has visited commissions in Nashua, Hudson, Litchfield, and now Merrimack to make them aware the plan is being updated. The data in the plan will be updated, e.g., land use, population. They will collaborate with municipal staff on watershed audits of the towns and hope to conduct an online survey of the public to ask how and if they access the river.

She questioned any major changes that may have occurred since 2008 noting she is aware of a lot of the things that have happened in or near the corridor such as the change to the infrastructure of Pennichuck Water Works a dam removed on the Souhegan River, contaminants that have been found, and population changes. She questioned if there are other plans or people that are relevant to this plan.

Vice Chair Boisvert questioned if the NRPC and/or the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests (Society) are aware the Commission is trying to gain access and develop a property on the river called the Sklar Waterfront Park. He suggested the organizations could help.

Ms. Rearick stated she visited the park the prior day. Asked what sort of assistance the Commission would be interested in, Vice Chair Boisvert suggested an ongoing relationship. He is aware the Society put out a video on the Merrimack River. As a Town, we are separated from the river by the railroad, and the Sklar property is one of the only points where we can access the river.

Commissioner Kolb questioned if the NRPC has been in contact with any of the volunteers from the Souhegan River Local Advisory Committee (SRLAC) and was told she has not. She spoke of having a peripheral role in that she collects water samples for them. George May, member SRLAC, in particular, has been following what has been occurring with the river over time. Upstream of

Merrimack there has been a lot of Riprap put along the river that came as a surprise to some of the abutters. That may have changed some water quality. They might have some observations of what has happened over time that might be of interest. Ms. Rearick commented on her belief George May is on the LMRLAC and that she has spoken with him, but not about that specifically.

Commissioner Drouin remarked some plants spread their seeds through water, and if there are invasives on the river they will spread down river especially to the Sklar property as its topography is mostly flat and it floods when the river rises. He questioned if the NRPC has any plans to address that. Ms. Rearick responded the plan is a document describing what is occurring and some actions to take. The current plan talks about plants and animals in the area and potential issues. She will have to look to see if that is covered specifically.

Commissioner Drouin reiterated with the topography of the Sklar property, there is concern with erosion.

Commissioner Rosati questioned if there is concern with the commuter rail having impact on the river. Ms. Rearick stated some of the members of LMRLAC brought that up and were concerned about the potential pollution. It is on her radar. Vice Chair Boisvert questioned the potential for funding for improved access because of the railroad expansion. That would be useful for the Sklar property. Ms. Rearick was uncertain. Commissioner Kolb spoke of the desire for more people to take an interest in it as it will take multiple sources to cooperate to improve access to the Sklar property and will have to involve the rail. The more local groups appreciate the need to access that recreational area, the better.

Asked for a brief history of the Sklar Waterfront Park, Vice Chair Boisvert stated the Commission was interested in purchasing the property some 15 years ago. It was owned by a realtor by the name of Sklar. An offer was made but not accepted. After Ms. Sklar passed away, her sons were looking to have the property serve as a memory of their parents by selling it to the Commission. The sale occurred about 4 years ago.

Ms. Rearick spoke of development that has occurred in Merrimack and asked if there are any areas that come to mind that are close to the river or tributaries. Commissioner Rosati spoke of the Flatley property. There is property being developed that is in the zone where there is PFOA contamination. They have been asked to provide the Commission a plan on how they are addressing the material. One of the concerns was with Dumpling Brook, which dumps into the river. Flatley has a series of developments.

Asked what the NRPC would like to see from the Commission, Ms. Rearick responded offering feedback to help ensure they have a comprehensive view of what is occurring in the corridor is helpful. She had received some feedback that simplifying the plan would be helpful. It is an update so the structure will remain but simplifying it and making some things more straightforward would be helpful so that organizations can utilize the plan. It can be a helpful document when considering land purchases or reviewing developments happening within the corridor or even knowing that LMRLAC should take a look at a development. They are an advisory committee. They would like the document to be utilized and help individuals/groups focus on the river as an asset.

Ms. Rearick stated her intent to have drafts of the first 3 chapters of the plan completed to bring to LMRLAC at the end of January for review and feedback. She offered to send an invitation for the presentation and commented she should be able to provide copies of the drafts via email if there is an interest in reading and commenting. The plan is to have the final draft done in the April timeframe to

provide to NHDES for review and hopefully approval prior to the May deadline. Chair Perkins stated the desire for the Commission to be provided with copies of the draft.

- Possible subdivision of lot on 69 Bean Road

Chair Perkins noted the item was on last month's agenda and postponed as the property owner was unable to attend. The individual was not in attendance for this meeting either. The expectation was that the Commission would receive input from the property owner and perhaps schedule a non-public session to discuss a potential purchase. Chair Perkins will follow up with the property owner.

- Proposal to remove trees on Sklar

Chair Perkins stated there to be two separate issues. There is the portion of the property (triangular piece) located on Commission property and the request by the Flying Eagles for approval to remove trees. The second issue is a request that was put before the Town Council. Councilor Hunter stated he reviewed the Town Council meeting and believes there to be an action to appear before the Town Council after obtaining input from the Public Works Department (PWD). He is of the belief the Town Council tabled the matter until their meeting on Thursday.

Chair Perkins commented historically the Commission would discuss the issue. He would look to Councilor Hunter to represent the opinion of the Commission at the Town Council meeting. Councilor Hunter stated his impression the Town Council is looking for feedback from the Commission that it is acceptable to removal of the trees on Commission property.

Bob Frigo, Member, Southern New Hampshire Flying Eagles, stated the group met with the Town Council the prior week, and he was before the Commission to provide information on who they are, what they do, and request approval for removal of some trees.

The club was organized in 1988 and has operated on the land that was previously the Patterson Construction property. The Town later acquired the property. They are a member of the American Academy of Model Aeronautics and are subject to the rules of the Federal Aviation Administration. Currently they have a roster of about 65 members that include engineers, pilots, CPAs, tradespeople, etc. Membership is open to anyone having an interest in this particular hobby.

The AMA is an interface between the group and the FAA. Going back to about 2015-2016, the FAA started to reevaluate airspace. There are companies like Amazon and Walmart who, in the future, want to deliver packages by drone. That will make airspace more crowded and why the FAA got involved. The Flying Eagles operate what are called unmanned aircraft systems. A drone, which most people associated with what they call a quad copter, meaning it has four propellers and lifts up vertically. The Flying Eagles fly airplanes; fixed wing aircraft.

With the FAA coming out with changes in the regulations, the AMA was instrumental in carving out this particular hobby and how well it is controlled so that they did not get over-regulated or caught up in what is really commercial airline information. Under the rules of the FAA, all UAS pilots have to be registered with the FAA. All model aircraft have to carry the registration number. They are restricted in size; under 55 pounds. Clubs recognized by the FAA must comply with the rules of a Community Based Organization (CBO) such as the AMA. Aircraft must operate in designated areas and within specified altitude limits (400' and a 400 yard radius). Pilots must comply with all FAA flight regulations.

Mr. Frigo spoke of the club's appreciation for the property it is allowed to utilize and how they give back to the community. They have developed and maintained the Drobysh-Patterson Field, support the 4th of July parade, participate in Commission cleanups, raise funds for WWII Veterans "Honor Flights", support Boys Scouts' interest in aviation, and have supported the Winter Carnival and Toys for Tots.

In 1988, the field was an open sandy space. In the intervening 34 years, numerous trees have grown on all four sides of the field, significantly decreasing operating space and creating serious hazards to the aircraft. The club is seeking permission to restore the field to its original open boundaries. The effort to accomplish this would be borne by the club.

Photos were displayed of prior and existing conditions. Upon takeoff, the planes are above the trees and depth perception becomes an important issue. If you cannot see where your plane is or judge the trees, you will lose it. Mr. Frigo commented on the improvements the club has made to the property. Looking north from the south end of the field you can see the end of the runway and the trees on the west side, east side, and north end. Looking at the north end there are a few tall trees. He noted a particular tree the club is looking to remove. On the south end of the field is where they would like to cut a notch. The issue is the approach; from the south end of the field their approach is above the trees and quickly over the dirt road and end of runway. They throttle back and cut their engines, but gravity causes the plane to pick up speed as it comes down after clearing the trees and they end up overshooting the runway.

Mr. Frigo explained what the proposed project would entail:

- A select number of tall trees at the north end of the field would be felled to improve the landing approach.
- Trees along the eastern edge (mostly less than 6" in diameter) would be felled, cut into log length, and reduced to firewood or used as border edging. The branches would be either chipped into mulch or burned.
- Tree stumps would cut close to the ground and left for soil retention.
- A notch would be cut at the south end of the field to provide a landing approach from the south to help eliminate overshooting the runway.
- Natural vegetation will continue to grow on the property and provide for soil retention.
- A professional tree service would be employed to fell the larger pine trees.
- The project would be done over 2-3 years as Club resources allow.

Mr. Frigo noted the photo shows Patterson Field at the top and the loop used to bring in trucks. From that loop down to the road at the bottom was once open. They would like to open it up and reclaim it. In addition to that space is the notch that lines up with the runway.

Vice Chair Boisvert noted the notch to the south has been cut. Mr. Frigo stated to the best of his knowledge that is not completely open as of yet. Vice Chair Boisvert stated it is cut now. Mr. Frigo was unaware. Chair Perkins spoke of having visited the site on Saturday and noted a lot of cut trees. Asked if it is known who did the cutting, he commented on how the trees that were cut were the ones that were marked.

Vice Chair Boisvert was uncertain of what occurred; however noted there remain trees with paint on them. He suggested, particularly on Commission land, that flagging be used to identify trees to be cut. Mr. Frigo stated the club had spoken with Commissioner Drouin several months ago and he had requested they mark the trees they wished to cut. Commissioner Drouin stated he should have specified how the markings should have been done.

Vice Chair Boisvert commented there is no input needed on that area any longer as those trees are down. There are some 4-5 marked trees remaining. He suggested no additional cutting be allowed. Mr. Frigo asked for clarification on the area of interest of the Town Council and that of the Commission. Vice Chair Boisvert stated the area of the Commission is that referred to as the notch.

Speaking as an individual member of the Commission, Vice Chair Boisvert stated he did not have too many concerns to the north towards the Patterson property. He would like to see the area to the east, towards the river, reduced for a variety of reasons, e.g., aesthetics, 100-year flood, possible routes that could result in ATV use. He would like to see the Town involved in each step and the removal of the trees done in a manner that reflects that it is adjacent to a conservation area and that it remains a healthy forest for regrowth.

Mr. Frigo stated the desire not to increase the amount of mowing required. There is a lot of natural vegetation. Along the fence area, they have cut in the spring and allowed it to grow through the summer and fall. If they come in too hard from the north and overshoot the landing it does not hurt the aircraft to run into the weeds. They use that area as a buffer. They are not interested in clearcutting and putting more grass in because some of the vegetation is helpful. The problem is visibility once they get airborne. If they could back the trees up to where they are already on a lower glide path, it is not an issue (basically the north side of Naticook Brook).

Councilor Hunter asked for clarification, on the east side (line that parallels the road) they would like to see a line of trees left there. Vice Chair Boisvert clarified the east side paralleling the Merrimack River (in the trapezoid), they would like to see it come over.

Mr. Frigo stated he would ask a modification if that turned out to be the case; for them, the issue is the tall pines along that line. He questioned if Vice Chair Boisvert would be agreeable if they were to leave the smaller trees but take down the tall pines. Vice Chair Boisvert responded it would depend on where the pines were; however, noted that would be a decision for the Town Council, regardless. Mr. Frigo pointed out 4-5 tall pines that are an issue. Vice Chair Boisvert stated he personally does not see a problem with half a dozen tall pines. He is supportive of the club, but has concern that once the trees are gone, they are gone for a long time. He wants to ensure the project is done properly.

Mr. Frigo stated they could leave the smaller trees and just take out the obstructions, if possible. Asked about the number of trees, he stated that to be the problem; in the eastern space he would guess there are 200 trees in the trapezoid as they are very small. Providing a count is difficult.

Councilor Hunter stated his belief some members of the Council want the PWD to be involved to ensure the project is completed as determined by the Town. He will relay the concern noted to the Council.

Commissioner Drouin spoke of his understanding the Town Council has asked the Commission to weigh in. He is assuming the project would not impact inside of the buffer of Naticook Brook as there are no tall trees there. Mr. Frigo noted the 1 tall tree at the north end of the field. Commissioner Drouin remarked, in the notch, while several trees were cut, no one knows who did it, and in this country, you are innocent until

proven guilty. There remain several trees the club is looking to cut. He can see that would be beneficial to the club. He personally does not want airplanes divebombing the parking lot. Removal of those trees would increase safety.

Asked if the club would be interested in assisting with the removal of Bittersweet, Mr. Frigo responded the club would do whatever is asked. Commissioner Drouin suggested some of the trees are of value and if the club sees it as a fair exchange, it would be helpful to the Commission. Mr. Frigo questioned how one clears Bittersweet. Commissioner Drouin was uncertain. He believes ridding the area of the invasive would result in trees being saved. Mr. Frigo stated he would go back to the club to determine what resources they have but would need help in terms of the best method.

Vice Chair Boisvert questioned if the Commission has to vote on whether to leave the notch in its current condition (15-20 trees have been cut) or allow the club to cut another half dozen or so trees towards the southern edge of the notch. He personally believes enough trees have already been taken down.

Asked about timeframe, Mr. Frigo stated most of the work would be done in the winter months. Summer months pose two issues; quick growing vegetation and the desire to use that time of year for flights. Commissioner Rosati spoke of nesting season, which will start around March.

Vice Chair Boisvert asked for clarification the project would be completed by individuals utilizing chainsaws and cutting the trees low. There would be no skidding or road put in for skidding. Mr. Frigo stated there would be no roads cut in. He commented on how the Town placed stones to block roads that were being utilized by ATVs and suggested the tall pines could be dropped and serve as permanent barriers.

Commissioner Kolb stated she would defer to the subcommittee on a lot of issues. She went down to the property the prior Saturday. If the trees have gone down in the notch, it must be recent. She can understand wanting to clear and she is inclined to favor clearing the notch but would defer to the subcommittee on specific trees. To her it is a safety issue.

Commissioner Glenn stated agreement with Vice Chair Boisvert in regard to removing the tall pines, depending on timing, and particularly if they could be used to block potential ATV trails. She is concerned about who cut the trees in the notch area and would want to wait to do anything until understanding who that was.

Commissioner Drouin commented there have been other trees cut across the property and it is not known who did the cutting. We are not trying to find out given we have no cameras. The trees were marked. The sub-committee has not been heard from and they have instructions to cut marked and hazardous trees. His first thought is to assume one of them did it. He will find out.

Commissioner Kolb stated appreciation for the information provided commenting people going in and pirating the trees is not good for any of us.

Mr. Frigo stated the club has motion sensitive cameras on the field. They have not had any mischief on the field of a destructive nature.

Commissioner Drouin commented he believes it more difficult with the trees in place especially for the elderly. The elderly don't have a lot to do around Town. That is another reason he would like to support this.

MOTION BY COMMISSIONER DROUIN TO ALLOW THE SKLAR WATERFRONT PARK SUB-COMMITTEE TO DECIDE WHAT TREES CAN BE CUT IN THE NOTCH AREA

The motion did not receive a second.

Commissioner Rosati stated the trees were marked. Commissioner Drouin clarified he would like the sub-committee to decide what remaining trees should come down.

Commissioner Rosati stated concern that the Commission does not know who took down the trees in the notch. She wants to understand who took them down and who provided permission for that to occur. Commissioner Drouin commented we may not ever find out. Vice Chair Boisvert reiterated most of the trees in the notch are down. Chair Perkins remarked that is the one thing the Commission worries about when allowing some trees to be removed.

Chair Perkins stated his impression, the consensus, in terms of the northern/trapezoid parcel, is that there is no significant objection. There is the desire for a semblance of a boundary around the eastern border as that is the road that protects it. The Commission would be elated if the PWD participates in that process.

Mr. Frigo questioned if it is the request of the Commission for the club to contact the PWD. Councilor Hunter stated his belief the Town Manager will manage the details of how involved the PWD will be.

Councilor Hunter questioned where the Commission stands on the notch. If there are 3-6 remaining trees the club would like to take down, where does the Commission stand on that?

Commissioner Kolb clarified her confidence is based on the fact that there is a sub-committee that consists of 6-7 individuals.

Commissioner Rosati spoke of being uncomfortable with there being trees down and there not being an awareness of that. Vice Chair Boisvert negotiated the purchase of the property. He knows the rules of the property and she feels more comfortable if he is down there keeping an eye on what trees are down rather than Commissioner Drouin simply stating he does not know who took the trees down and “innocent until proven guilty in this country”. She does not want the sub-committee to be on the property deciding a tree is in the way and take it down. She would like to see Vice Chair Boisvert and Commissioner Drouin work together more so they each know what the other is doing.

Chair Perkins commented he visited the area on Saturday; the notch did not look great. Vice Chair Boisvert remarked it happens to be right where the trailheads and parking are. That will be the first thing people see when they drive into Sklar. Commissioner Rosati remarked when they were there for the Hike Club walk, mention was made that the kiosk would move. A Boy Scout put that kiosk in and put a lot of work into that. She does not think anything should be done to upset the integrity of the kiosk. If moving it, it needs to be done very carefully so that it looks exactly the same.

Commissioner Drouin stated they were talking about removing some of the trees behind it and adding a second side to it. Vice Chair Boisvert commented instead of moving the kiosk they would have postings on both sides. The sub-committee desires expanding the parking lot. He is not in favor of moving the kiosk.

Asked if he has a recommendation, Vice Chair Boisvert stated he would suggest 1 additional tree be selected for removal. The rest should remain.

Commissioner Drouin reiterated his desire for the Bittersweet to be removed. Commissioner Glenn stated it could be cleaned up, but it is an ongoing project. Vice Chair Boisvert stated it to be an unsurmountable problem. If we have an opportunity to rid the area of some of it, he is agreeable, but it is not something that should be the center of our attention and efforts right now at Sklar. Commissioner Drouin suggested the club be permitted to drop 1 tree and, after cleaning up the Bittersweet in the notch, they be permitted to remove a few more trees. He believes that to be a good compromise.

Commissioner Rosati remarked they will not take out all of the Bittersweet without our help. If they are going to work on that then we help them. Mr. Frigo asked, and was told, clearing the notch of Bittersweet would be an ongoing effort. Commissioner Rosati remarked if it gets to a certain level the Commission could have someone come in and treat it; however, that is a costly endeavor. Asked if there is a poison that kills it, Commissioner Rosati stated there is, but the question then becomes do we want to use toxic chemicals. Commissioner Glenn spoke of pulling it before it climbs the trees and taking it away. Commissioner Rosati was uncertain if it could be taken off the property or that it could be burned.

Commissioner Kolb remarked what she was hearing was that there is a request to clear the notch and news that the notch may have been cleared in part. She questioned if confirmation is needed before a decision is made. Chair Perkins remarked what was essential tonight was to discuss the trapezoid area to the north prior to the next Town Council meeting. Having done that, he suggested time be permitted for Commissioners to visit the site of the notch and look to identify who removed the trees.

Mr. Frigo stated he would discuss this with the club president as he was hearing of this for the first time. Vice Chair Boisvert spoke of appreciating the presentation.

Vice Chair Boisvert noted the Town Council will have our recommendations, and we are postponing a vote on the southern notch.

OLD BUSINESS

- Continued discussion about additional trail signage

Vice Chair Boisvert thanked Scott Simpson for providing approx. 11 trail signs for Grater Woods and spoke of the improvement the signs have made. Although the signs do not show up as well in the open areas of the Sklar Waterfront Park, in Grater Woods, they show up really well. Mr. Simpson has been asked to make 22 in total for Grater Woods. It is a time consuming project (4 coats of paint and lettering). Understanding the amount of time involved, Vice Chair Boisvert offered to have the Commission paint the lettering. When that project is completed, if there are additional requests, and Mr. Simpson is willing to continue making them, additional signs could be requested.

It was suggested that a decision be made in the next month or so regarding the large sign for the Sklar Waterfront Park and that the PWD be asked to provide one. Asked where the sign would be placed, Vice Chair Boisvert suggested near the kiosk.

Approximately half of the allotted \$500 has been expended. After completing the signs for Grater Woods, the supply of cedar will be depleted. If additional signs are requested more will be purchased with the remaining funds.

- LCIP annual review completion/submittal

Chair Perkins spoke of the walk that was taken at Wasserman. Invasives was the only notable item. The steps were plotted in an app. Commissioner Starr will complete the submittal. Commissioner Drouin will provide photographs.

- Re-visit Chapter 111 and what the potential next steps are

The update has been ongoing since 2017. The Chapter was written in 1995, and for the most part, has not been touched since. The Commission's proposal for updates was brought before the Town Council on May 27th. Desired is to expand the Chapter to include all 62 parcels.

Former Commissioner Tenhave has been working with Town counsel to draw up the legal language. The intent is to have proposed language by the end of the month. When presented to the Town Council, the proposal will have to go through 3 readings. There will likely be another opportunity for the Commission to appear before the Council.

Commissioner Drouin questioned if a meeting should be dedicated to this topic. Chair Perkins responded no roadblocks have been encountered, and the proposal is moving along as planned. Commissioner Drouin suggested, prior to the final presentation, that the Commission dedicate some time for review. Chair Perkins stated that could be done; however, the presentation was conducted on May 27th. That was the presentation that was discussed over many months, vetted, and put forth.

- Potential mat purchase for Sklar

Commissioner Drouin spoke of the prior discussion noting the Sklar Waterfront Park has a boat ramp that has been used for over 200 years. Currently it is very muddy; you cannot walk and put your kayak in, and vehicles get stuck almost every day and have to be pulled out. The area where the boats are put in is formed into a V as the activity pushes the dirt/mud back into the river and is creating erosion.

The proposed mat is a temporary measure (will not last more than a decade). It is one used for boat access all around the country and by the Navy. Crushed rock or other material would be placed under the mat. It would improve access to the river. The cost is minimal. The Town will have to address the more permanent solution. The mat can be rolled up in the winter months and stored.

Commissioner Kolb spoke of having visited Salisbury Beach to see the mat but was unable to find the material in use. She visited the boat ramp and saw how slick the area is. There is the need to make allowances if vehicles are going to be in the area. She would like to hear from others on the Commission if there is an awareness of other options.

Vice Chair Boisvert stated his belief it is a good idea provided the Town is agreeable to it. It is Town property and will have to be approved by the Town. He is not familiar with the product. We need a temporary solution in the area. He believes it will improve the area.

Councilor Hunter spoke of Wells, ME where you park and use a walkway to gain access to the beach. He asked if pick-up trucks and boats would be using the ramp and was told they would. The mat is said to manage that use. Councilor Hunter commented he is not familiar with the product. He questioned what would be done with the substrate. The mat is only part of the expense, and there is the need to identify the entirety of the project. He believes it to be a good plan and a good idea to improve the access if people are using it. He would not want to approve the purchase of the mat if only half of the expense is understood.

Commissioner Drouin had questioned and was informed nothing is required under the mat. Because of the condition of the ramp we would need to build the area up, e.g., crushed rock. He will seek a quote for that. Councilor Hunter questioned the equipment that can get into the area. Commissioner Drouin stated a lot of material is not needed and the PWD could be asked for input. The area was previously asphalt, which has washed away. The crushed stone that was beneath the pavement remains.

Asked if the mat would hold up to water level changes, Commissioner Drouin stated it holds up to ocean water and is secured by spikes. There are two types, light and heavy duty. Recommended is the light duty mat. Commissioner Kolb commented basically what is being looked at is an investment for a limited period of time. This will allow us to find out what will work for the next generation of conservation commissioners who come along. If we have to do something, this may be the way to go.

Commissioner Drouin stated the cost to be \$4,831.72 (\$3,999 for the light duty (10 x 50) mat and \$832 for shipping). The size of the area is 10 x 30'. Asked how the length would be adjusted, he stated it would run into the water (rest on bottom). Asked if that is the best practice, he stated it is. There is a shorter version, but it is around 20'. The cost of the heavy duty mat is \$6,682.30 (\$5,739 with \$943.30 for shipping). Both come with the spikes and staples (can choose which to use). Asked if he has had contact with the company and if there is a representative who could visit the site and make a recommendation, Commissioner Drouin stated he could look into that.

Commissioner Rosati stated the need to understand what is required for underlying material, how the mat and material will be brought onsite and placed as well as a total cost. Commissioner Drouin stated his belief the underlying material will cost less than the shipping cost. Commissioner Rosati stated the need for approval of the Town Council as this is their land. Councilor Hunter stated the proposal would have to be presented to the Town Council. He would be more than happy to support the endeavor. Commissioner Drouin volunteered to make the presentation.

Asked about delivery time and whether the mat needs to be installed in low water conditions, Commissioner Drouin was uncertain. He will gather the necessary information and look to be placed on an upcoming agenda for the Town Council. Following that, he will bring the proposal back before the Commission. Chair Perkins questioned the installation process and if the Commission could pay to have the company install the mat. He asked if there is a warranty provided, particularly if they install it. Commissioner Drouin stated they do not install. Councilor Hunter noted the information provided indicates it takes two people 15 minutes to install a 50' long boat ramp.

Chair Perkins asked about the timeline, whether there is a recommendation of substrate, and if a representative could visit. Commissioner Glenn commented on her belief the Town Council will likely ask if anyone else in the Town has been consulted. Commissioner Drouin believes he could get a representative here but is concerned with the timeframe associated with getting a representative here, taking the presentations to both the Town Council and the Commission, and the possibility there could be a backorder. Chair Perkins questioned what can be put into the river, e.g., crushed stone. Commissioner Kolb remarked the next step is to prepare something to be brought to the Town Council.

Chair Perkins reached out to the Fish & Game Commissioner for Hillsborough County and discussed what the Commission was looking to do. He requested the Commissioner visit the site to see if the boat ramp is something they could put on their list.

OTHER BUSINESS

- Subcommittee Updates

The Wildcat Falls Sub-committee will meet on January 11, 2022 at 6:30 p.m. in the Merrimack Memorial Conference Room.

The Sklar Waterfront Park Sub-committee has a workday scheduled for Sunday at 11:00 a.m.

PRESENTATION OF THE MINUTES

Merrimack Conservation Commission. [November 1, 2021](#)

The following amendments were offered:

Page 2, Line 12; replace “Commission” with “Sub-committee”

Page 3, Line 32; replace “interested” with “interest”

Page 5, Line 25; replace “of” with “or” and capitalize “Bobcat”

Page 6, Line 22; capitalize “Bobcat”

Page 7, Line 9; replace “lead” with “led”

Page 7, Line 37; insert a comma following “Of that”

Page 11, Line 10; correct the spelling of “stated”

MOTION BY COMMISSIONER ROSATI TO ACCEPT, AS AMENDED

MOTION SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER GLENN

MOTION CARRIED

4-0-3

Vice Chair Boisvert, Commissioner Kolb, and Councilor Hunter Abstained

PUBLIC COMMENT - None

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Kolb attended the online annual meeting of the New Hampshire Association of Conservation Commissions (receipt submitted). She participated in workshops on wildlife corridors and access to properties; improving access for people with limited mobility. Those who gave the presentation were with the Manchester Cedar Swamp project. They just finished a boardwalk that opens it up to much greater use.

Commissioner Rosati reminded users of the properties to wear orange.

Commissioner Drouin commented on the progress occurring at the Sklar Waterfront Park; roads fixed, could use some sand. There is a problem/conflict that will be discussed further. He would like to meet Vice Chair Boisvert at the property to discuss it and get on the same page.

Chair Perkins will look into the availability of sand.

It may be that a non-public meeting is needed on the next agenda.

ADJOURNMENT

**MOTION BY COMMISSIONER GLENN TO ADJOURN
MOTION SECONDED BY VICE CHAIR BOISVERT
MOTION CARRIED
7-0-0**

The November 15, 2021, meeting of the Merrimack Conservation Commission was adjourned at 8:39 p.m.

Submitted by Dawn MacMillan