DRAFT

MINUTES OF THE
CONSERVATION COMMISSION

MEETING OF
February 5, 2020

A meeting of the Conservation Commission was held on February 5, 2020 at the Salem Town Hall, 33 Geremonty Drive, Salem, NH.

PRESENT: Ruth Isaks, Chairman; Linda Harvey, Vice-Chairman; Steve Boyd, Secretary; Glen Edwards; Donald Marotte; and Karri Makinen, Community Development Coordinator.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance. Chairman Isaks introduced the commission members and went over the agenda.

NEW BUSINESS

1. ABERCROMBIE – Request to retain 32 feet of existing unpermitted retaining wall, 11 Millville Circle, Map 57, Lot 2606

   Mike Seraikas, wetland scientist is here with Mr. Abercrombie, the property owner. He was contacted by Mr. Abercrombie to help with a situation. Mr. Abercrombie had some erosion problems along the bank and started to build a retaining wall. While building the wall, he found out that he needed a permit. So Mr. Abercrombie contacted him and we spoke with the Wetland Bureau and they gave us guidance. He explained the work that they did. We are asking to retain the wall as is constructed.

   Chairman Isaks said, when we were there on Saturday, what had been constructed was clear, but what was actually the 32 feet that you are requesting wasn’t clear. What is there and constructed, is that the 32 feet, or is that partial and to the tree is 32?

   Mr. Seraikas said, the total is 32. There was a part in the middle that was not done, and Mr. Abercrombie would like to finish. The overall length is 32 feet, and that’s existing and he’d like to finish it up. He was having problems with erosion along the bank. He didn’t know until his neighbor did work and needed a permit, then he realized he needed one.

   Chairman Isaks said, on the modified application, it needs to be made clear that the 32 feet has not been constructed. The construction of the 32 feet needs to be finished. It implies on that second application that the 32 is already constructed. So the wording needs to be changed.

   Mr. Seraikas said, we will take care of that.

   Mr. Marotte said, it is a nice solid wall, and the job is very minor. He doesn’t see any issues with it.
Mrs. Harvey asked, when was the work started?
Scott Abercrombie, 11 Millville Circle, said about 4 years ago, it was built over a two year period. Two summers ago, he had a little left to do then realized he wasn’t supposed to be doing this. When his neighbor got a permit, then he realized that he needed a permit. He didn’t finish two years ago, so last summer he contacted Mr. Seraikas to help him get the permit.
Mrs. Harvey asked, where is the high water mark on the map?
Mr. Seraikas showed that on the map. It is the 136 contour. The 136 elevation is the high water mark of the pond. It is being put in at the 136 contour. It’s the maximum height of the water. If you go to NHDES shoreland, their number is 136 and the town’s is too.
Mrs. Harvey asked, are you going down?
Mr. Marotte said that there is no concrete involved, just stones laid on top of each other.
Mr. Boyd asked, what are you looking for from us?
Mr. Seraikas said, we need you to approve the project as it is proposed. And on the wetland application, there is a space for the Conservation Commission to sign off on it. We are asking to get a signature.
Chairman Isaks said we need to make a recommendation on the permit.
MOTION by Mr. Boyd that the Conservation Commission’s signature be granted and certify that the Conservation Commission has reviewed the application and waives its right to intervene and believes the applicant’s submitted plans accurately represent the project’s proposal and we have no objection to permitting the proposed work.
Chairman Isaks said they need to make it clear that the 32 feet has not been completed. He is requesting a permit to retain the 32 foot section of wall, but the 32 foot section is not all there. There has to be a correction on the application.
Mr. Seraikas said, he will make a note of that before it goes to the State. He will take care of that and he will do that tomorrow.
SECOND as amended by Mr. Edwards.
VOTE ON MOTION: 5 - 0
UNANIMOUS

OTHER COMMISSION BUSINESS

1. Review of Minutes
MOTION by Mr. Edwards to accept the minutes of the January 2, 2020 meeting as drafted.
SECOND by Mr. Boyd.
VOTE ON MOTION: 5 - 0
UNANIMOUS
2. Conservation Fund Report

Mrs. Harvey said, at the end of the year for December, there was a total interest income of
$423.10 from Citizens Bank, and $66.16 from Salem Coop. There was no other activity in
December, and at the end of the year, we had a total in both bank accounts of $1,010,478.69.

Chairman Isaks said, since then we had John Sytek invest in January via our discussion. He has
invested the $900,000 as was voted and that was invested about the second week in January, in a
sweep account. We are getting 1.6% interest on the account, which means over a year we get
about $900 for interest. For the month, we get about $1,200. It has only been in there about 3
weeks, so the amount of interest has been $914.88, but it is on its way. This comes in after the
first of the month.

Mrs. Harvey said, we don’t get the January statement until after. We are too close to the end of
January when we have our meetings, and Finance hasn’t had a chance to review everything and
issue things. So we are always a month behind. So this report is through the end of 2019. We will
have the January information next month.

3. Town Forest

Mr. Edwards said he has several items. First is the question about if we can combine signs to
reduce them to make it more visually appealing. Checking it out, he got a contact from Kerri
Makinen for the land, water and conservation fund and they require their own dedicated sign.
Their reasoning is so that it is standardized across the country. We can’t combine the signs.

Mrs. Harvey asked, can we put a new sign in the kiosk instead of on a pole?

Mr. Edwards said, he would wait until we see the sign. The sign is about 2 feet wide. It could be
too much for the kiosk, but we’ll look at it. He thinks we should see it before we decide.

Mrs. Harvey asked, is the LCHIP sign metal?

Mr. Edwards said yes.

Mrs. Harvey said, maybe they can both be put on the same pole.

Mr. Edwards said we should wait until we see it.

Chairman Isaks thinks LCHIP was sort of OK, but also sort of not OK. They have a particular
look and placement but they may consider it. We only have two. The signs are very important to
the people who are supporting us.

Mr. Edwards said, the next item is the Hummingbird Lane gate. It has been installed. When he
went to inspect it, he was concerned that the gate is open, and there was not a lock on it. If
someone climbs on it, it would collapse. But thanks to Kerri and Don, we were able to get it
straightened out. We need to lock that gate. We need to get a chain and lock that is acceptable to
the Fire and Police Departments.

Mrs. Harvey said, the other gate has a lockbox on it. She thought this one would also, but it
doesn’t.

Mr. Edwards said, it is important to secure it.

Mrs. Harvey asked, is there any way to get one?
Mr. Edwards said, it’s a different design than the other one. He explained the difference.

There was a discussion of a knoxbox.

Ms. Makinen said she asked about latch options to Granite State Fence. They haven’t gotten back to her yet. On the bikeped corridor gates, there is simply a knox lock, which is just a padlock that fits the Fire Department keys. She can ask the Fire Department about that also. She hopes Granite State Fence gets back to her soon with options.

Mr. Boyd said, we should be able to match the Fire Department locks.

Mrs. Harvey suggested that we reach out to Pat Hargreaves for a key and lock.

Chairman Isaks suggested Don Marotte take over that.

Mr. Edwards suggested that Karri take care of it. Just ask the Fire Department what they need.

Mr. Edwards said, we haven’t solved the problem with the graffiti removal needed in the town forest along the brook. It would be good to have something done if possible in the spring. Karri was reaching out to some groups. But it was hard to find a date that worked for everyone. It is important to get that done. When you get close to April 20th you may want to notify the police to make sure you don’t have another incident.

Ms. Makinen said, we want to avoid black fly season too. What is a good month?

Mr. Marotte asked, have we decided on how we are removing this?

Chairman Isaks said yes. She and Mr. Edwards found some options and we tried some of them, and there was one that did the job. We bought the supplies. We just need to all get together to do it. It was high school students that were going to help.

Ms. Makinen said the high school had agreed to help in the fall. She can reach out to them again. Chairman Isaks suggested that we watch the weather and hopefully get it done by the end of April.

Mr. Marotte asked, is there a temperature on when it should be done?

Chairman Isaks said she will look at that.

Mr. Edwards said we went through the 2019 forest goals. There were some carryovers but he made a list of ones that he thought was reasonable to accomplish in 2020. The timber harvest was supposed to be done by February 1st. We need extension language if we go forward with the harvest, which he highly recommends that we do. He is not sure if we still have a contract. The first goal is getting the timber harvest done. The second goal is relocating the woods road, because that’s part of the timber harvest. That is all part of that contract. Next is, update the trails map. He will reach out to the GIS Department. Next is trail improvements for wildlife habitat. He discussed this one. Fish & Game had software. There were recommendations for trail improvements to make it better for wildlife. Even though we rated very well, there were a couple of small changes. He explained these. So far we have been successful in blocking off the private trail. That was another recommendation, that we find a new trail to go across that land but there could be wetland issues with that. The fifth goal was to freshen up the visitor information in the kiosk. A lot of that stuff is faded. He also mentioned graffiti removal and that the first Saturday in June we will do a town forest clean-up day. And on Trail L there was an
undersized pallet and we need some other planking or bridging. He has been in contact with our
town forester and he will give us ideas.

Mrs. Harvey said, one of the workshops she went to at the NHACC Convention, they said,
instead of using bridges and planking, that pebbles be placed. The water can run through but it
still gives a solid area to walk on. So that may be something to think about.

Mr. Edwards said, this is located deep within the forest which is one of the challenges in
replacing this.

Mrs. Harvey said we should suggest that to the town forester.

Mr. Edwards said, he will have the forester look at that also. The other goal was to promote
formation of friends of the forest. He appealed to anyone watching, and to any groups in the area
that may be interested in working on this. We really need more people to do this. He discussed
the things that need to be done. He mentioned the pressure treated wood signs that were out there
with information on them.

Mrs. Harvey said those signs are subject to vandalism. There are very few left.

There was a discussion of these signs.

Mr. Edwards said, we should reach out to groups. He mentioned the teacher that came in that
was doing the project on invasive species. We should invite people to come in. It is too much for
a couple of people. It’s a treasure for the town and we need to work to improve it. He is hoping
to get the support of the Conservation Commission on revamping the goals to make them more
realistic. He is asking that these goals be accepted by the commission.

Mrs. Harvey said she’d like to add one goal. The entrance sign into the town forest is looking
faded. Bill Dumont in the past has taken it and repainted it. But we won’t have him around
forever. So maybe we should invest in a more permanent type.

Chairman Isaks said item 10 would be to replace the entrance sign.

Mr. Edwards said, we have a town forest maintenance schedule.

Mrs. Harvey also mentioned Earth Day and Trails Day and various days. If we have guided
walks, we could coordinate with the Recreation Department and let them do the publicity but let
them know early on.

Mr. Edwards said that’s why it would be helpful to have a friends of town forest. He is trying to
make the list realistic.

Mrs. Harvey suggested we find out how the Field of Dreams group got started.

Mr. Boyd said, he understands what Glen is saying. We need to bite off less than we can chew. It
is difficult. The less we add, the better.

Chairman Isaks said, it shouldn’t be a wish list. The things on there should be realistic that we
can accomplish in a year.

Mrs. Harvey said, regarding the sign, we can ask Bill Dumont if he can repaint it. If not get a
quote for a new sign.

Chairman Isaks said, two more were added: repair or replace entrance sign, and nature walks.
DRAFT

MOTION by Mr. Boyd to accept Mr. Edwards recommendation on the town forest.
SECOND by Mr. Marotte.

VOTE ON MOTION: 5 - 0
UNANIMOUS

Chairman Isaks mentioned the contract. Do we have to have a contract or extension of that contract, that starts from the end of the current contract? Rather than waiting to see when he can start and do the work? Do we have to have an extension now? Can we get an extension on the contract for the next several months? She is not sure legally, if we don’t have an immediate extension on that, whether or not it is still legally binding.

Ms. Makinen said she thinks we are OK. Ron Klemarczyk was talking to the logger and he will try to get an idea of the schedule and get an extension form. He’ll get that to us soon. She thinks we are OK.

Chairman Isaks said, the other issue is the parking lot lease. She mentioned the invoice for that.

Ms. Makinen said, we received the renewal for the town forest parking lot lease from a realty company that manages it for the State. It is $400 each year. We told the company that we cannot pay the lease until we have an invoice from them. We don’t have an invoice yet. The Town Manager has signed the lease, but we won’t mail it in until the Conservation Commission approves the $400 payment, which won’t happen until we have an invoice.

MOTION by Mr. Edwards to approve the $400 lease for the town forest parking lot.
SECOND by Mr. Marotte.

VOTE ON MOTION: 5 - 0
UNANIMOUS

Ms. Makinen said she will submit the lease but we won’t pay the $400 until we have the proper invoice for our records.

Mrs. Harvey asked is that a verbal discussion or was that in writing that we need an invoice? Did we send a letter?

Ms. Makinen said, we had phone calls and emails.

Mrs. Harvey said, you may want to get that in writing.

4. Conservation Commission Goals

Chairman Isaks suggested that we look at these for the next meeting.

Mrs. Harvey said, the wetland information that we just got, has a section on monarch butterflies. She suggested that we scan this and put it on the website.

Ms. Makinen said we are working to revamp the entire Community Development and Planning websites. We should look at the Conservation Commission website and think about how we can better use that for education.
Mrs. Harvey mentioned the bylaws. We have been off and on about updating them. We were waiting for the new wetland regulations to be issued and they were issued, so we should update the bylaws. We were also waiting for help with the nonpublic methodology that we use. Arthur was supposed to be helping us. She asked Karri if she ever received anything from him.

Ms. Makinen said she didn’t, but she found some information from the New Hampshire Municipal Association that was helpful and we can use.

Mrs. Harvey said, that section on non-public needs to get updated. Also, we need to have Karri Makinen designated as the agent for the commission. The open space master plan, she asked Karri if we have heard back from Rockingham County yet.

Ms. Makinen said, they are willing to work on it with us. We should schedule a meeting to figure out what we are doing. We can get that started.

Mrs. Harvey asked Mr. Boyd if he still wants to do that.

Mr. Boyd said he would.

Chairman Isaks asked for an update on the easement monitoring.

Ms. Makinen said that Mrs. Harvey and Mr. Marotte were going to do it. We will schedule something in a couple of weeks.

Mrs. Harvey said, we need to look at our own wetlands ordinance to see if we need to make any changes.

5. Review of Correspondence

Chairman Isaks said there is communication about 7 Queen Anne Lane that is for informational purposes. It is from the NHDES. They have approved the wetlands permit. We sent in a recommendation for this in December. It has now been approved and the permit was issued.

Another item also for information is for the article for the town conservation land, the warrant articles from the meeting. It is article 21, which will appear on the ballot. Hopefully that will pass. The other item we have is on the banner design for the conservation commission.

Mrs. Harvey showed a couple of ideas on the wording on the banner. One is from Ruth and one is from Linda. We are looking for additional suggestions. The banner is 8 feet high by 2 feet wide.

Ms. Makinen showed potential wording.

Mrs. Harvey described how it could look. The high school graphics department will do the work up for it. So the credits should be at the bottom. Ruth came up with another concept that may work better. But there may be some other words we can put on there. She doesn’t want to get too busy with these things.

Chairman Isaks said, it needs to be something that is attention catching and then maybe a couple of words that stand out. We can maybe give them a general idea and ask them for two or three ideas, and also have wildlife pictures. People will look at it, not read it. So they should look at it and see it, so possibly a picture rather than something they have to read. Hopefully it’s at a table and we’ll have things to give them.

Mrs. Harvey suggested it say “Con Com” at the top.
Mr. Boyd suggested that we spell things out because sometimes people don’t understand the abbreviations. The Con Com may not work, but if you put Salem Conservation Commission, that would work.

There was discussion of the banner.

Chairman Isaks suggested that we give them the ideas because they’ll be the designers.

Ms. Makinen said they did ask if there were any specific photographs. Finding a picture could be the hardest part, and it has to be something that works with this format. If any of you have a photo or maybe there is a local wildlife photographer who we could ask to use one of their photos. Some direction would be helpful for the designers. It would be cool if it’s actually a Salem photo rather than a generic photo.

Chairman Isaks said she would like to see the words in the back and the objects superimposed on the names which are faded into the background. But we can see what they come up with.

Ms. Makinen said she will be in touch with them.

Mrs. Harvey said she is in touch with the sign company.

Chairman Isaks mentioned article 21 for the warrant article. She asked Karri, is there any comment you want to make? She asked people to vote for article 21. Another issue is the free spring classroom wildlife program. New Hampshire Fish & Game Department has wildlife presenters and they will come to the high school and do a program at the high school for grades 3-6. Teachers can apply to have them come and do different programs, which she listed. It is free. They can send in an application and program request form.

Ms. Makinen said we can share this with the school directly.

Chairman Isaks said the other item is the Save the Date, for Saving Special Places 2020, which is Saturday, April 4, 2020. This is the New Hampshire annual land conservation conference. The program they have listed is not the new program. It’s the one from six months ago, so they haven’t put up the new program yet, just the announcement.

Mrs. Harvey asked where it is. The last couple of times it has been over near Alton.

Ms. Makinen said that Pat McCoul brought us some wildlife calendars. There are a few different ones. She may be someone to ask about a photo for the banner.

Mrs. Harvey asked about the land on the Spicket River.

Ms. Makinen said she doesn’t have that information yet. There isn’t enough to discuss. The situation hasn’t changed from when we talked about it last.

MOTION by Mrs. Harvey to adjourn.
SECON by Mr. Boyd.

VOTE ON MOTION: 5 – 0
UNANIMOUS
DRAFT

1 The meeting adjourned at 8:12 p.m.

4 Minutes by: Susan Strugnell, Conservation Commission Recording Secretary
5 Approved: Conservation Commission
6 Date: