

**CONSERVATION COMMISSION**  
**MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING**  
**October 13, 2021**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Jeremy Degler  
Sarah Eckstein  
Angela Ficco  
Mercedes O'Donohue  
Scott Orzechowski  
Jeremy Rhodes  
Dale Smith-Kenyon

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** None

**STAFF PRESENT:** None

The meeting was called to order by S **Orzechowski** at 6:02 pm.

**1. Approval of Meeting Minutes.**

Regular meeting of 9/8/21

Corrections:

- 4A – Note possibility of a second site walk at the medical mile site.

D. Smith-Kenyon moves to approve, J. Degler seconds. Motion Carries 7-0-0

**2. Public Comment**

No public comments received

**3. New Business**

**A. Sustainability Committee Report**

S. Eckstein delivers report; draft goal setting conducted at the last session of items for mayor's 2030 document. Vote is planned at next meeting. A partnership is in development with the NWF and SERT focusing on additions to the plan. Also notes that UNH has a program for Carbon and Nitrogen monitoring for Great Bay watershed; conversations have been held with M. Bobinsky (DPW) to assist in this program given the status of our watershed. Noted reminder that Conservation and Sustainability are working on a 2-minute survey regarding climate adaptation.

**B. Getting map coordinates for easement monitoring**

No Updates at this time

**C. John Silverio and residents of Whippoorwill Drive - questions about regulations of nearby conservation lands**

A group of residents of this development are in attendance, with John Silverio speaking for the group. The group is requesting information regarding what activity and work within the conservation site are permitted, which are not permitted, and which require specific permits. There is a portion of land

owned by the HOA, as well as neighboring lots owned by the city (wellhead and leased back to the Oaks Golf Course).

The primary guide to restrictions on use and permitted use is the language included in the conservation easement of the deed for these lands; in short, undeveloped land under easement may not be worked, including creation of trails and cutting of vegetation. Passive recreation, such as hiking, snowshoeing, or cross-country skiing is permitted. Construction of any river crossings requires specific DES permitting; J. Silverio is working with the DES to attain permits for this purpose.

Surrounding lands and stream crossings in them are under the same restrictions.

Predevelopment plans were shared and discussed, noting that new plans will supersede older ones.

J. Silverio notes that there was no ill intent with this work and that one of the major attractive factors for residents of these homes was their location in a natural setting and the presence of conservation land abutting; their intent is to be good stewards. The commission agrees with this statement and expresses an intent to work with the residents in this goal.

The residents note that there are some areas in abutting conservation land that require cleanup, particularly a demolished house site in the 55 Coles Pond parcel recently acquired by the city (see cleanup notes later in their minutes).

S. Orzechowski notes that the intent of the easements is to protect wild land and water sources; based on this, removal of deadfall should only be undertaken for reasons of safety, and that cutting should be avoided.

Discussion occurred around the desirability of linked trails throughout city and to our neighbors, but financial and insurance concerns for city-owned land are difficulties to be overcome.

Residents will continue to pursue permits for water crossings and will avoid cutting and alteration.

#### **D. NH Association of Conservation Commissions 2022 Membership Dues**

We are up for renewal; dues are \$575.00

A. Ficco moves to allocate \$575.00 to permit renewal; J. Rhodes seconds.

Motion Carries 7-0-0

E. Any Other New Business  
No new business at this time.

#### **4. Old Business**

##### **A Tree City USA Signage**

We currently have 2 posts but no signs. Previous meeting had expressed interest in placement of signs at Rochester (108) and Dover and South Berwick (High St) borders.

J. Rhodes moves that we allocate up to \$225 for purchase of three signs (at \$64.95/ea.) and a post for installation at these sites. J. Degler seconds.

Motion carries 7-0-0

**B. Backyard Habitat Promotion**

S. Orzechowski has paid required fee (not seeking reimbursement) and contacted NWF for this effort; mayor and council representative are on board with promotion based on Monarch Butterfly item. A spring 2022 rollout in concert with Sustainability is targeted.

**C. Easement Monitoring**

S. Eckstein and D. Smith-Kenyon conducted a second site walk at the medical mile location discussed in the prior session. They noted several sites with trash, including construction debris and a possible installation of swings bolted to a tree in conservation land, as well as a large steel cable looped around a tree presenting a girdling risk. They will coordinate with city to address lines and removal. Also noted were a number of probable vernal pool sites; J. Degler has volunteered to check these sites in spring.

**D. MEMBER ITEMS, SUB-COMMITTEE ITEMS, AND REPORTS**

A. Ficco noted posters for a Willand Pond cleanup being organized by a Dover civic agency requesting shovels, loppers, and similar tools. Request forwarded to not perform any of this sort of work on the section in Somersworth under conservation easement.

**E. Update on remediation at Steven E. Brown Willand Drive property**

Update sought from M. Mears.

**F. Any other old business that may come before the board**

3 new members noted on iNaturalist; this is encouraging.

S. Orzechowski has written and submitted to city staff a press release regarding the 50 Coles Pond Road purchase.

A. Ficco is working towards a spring cottontail release; this has been delayed by COVID.

A list of current projects and backlog items was discussed:

- Coles Pond Road purchase SRPC and GRANIT entry
- Coles Pond Road cleanup (to be held at 11/7/21, 09:00, Shaun's Way)
- Wildlife Management Plan for Coles Pond property
- City Invasives Plan
- Backyard Habitat project
- No Hunting signs at Malley Farm
- Conservation markers at Coles Pond property
- Cottontail release
- Prime Wetland designation (peatland and several properties discussed)
- Entomologist walk
- Malley Farm bridges
- Ongoing site monitoring

Consider the backlog when taking on new projects.

S. Eckstein noted a visit to Salmon Falls River site and the presence of several bridges in disrepair; future work may be required on these sites.

5. **Treasurer's Report**

Current balance is \$59,798.45 with a grant rebate received and a substantial land use tax input. S. Orzechowski noted that the grant amount is unexpected, and requests treasurer follow up with city staff to ensure correctness.

Mayor is expected to include funding sources other than the current land use tax as part of eye on 2030.

D. Smith-Kenyon moves to adjourn, A. Ficco seconds. Approved 7-0-0

Meeting adjourned at 7:29 PM.

Respectfully submitted:

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Jeremy Rhodes  
Conservation Commission Secretary