

## Conservation Commission Minutes for April 13, 2015

Chair Sam Demeritt opened the meeting at 7:05. The meeting was held in Conference Room 1 because Conference Room 2 was not available for our use. The meeting was not recorded. Other members in attendance were Debra Kimball, Susan Mooney, Raelene Shippee-Rice, Kristen Lamb, Terry Bonser who sat in the vacant seat and Johan Kerkhove who was seated for Cheryl Smith. Guests were Dr. Dale Rice, Nottingham; Mark West, Nottingham and representing Bear-Paw Regional Greenways (BPRG) (arriving at 7:24); and Glenn Griswold, 33 Deerfield Road.

**Minutes:** The minutes of December 8, 2014 were reviewed and edited. The Minutes were accepted as amended by a motion made by Kimball, seconded by Mooney and supported by seven (7) votes in the affirmative.

The minutes of March 9, 2015 were reviewed. The minutes were accepted as read by a motion from Lamb, a second from Kimball; all seven (7) votes were in the affirmative.

### **Correspondence:**

- A postcard was received re: the publication "Big Trees of New Hampshire" by Kevin Martin, which is for sale by the author for \$24.95.
- From the Forest Society: A thank you for the town's contribution of \$250,000 from the Conservation Fund toward the conservation easement purchased from Rick and Helen Fernald on their 95.5-acre parcel along Deerfield Road.
- Received from the NHACC, a copy of a recent article about conservation commissions that appeared in *Forest Notes*, a publication of the Forest Society.
- A letter from BPRG containing an update of conservation easement monitoring reports in Nottingham that were done in 2014. Enclosed were copies of the six (6) monitoring reports.
- From the Business Office, an emergency contact information form for the members to complete.
- A pamphlet from Comprehensive Trail Services. Please contact Peter DeSantis in Candia if interested in this service.

**New BPRG Maps:** Mark West, Chairperson of the Land Protection Committee for BPRG, described their mapping project that was begun in 2014. He presented two co-occurrence maps of the "Natural Resources Inventory Conservation Focus Areas", one for the seven towns in the Bear-Paw area and the other of Nottingham. The maps were funded in part by the Open Space Institute. The purpose of the project was to show resilient landscapes that are predicted to be better able to adjust to the environmental challenges of climate change due to their complexity and diversity. The new regional map shows the seven core towns plus the new member towns of Hooksett, Allenstown, Pittsfield and Barnstead. The map of Nottingham shows features that extend into abutting towns. West explained that the darkest colors on the maps indicate the highest co-occurrence. The Commission asked West for digital copies of the maps both for Nottingham and for the Strafford Regional Planning Commission.

The Commission thanked Mr. West. He left at 7:44.

**Road Side Cleanup:** There was a discussion about a town wide cleanup for Nottingham. It was decided that such an activity would be too complex for the Commission to orchestrate, so instead, a campaign to encourage residents to pick up trash along their own roads would be an effective alternative. Earth Day is April 22; Demeritt and Shippee-Rice will try to do trash pick up in the morning of the 15<sup>th</sup> and Kimball will begin about 4:00. Demeritt indicated he might be able to participate in the afternoon, too.

**Volunteer River Assessment Program (VRAP):** There is a training session in Concord on May 2. Kimball will drop off the kit to be checked – instruments to be tested, fluids to be replenished, batteries to be replaced. Kimball will also send out a testing schedule for members to volunteer for noted dates.

**BPRG Report:** In brief, Demeritt reported that the next Annual meeting in 2016 would be held again at the Hooksett Library. The presenter will be Jane Kelly. She will talk about her work rehabilitating raptors. The BPRG Newsletter has been printed and will be mailed shortly.

**Lamprey River Watershed Association (LRWA):** Demeritt who also sits on this association reported that the LRWA is scheduling summer programs at this time.

**Saving Special Places:** Both Demeritt and Lamb attended the annual conference held at John Stark Regional High School in Weare. There were nine sessions for a total of 27 workshops in three time blocks. Most of the topics were updates re: conservation issues and conservation planning in communities.

**Election of Officers:** It was agreed to postpone these elections until Terry Bonser has been sworn in as a full member by the town clerk.

Shippee-Rice asked for a report on the **Conservation Easement Properties** power point presentation done by Lamb and Demeritt at Blaisdell Memorial Library on March 18. The topics were conservation easement properties in Nottingham that are assessable to the public for passive recreation and the types of wildlife and habitats found on those properties. The program was very well attended and the audience had a lot of interest in the information provided.

**Facebook:** Kimball suggested that a facebook page for the Commission to posting events, provide information on wildlife, suggestions and the like would be a good vehicle for outreach into the community. She will check with the Selectmen's Office and will take a look at Exeter's conservation commission's facebook page and report back at the next meeting.

Shippee-Rice asked for clarification as to the Commission's role in applications that propose to impact wetland crossings. Demeritt provided the information and explained that depending on the size of the proposed impact the commission would play either a minor or major role in reviewing the application along with the site to be impacted.

**Maple Ridge Development:** Mooney updated the members as to the status of the 150+ acre development site known as Maple Ridge. The owner wishes to place some if not all of the property into a NRCS conservation easement and he has the full support of the

Commission and other municipal groups in town in addition to regional and state agencies. Unfortunately funding for this year has been cut in half, he will need to do a new appraisal, and he can no longer wait while mortgage expenses continue to accrue. Mr. Falzone will speak before an upcoming Planning Board meeting to ask for permission to begin an abbreviated version of the development, to develop one third in an Open Space Development in the southeastern sector with a single road with a cul-de-sac or tennis racquet design at this time. In view of this new NRCS financial situation the Commission discussed increasing the support from the Town's Conservation Fund for this parcel, because it contains habitats of the highest ranking from NH Fish and Game and the Wildlife Action Plan and would continue to provide water resource protection in the area. The additional monies from the Fund would be "borrowed" from another commitment made by the Commission for an abutting project that has stretched over the last several years with minimum forward progress. Additionally, without the easement protection of the Maple Ridge parcel, the other abutting property would most likely be downgraded in its NRCS application because it would lose some high-ranking points. To this end, a motion was made by Shippee-Rice" to increase the support for the Maple Ridge conservation easement up to \$200,000 due to its highest ranked habitats and water resource protection and its connectivity to other open spaces and conservation lands but only if the Planning Board approves the design by a poll of the members which most likely would include a cul-de-sac." The motion was seconded by Lamb. All seven (7) votes were in favor.

**By-Laws and Rules of Procedure:** Members each received a personal copy for their folders. Four copies were signed by the members present, a copy each for the town clerk and Business Office and two copies for the Commission's files. Smith will sign at the first opportunity and then the copies will be distributed.

**Memorandum of Understanding (MOU):** Lamb will write the final copy and will send the final copy to Mooney to duplicate for placement into the files for use.

Shippee-Rice moved that the meeting be adjourned. The motion was seconded by Lamb. All seven votes were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 8:56.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan P. Mooney, Secretary

These minutes were approved as read at the meeting held on May 11, 2011.