

**Town of Northwood
Conservation Commission Minutes
April 4, 2017**

Chairman Steve Roy calls the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

Present: Chairman Steve Roy, Steven Hampl, Shelley Frost, Thomas Chase, Wini Young and Grace Levergood

Town Staff Present:

Board Administrator Linda Smith and Land Use Secretary Susan Austin

MINUTES

March 7, 2017

Chairman Roy made a motion to accept the minutes as written. Mr. Chase seconds. Motion carries 6/0.

APPOINTMENTS

Dan Kern, Bear Paw Conservation

Chairman Roy stated that he would like to touch base with Mr. Kern about the Bennett Island Forever project because he was concerned that he had some feedback from people saying that the commission had committed \$25,000 to the project. He stated that he wanted to clarify that it was a pledge of up to \$25,000. He stated that they had decided to earmark the money and then gauge public interest. He stated that they had attempted to put a petition article for up to \$35,000 on the ballot, but after gauging the reactions of the Budget Committee and Select Board, they decided against it. Chairman Roy stated that he would rather put the pledge into pause mode, rather than undoing. The Select Board are not in support of the project unless it has unfettered public access. Chairman Roy stated he would like to know what role did Bennett Island play in the lake's ecosystem.

Mr. Kern stated that there are one of 6 eagle nests in southern New Hampshire on Bennett Island, as well as a common Loon nesting area. Those two things are the primary interest that Bear Paw has in protecting it. The Loon Preservation Committee noted that the productivity from that nesting area was twice the state average. The alternative to conserving the island will be the development of the island. This is a onetime opportunity. The appraisal came in at \$700,000, and the land owner has agreed to sell the easement for \$200,000. Mr. Kern stated that the landowner did sign an extension through December 31. They will be doing fundraising events throughout the summer.

Chairman Roy stated that since they have more time, they should take some more time to do research. The question of the actual town line was raised because on some older maps it didn't look like any of the island was in Northwood. Mr. Kern stated that they did have deed research that they could

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send over to the town. Mr. Kern stated that if the concern was about popular support, then Bear Paw could work with them on that, either putting it on a warrant, or possibly at a town meeting. If they are interested or concerned about public support, then they would be happy to support that process.

Chairman Roy stated that they would like to wait another month or so to decide. Ms. Levergood stated that she would ask Pat Bell to look at the deed for Bennett Island. Ms. Smith stated that as long as he is a LLS, it would be okay.

INTERNAL BUSINESS

Ms. Young stated that they needed to reschedule the trails site walk. May 6 at 9AM was the time that worked for the committee. Chairman Roy suggested that they should include some other groups like members of the Recreation Committee.

Ms. Young stated that she attended the Recreation Committee meeting on March 8th. She stated that their concern was having enough parking. They have enlarged the parking lot. It's her understanding that they will be using at least one baseball field this year. They are supportive of the trails, but as far as the trailhead and people parking there and using that as their entrance, they had concerns about parking and they wondered if there was another way for them to get to the trails. They are supportive, but they would prefer to wait a year to see what the parking issues would be.

Chairman Roy stated that they had planned to go to the March Select Board meeting in reference to the land that was up for sale. Because the vote was moved, the meeting is now rescheduled for April 25th. Ms. Smith stated that she thought that the meeting on the 25th was for the trails discussion. Chairman Roy suggested that they talk about both at that meeting. Ms. Smith stated that she thinks they could discuss both. The commission should request that no decision be made until they have a chance to talk to the board.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Chairman Roy nominated Steve Hampl to Chairman position. Ms. Frost seconded.

Mr. Hampl stated that he was honored, but he could not accept the nomination because of too many personal obligations.

Chairman Roy and Ms. Frost retracted their motion and second.

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Chairman Roy nominated Grace Levergood as Chair and Shelley Frost as Vice Chair. Mr. Chase seconded the motion. Motion carries 6/0.

Ms. Levergood makes a motion, second by Ms. Frost, to adjourn at 9:11 p.m. Motion passes unanimously; 6/0.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Austin, Land Use Secretary