

**Town of Northwood
Conservation Commission Minutes
April 7, 2015**

Chairman Steve Roy calls the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Present: Chairman Stephen Roy, Vice Chairman Steven Hampl, James Ryan, Thomas Chase, Board Administrator Linda Smith, Board Secretary Lisa Fellows-Weaver.

Absent: Wini Young, Paul Lussier, Alternate Loren O'Neil, and Alternate Michael Matson.

MINUTES

March 3, 2015

Mr. Chase makes a motion, second by Mr. Ryan, to approve the March 3, 2015, minutes, as written. Motion passes unanimously; 4/0.

CONSIDERATION of APPLICATIONS

Wetland Permit Application:

Camp Wah-Tut-Ca/Yankee Clipper Council, Map 224; Lot 9

Joel DeStasio of the NH Division Trout Unlimited is present to propose a project to restore instream aquatic habitat within Gulf Brook, which runs into Northwood Lake. He explains that this is a habitat restoration project for instream brook trout.

Mr. DeStasio states that Trout Unlimited is working in conjunction with Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS), NH Fish and Game Department (NHF&G), and Tracy Degnan of the Rockingham Country Conservation District (RCRD). He adds that input will also come in from John McGee from NHF&G relative to fish biology.

Mr. DeStasio explains that the project is referred to as a large wood installation. They find stream habitat that is lacking large and naturally occurring instream wood, which occurs as trees along the bank die and fall into the stream. As these trees decompose they create riffle pool environments for brook trout. He adds that they are trying to establish populations of trout species. In addition, this would also add habitats for native species. He states that Mr. McGee has also been involved with other projects similar to this proposal. He notes that they have found that adding wood to the streams to recreate naturally occurring instream wood, fish species will move further upstream into these areas and establish populations.

Mr. Destasio explains the location of the project. He states that there is a fresh water wetland upstream that crosses Old Gulf Rd., an old skid or logging trail. Between the trail and the inlet to the lake there is a 600-700 ft. stream segment that is wooded, which is where they will be trying to place these installations. Mr. DeStasio explains the topography of the area. Further

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discussion is held regarding the specific location relative to the entrance to the camp.

Mr. Roy asks how the trees are placed into the stream. Mr. DeStasio explains that they do not put the trees directly in the bank. He states that tree growth that occurs in the right vegetation area immediately adjacent to the banks of these streams play a critical role in the bank structure. He states that the roots of large trees hold sediments. He states that they leave a 50' buffer on each stream bank.

Mr. DeStasio explains that the process involves an insured logger. He adds that he and the logger scout the streams the day before and select specific trees. He explains that the criteria for tree selection is basically trees that are a maximum of 18" in diameter and the species targeted is whatever is local for southern NH; hemlock, beech, maple, pine. He adds that the species does not matter at this point; it is more the size and distance from the stream way. He notes that Mr. McGee will be on site for this project.

Mr. Hampl asks if the area will now be stocked. Mr. DeStasio replies that they are not planning to stock; they are trying to encourage native fish populations. He adds that Trout Unlimited focuses on trout; however, any warm water fish species can benefit from these installations.

Mr. DeStasio explains that this is a minimum 3 year project. He states that this past summer he visited the easements and took water samples, water parameters, and defined a profile of the water over the summer. He states that this summer they plan to do the installations, take samples, and sample again next summer. There will be three sets of sampling that will show how the installations affect the water quality. He adds that they are also working with UNH who will test as well to see how these installations will affect nitrogen loading.

Mr. Roy states that this area drains into the Merrimack River. He adds that the riffles effectively add dissolved oxygen and if there is ammonia coming from the swamps, the swamp water will convert it into nitrate. He asks if someone is looking into the hydraulics as there would be concerns of water backing up and flooding. Mr. DeStasio explains that the area is a big deep valley. He states that the area is not a residential area now in the immediate project area.

The application is reviewed along with maps of the area.

Mr. DeStasio explains that they plan to submit the application to NHDES. He explains that the normal review time is 75 days for a regular review. He states that for an expedited review is 30 days. He states that he would like to do the

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expedited review; however, there needs to be signatures from the conservation commission. He adds that they hope to be in the field by June 1 to begin the projects. He explains that without the expedited permit they will begin the project later in the season.

Mr. Roy asks what NHDES considers this project to be. Mr. DeStasio replies that NHDES considers this to be a Standard Dredge and Fill permit, it falls under that umbrella. He states that this project is considered minimum impact as compared to minor or major due to the fact that it is a restoration project. He adds that there is a PGP requirement for the Army Corp of Engineers.

Mr. Hampl asks if this is in conjunction with the Boy Scout camp and what prompted this project. Mr. DeStasio states that the Yankee Clipper Council BSA is the property owner. He explains that NRCS looks around NH and they try to find properties where conservation and restoration is a possibility. They propose the ideas to the land owners, then provide financial assistance to lock in the easements as restoration of conservation areas.

Mr. Hampl asks who applied for the project. Mr. Roy asks who the property owner is. Mr. DeStasio replies, Yankee Clipper Council owns the property and RCCD is the authorized agent. He notes that RCCD obtains permissions from the property owner and there is a permission letter within the application from Yankee Clipper Council noting that Trout Unlimited has been authorized to do work on the NRCS easement. Ms. Smith notes that a signature from the property owner has not been obtained.

Mr. DeStasio states that there is an easement by the USDA. Mr. DeStasio replies that NRCS is the USDA.

Mr. Roy notes that there is a signature from Kevin Nichols, scout executive for Yankee Clipper Council, and he asks who that is. Mr. DeStasio replies that this section is not the portion of the application that Trout Unlimited addresses, that section is addressed by the offices of NRCS and RCCD. Ms. Smith suggests that the commission not sign the application tonight until there is an owner's signature added to the application. Mr. DeStasio explains that a property owner signature was not added as they have submitted permission letters.

Mr. Roy notes that there have been some issues with the camp last year that resulted in work being conducted and an after the fact permit filed. He states that the commission needs a signature from the property owner. Ms. Smith states that she reviewed the Yankee Clipper Council website and Mr. Nichols is not listed within the council.

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Discussion ensues as the commission reviews the application and the maps. Mr. DeStasio further explains the Gulf Road area and the project area. He explains that they do not disturb the stream bed and the project utilizes trees along the banks and replaces them in the stream, placed against the flow. He further explains that the rule of thumb is with a naturally occurring instream they place a tree every 20' and add an installation.

Ms. Smith states that it appears that the Yankee Clipper Council is in the process of merging with Boston Minuteman Council from Massachusetts and the charters are being re-written.

Mr. Roy states that he supports the concept and the project; however, is reticent on signing the application. Mr. DeStasio states that he will follow up with the land owner signatures as well as obtain clarification for signing off on the permission letters.

Mr. Chase suggests that another meeting be scheduled to expedite the application. Mr. Roy states that when the information is received he can come in and sign the applications. Ms. Smith states that the information provided by the property owner should include letter head and can be faxed or emailed. **Mr. Hampl makes a motion, second by Mr. Chase, to authorize Mr. Roy to sign the application once the executive authorizer of the Yankee Clipper Council has been received.** Mr. Ryan states that he feels that the commission is rushing the process. He adds that he will see Mr. McGee tomorrow and asks if there is anything that the commission would like to ask him. Mr. Roy asks if Mr. McGee believes that there would be a sustainable trout population. **VOTE: 2/0/2. Motion does not pass.** *Mr. Ryan and Mr. Roy abstain.*

Ms. Smith suggests a site walk be scheduled. A site walk is scheduled for May 2, 2015 at 10:00 a.m. weather permitting, with a backup for May 3, 10 a.m.

The application is continued to May 5, 2015.

Meadow Lake ~ Northwood Meadow State Park

Mr. Roy explains the after-the-fact permit application for the dredge and fill operation within the Northwood Meadow State Park. He explains that the area around the overfill pipe was caving; it was rotting out. The soil had been undermined and the area began to cave in causing very dangerous conditions. He explains that this was discovered in late November, early December 2014 and an emergency authorization was received for emergency construction of a bypass. DRED breeched the dam on one side and on the downstream side of the dam the culvert daylighted and there is a series of step down, rip stone, benches where water bypasses. He states that the pond is down 2-3 ft. and the outlet pipe is now exposed.

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Mr. Roy states that he believes that the intent is to fix the damaged section and also plan to add a valve for future work.

Mr. Chase makes a motion, second by Mr. Hampl, to sign the after-the-fact application for Meadow Lake. Motion passes unanimously; 4/0.

INTERNAL BUSINESS:

Total Number of Members

Mr. Roy states that he has reached out to contact Mr. Lussier a few times, to no avail. Ms. Smith offers to send out an email.

Ms. Smith reads RSA 36:3 relative to the composition of the commission, which indicates that the commission shall consist of no less than three and no more than seven members. She states that the commission's by laws/procedures that have been adopted state the CC shall consist of seven regular members and two alternative members. She states that there have been six members for some time now and that still requires four members to be present for a quorum. She suggests trying to get additional member to bring the membership to seven or consider reducing the membership to five, then three would be a quorum.

Discussion ensues regarding appointments. Ms. Smith states that Ms. Young and Ms. O'Neil are interested in being reappointed. She adds that she has not heard from Mr. Matson or Mr. Lussier, who have not attended any meetings in 2014.

Mr. Roy suggests that Ms. Smith send an email out to Mr. Lussier and Mr. Matson to see if they are interested in remaining on the commission.

This item is being continued to next month when further discussion will be held regarding advertising for members.

Mr. Chase asks what the process is for re-appointment of members. Ms. Smith explains that the process is that the commission votes to recommend an interested party and a letter of recommendation is sent to the selectmen.

Mr. Roy makes a motion, second by Mr. Chase, to send a letter to the selectmen recommending the reappointment of Wini Young to the commission as a regular member, for a three year term. Motion passes unanimously; 4/0.

Mr. Hampl asks if the selectmen would need to be notified regarding changing the amount of members. Ms. Smith states that she will check into this.

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Mr. Chase makes a motion, second by Mr. Ryan, to send a letter to the selectmen recommending the reappointment of Steve Hampl to the commission as a regular member, for a three year term. Motion passes; 3/0/1. Mr. Hampl abstains.

Mr. Roy makes a motion, second by Mr. Hampl, to send a letter to the selectmen recommending the reappointment of Loren O'Neil to the commission, as an alternate member, for a three year term. Motion passes unanimously; 4/0.

Election of Officers

Chairman: Mr. Hampl nominates Steve Roy for chair. Mr. Chase seconds. Members provide comment in support of Mr. Roy remaining as the chair for the commission as they appreciate his knowledge as well as how the meetings are productive and function with his confidence and expertise. **Motion passes; 3/0/1. Mr. Roy abstains.**

Vice-Chairman: Mr. Roy nominates Steve Hampl for vice-chair. Mr. Ryan seconds. Members comment that Mr. Hampl has done a fine job when it is necessary for him to fill in for Mr. Roy and it is appreciated. Mr. Roy agrees. **Motion passes; 3/0. Mr. Hampl abstains.**

Hemlock Tree

Mr. Roy states that he will provide the site walk notes from the site walk held Sunday, March 8. He states that pictures will also be provided. Discussion is held regarding the location and access. Mr. Roy notes that the fourth largest beech tree is also in this vicinity.

Johnson Donation

Ms. Smith provides an update of the project. She states that the title exam has been completed. She notes that there were a number of items that needed to be addressed. She states that everything should be done within one week. She will still need to connect with the title company and they may suggest that the deed be mailed out to Mr. Johnson and schedule a time with the selectmen to complete the project. She states that nothing is left for the commission to do. She states that she will inform the commission as the date for finalizing is set.

Giles Forest

Ms. Smith states that the Giles forest project is complete. She has received the entire backup relative to the cut and a check has been provided to the treasurer who has opened a new revenue account per the recommendation of town counsel.

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Mr. Roy asks if the revenue account is a Forest Management Fund. Ms. Smith states that the account is called a forest maintenance fund. She states that the total received was \$3,431.01. A report of timber cut has also been received from the town's forester. The summary sheets are reviewed. She states that the original amount was \$4,228.21 before forester fees. Ms. Smith states that if the commission were to want to use any funds, it would require a vote at town meeting.

Mr. Roy states that per contract, Mr. Moreno has another meeting with the commission. Discussion to be held at another time should the commission want to appropriate funds for forest work.

Representative for Scenic Byway Committee

Ms. Smith states that last month she asked if any members may be interested in being a representative for a scenic byway committee.

There is no interest from the commission, at this time.

Land Acquisition/Projects

Non-Public Session

Mr. Roy makes a motion, second by Mr. Chase, to enter into a non-public session per RSA 91-A3:II(d) at 8:33 p.m.

Roll Call Vote

Tom Chase – yes

Steve Roy – yes

Steve Hampl –yes

Jim Ryan – yes

Motion passes unanimously; 4/0.

Mr. Ryan makes a motion, second by Mr. Chase, to come out of non-public session at 8:54 p.m.

Roll Call Vote

Tom Chase – yes

Steve Roy – yes

Steve Hampl –yes

Jim Ryan – yes

Motion passes unanimously; 4/0.

Mr. Roy makes a motion, second by Mr. Hampl, to seal the minutes.

Motion passes unanimously; 4/0.

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Mr. Hampl makes a motion, second by Mr. Chase, to update the correspondence consistent with the discussion that was held. Motion passes; 4/0. Mr. Roy states that he will coordinate the correspondence with Ms. Smith.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Roy makes a motion, second by Mr. Chase, to adjourn at 8:57 p.m. Motion passes unanimously; 4/0.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Fellows-Weaver
Board Secretary