

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Boscawen Municipal Complex

March 19, 2024

Final Minutes

Present: Alan Hardy, Chair, Jeff Abbe, Aurel Mihai, Norman LaPierre, Betsey McNaughten, and Matthew Burdick, Member Ex-Officio.

Alternate Members Present: Gary Tillman.

Excused: Mark Kaplan, Charlie Niebling, Town Forester.

Staff Present: Rose Fife, Recording Secretary, Ruth Ashby, Planning and Community Development Assistant and Kellee Jo Easler, Planning and Community Development Director.

Regular Business:

- Open by Chair at 6:30 pm
- Roll call by Recording Secretary

Turtle Discussion – Betsey gave a history of how this presentation came to be. Josh Megyesy NHFG Wildlife Biologist who is with the ‘non-game program’ made a presentation regarding Turtles. There are seven species of native turtles in NH. He reviewed each type of turtle in the area. You can tell the age of Wood Turtles by the lines on their under (belly) shell. They live up to 75 or 80 years old. They live in winding streams. Spotted turtles use wetlands and vernal pools. They are the 5th largest contraband trade. They do not reproduce until they are 15 years old. There is a reporting website to report vernal pools, which is an important project. You can also use it to report species. Culverts are not something turtles would use. A box culvert is much more useable for them. It is wide enough and gets enough daylight in them and is more appealing to a turtle. Mr. Mihai asked about the natural bottom culverts and what type of materials should be used. “Trails for People and Wildlife” shows you which trails will have a high negative impact on wildlife. He added educational snippet regarding frogs as well.

Ms. McNaughten discussed placement of turtle crossing signs. High turtle areas would be on Queen Street and Corn Hill Road. She would like to suggest they utilize the flip signs so they can flip them up when it is not the turtle season. Ms. McNaughten would like this item placed back on the agenda for discussion. Chair Hardy agreed. They can discuss placement. Mr. Megyesy offered to help with the locations of the signs. Signs cannot be placed on state highways, only on town roadways. Mr. Megyesy asked for a list of road names, and he will make recommendations on where the signs should be placed. Ms. McNaughten will contact Ms. Easler to get the town road listing for him. Chair Hardy would like to order the signs. Mr. Mihai would like to ask Mr. Hollins of DPW to install the signs. Mr. Mihai suggested 2 signs per crossing. Mr. Megyesy suggested getting 24-inch road signs. Ms. Easler will order the signs. A **motion** to order 8 signs was made by Ms. McNaughten. Abbe suggested 1 per crossing. Chair Hardy noted there are 4 locations, and they will need 8 signs. The **motion** was seconded by Mr. Mihai and passed by a unanimous vote. Ms. Easler will order them. Mr. Burdick will send Ms. Easler the information. Mr. Mihai asked Mr. Megyesy if there is a hyperlink to a good site for turtle information? Mr. Megyesy would be happy to share the species slides he presented.

Consent Agenda:

- Accountant’s Report – 3/19/24
- Review Draft Minutes – 2/20/24

- Legal Review for Walker Pond Dam – 3/11/24
- NHACC Membership Dues – 10/04/23

Chair Hardy explained that because they will not have a budget, they will be operating from their own funds for most of their bills. He will put the bills in the consent agenda for approval. A **motion** to approve the consent agenda was made by Mr. Mihai, seconded by Mr. Abbe, and passed by a unanimous vote.

Chair Hardy reported that Lyman Cousens has asked to resign from the Conservation Commission. A **motion** to accept the resignation, with regret after many years of service, was made by Mr. Burdick, seconded by LaPierre, and passed by a unanimous vote.

Old Business:

- Town Forest Update/Discussion – Mr. Abbe has nothing to report regarding trails. Mr. Mihai discussed the kiosk and how they could better use it. If they bolt on a display case, it would be easier to use and to update. It would need to have a lock on it. He has not had a chance to measure it. He believes it is a few hundred dollars. They could post things seasonally. Mr. Mihai will measure it and bring a quote back to the Board. Mr. Niebling had made one for the Town Forest across from the old Marshall's gun shop. Mr. Abbe would like to see one like that one. Walker Pond could use one as well. Mr. Hardy suggested they meet soon to layout general plans for the Forest at Walker Pond. Mr. Mihai reported that there is not as much to do out there as was thought initially. They may need a wetland scientist to delineate where they could work out at Walker Pond. He would like to discuss it with Forester Niebling as well. Mr. Burdick asked if they had any digital versions of the trails so they could access them with their phone. The maps are on the current Boscawen website.

Chair Hardy and Mr. Mihai discussed a dedicated website for the Conservation Commission. Mr. Mihai reported on this item. They could have links for hiking trails, etc. Boscawen's website is busy. They are locked into the template there. He would like to streamline it. They could have trail maps, their projects, their forests, and easements along with the history of them. He suggested where the site could be hosted. He mocked up a site. They should think about a 'catchy name'; something short and easy to remember. New London's was NLCCH. He suggested Boscawen Conservation or BCCH. Anyone can send in content or ideas and whoever is maintaining it (he can do that), he can turn it into a page on the site. Chair Hardy thought it was a great idea and if Mr. Mihai was willing to handle that, it would be great. Mr. Abbe asked if they could link it to the town website. All said yes. Mr. Mihai wanted to know what the next steps would be that the Commission would like to see. He can make a mockup but would like input. He suggested looking at the Forest Society website as a good example.

New Business:

- Town Meeting Update/Discussion – Chair Hardy reported that the Commission was supported by most of the people who spoke. There is still some misunderstanding about how the process works. He would like to start discussing the parking lot and the demolition of the building in the Walker Pond Forest. He will ask Dean Hollins to come to the next meeting to discuss what he has found while researching how to remove that building. Matt Burdick also noted that Mason Donovan helped with information.
- Annual Election of Chair and Vice-Chair – Chair is a 1-year term. A **motion** to keep Chair Hardy as Chair and Mr. Abbe as Vice Chair was made by Ms. McNaughten, seconded by Mr. LaPierre, and passed by a unanimous vote.

Ms. McNaughten reported that 'Saving Special Places' is April 6, 2024 in Alton. Mr. Abbe reported that they have 30 people per class. Get in touch with Ms. Gallagher tomorrow if you want to go.

Ms. Easler reported that the Planning Board is talking about updating the Zoning Ordinance. They will start in late spring. If there is anything they would like to bring forward, please let her know as soon as possible.

Non-Public:

- RSA 91-A:3, II, (c) & (d) *tentatively*

A **motion** to adjourn at 8:27 pm was made by Ms. McNaughten, seconded by Mr. LaPierre, and passed by a unanimous vote.

Next Meeting: April 16th, 2024 @ 6:30 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted,
Rose Fife, Recording Secretary*