

## **New Boston Conservation Commission (NBCC)**

### **Meeting Minutes**

March 8, 2012

**Members In Attendance:** Laura Bernard, Barbara Thomson, Burr Tupper, Amy Elkes-Simon, Gerry Cornett

**Members Absent:** Mike DePetrillo, Ed Gilligan, Tom Morgan, Rick Searle, Rebecca Balke

**Guests In Attendance:** Lee Brown

**Additional Work For Maralyn:** Burr said the Rail Trail Committee is meeting every five or six weeks and asked if Maralyn would like to take minutes at these meetings as the process is expected to become very involved. The committee will keep Maralyn posted on meeting dates. Barbara and Cyndie Wilson have been organizing Conservation Commission files kept at the Town Hall. Maralyn was asked to help with this and was also asked to maintain a Conservation Commission active project spreadsheet Laura has created.

**Secretary's Report:** The members reviewed the minutes and corrections were noted. Laura moved to accept the February minutes as amended. Gerry seconded the motion. All approved.

**Treasurer's Report:** Rebecca was unable to attend tonight's meeting to report.

**Railtrail Enhancement Plan Update:** Lee Brown was present to update the Commission on Railtrail Committee progress as follows:

- Plan drawings were reviewed and will be filed with the Conservation Commission in the Railtrail file. Lee said the committee has been thinking of issues to address during this project.
- They reached out to the Goffstown Railtrail Committee to see what they have done and what kind of money is needed. Lee met with a Goffstown Selectmen who is overseeing the rail to trails project in Goffstown and is a retired civil engineer. He provided cost figures on their project and said Goffstown depended a lot on state and federal grants. Goffstown costs were reviewed as follows. Their trail is planned for 5.5 miles. New Boston's trail is 4 miles long. It has cost Goffstown \$600,000 to improve 2.25 miles of trail including land acquisition of \$300,000, crosswalks and other items they needed as they are an urban area. New Boston will not be responsible for a lot of these items. This person will attend the next Railtrail meeting to speak to the Committee. This trail could lead to linkage with Manchester. The Goffstown trail begins behind Cumberland Farms. Barbara said Goffstown doesn't yet own all the land needed to complete the trail 5 miles to Manchester.
- Randy Parker got old drawings of the area from B&M Railroad and sent PDF copies to the Conservation Commission, which are kept on a CD in the file.

- Railtrail Committee members walked the trail and found wetlands issues that they are now working on with NH DES. Some old drainage is installed in the form of wooden box culverts. The Committee is locating these and explaining to DES that the work can be done in these areas without a lot of permits. Town Engineer Kevin Leonard is working with the Committee. An all boards meeting with appropriate town departments is planned at DES to determine what is needed for permit approval to upsize the current wooden culverts that have rotted out. Barbara was concerned that drainage ditches have been filled in but Lee believes they are allowed to be worked in and can be cleaned and replaced as necessary without a permit. Burr is checking to make sure this work is done legally.
- Burr reached out to the NH DRED Division of Forests and Lands who owns Lang Station State Forest and met with the forester and land agent who is open to additional parking, updating the building and removing trees to bring the trail back on to the right of way in the area. They may also provide funds to assist with these improvements once a plan is in place.
- Burr and Lee met with Willard Dodge from 4H who is very enthusiastic and considering pursuing a right of way to the trail on the 4H grounds. Barbara found a letter from 4H to Randy Parker dated 1979 saying there was a swap of a right of way to another piece. The Commission plans to research this more by finding further letters from 4H or researching at the registry of deeds. Laura will research this online. The Commission will continue to pursue a right of way on the 4H grounds and feels this is critical if the 4H grounds is ever not owned by 4H.
- Lee says the project needs to include upgrading two wooden plank bridges to allow heavy equipment access to the town-owned section of the rail trail on Tax Map Lot 5-59, which lies between the section of the Rail Trail on Lot 8-38 which is owned by the 4-H Foundation, and the section of the Rail Trail on Lot 6-12-1 which is owned by the state. The 4H Foundation said it planned to improve the wooden plank bridge on their property, identified on the B&M Railroad Track Map as "Culvert #423 at 22,277.2", using two precast concrete panels. The estimate from Mitchie is \$4,000. Burr asked the Conservation Commission to consider offering to pay half of this cost and asked for someone to move to that effect. Gerry suggested offering to pay for the whole thing in exchange for the right of way. Barbara thought it too early for a separate motion on rail trail project expenditures. Barbara is concerned about considering this type of offer outside of the project itself because of the state's concern over Conservation Commission spending. She thought that improving access is part of phase one of the rail trail project and should not be broken out separately. The members decided to discuss this with the 4H Foundation.

Maintenance of the existing footbridge over the Middle Branch at Lang Station, while located on state land tax between tax map lots 6-12-1 and 6-13, is the Conservation Commission's responsibility. There is some money currently in the Lang Station bridge fund. Laura will ask Rebecca about this.

- Lee said the committee has to prepare a budget and prioritize project items. He is trying to meet with Jay from NH DOT to put figures together. A resident has come forward who is a former grant writer. The Committee is considering paying her to find grants for this project. It is important to plan where to get money for this project. Lee also suggested the Committee could set up a non-profit 5013C for fundraising for this project but there is an \$800 filing fee for this status. Barbara is concerned because she has heard about restrictions on horses. She suggested contacting the Piscataquog Area Trailways Board to see if they would be willing to allow the Railtrail Committee to use their non-profit filing for fundraising to avoid filing for a new one. Lee and Burr are interested in discussing this with the Railtrail Committee. The members asked if the Piscataquog River Local Advisory (PRLAC) should interface on this project and Burr said they will be kept informed as a courtesy because it is a designated river system. Burr is willing to set up an informational meeting with them and they will also be cc'd on the notification the abutters receive. Burr expects they will support the project as they operate under DES.
- Burr distributed an article from Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission following up on a project the Conservation Commission was involved in where DES got a grant to assess all culverts beginning in the spring. There are 536 total and some may be part of the railtrail. People involved with the Conservation Commission and PRLAC will be asked if they are interested in helping with this project. Barbara said this doesn't include the railtrail.
- Lee has contacted someone to add fill, if needed, to the potential parking area on Lot 3-86 next to Parker Road. This person is willing to contribute fill, and clear the Riverside Drive side as well.
- The Conservation Commission thanked Lee for his efforts and asked him to keep them updated on this project.

**Monitoring Reports:** Barbara gave the monitoring reports as follows:

- She has been working with intern Joshua Forand boundary marking the railtrail. They are almost done except for the information needed where abutters have placed "POSTED Private Property" signs inside the trail boundary.
- Scofield boundary was marked and GPS done on the trail. No boundary marker was placed at one corner where the trail is now on private property but the residents at Map 8 Lot 2 have yard and garden activity on the conservation land. The trail is now well worn through their property. The Committee discussed a real estate law that says if land is used by someone more than seven years that becomes their land and also discussed some options including tagging their deed, do a lot line adjustment or trade land. There is also a lot for sale near the trail. Laura spoke to Open Space Committee Chairman Ken Lombard who said people are not supposed to enter the trail from the Clark Hill Road entrance they are supposed to use the main entrance on Briar Hill Road.
- Trail maps: Laura, Rebecca and Barbara met, did initial work and planned the brochure (trail map/trail guide).

- Phase one of the filing project is complete. Phase two will be to further organize and optionally scan material in each folder.
- Gerry noted a paper drive will be held and asked if the Conservation Commission would like to be a cosponsor along with the Boy and Girl Scouts. The Commission was interested.
- Signs were installed at Lyndeborough Road East, Saunders Pasture and Betsy Dodge.
- Some tags were put up at Bog Brook. There was a question if the town owned a right of way on the west side of the southern end to Indian falls. Laura spoke with Ken who said he doesn't think so. People walk there but that is private property. The owner of the white house on Bedford Road was willing to give a right of way but the owner of the property on the Bog Brook side of the area was not. The Commission will try to talk to them about this possibility again or try to access the area from a different property. Ken also said they tried at the Christie Road side but it would not get someone to Indian falls. This will be added to the action item list. A small sign will be installed at the Bog Brook Preserve indicating "Bog Brook Conservation Land" or "Bog Brook Conservation Area" with a town logo.
- Nothing new at Mill Pond.
- Randy and Barbara decided to change part of the Saunders Pasture trail and the change was reviewed.
- Burr noted he would like to begin cleaning trails in the spring. He wondered if Willard would be willing to bring the brush hog he is planning to use at the Betsy Dodge trail to other trails. Burr would like the Commission to remove logs then use a brush hog or weed wacker and finally schedule a trail maintenance day in June or July to invite the public to help finish the cleanup. It will be advertised in the New Boston Bulletin. Lyn Lombard is working on an article for the railtrail.
- Gerry, Burr and Barbara will walk the proposed trail and decide what needs to be done. This will be added as an action item for next month.

**Saunders Trail Development:** Gerry and Burr walked the Saunders Pasture trail where there were significant signs of deer. They are reluctant to thin the stand until it grows back up. Winter has been too warm so the boundaries of this area cannot be verified. It will be tagged to the stonewall in the northeast corner, not the class VI road. The old stone path will be cleared someday as part of the clearing and logging.

**Signage Update:** Gerry has designed potential trail markers. They will be two colors, fully reflective and shine white at night. They cost 45 cents each for reflective white plus one other color. The other color cannot be green because white and green means boundary. Each marker will be numbered and marked on the map to make trails easier for inexperienced hikers or for emergency situations. Laura moved to authorize Gerry to order 750 blue and 750 orange trail markers. Amy seconded the motion. All approved.

**Kiosk Plans:** Burr asked Rick to look into designing a kiosk after receiving a request from Fish and Game to note the presence of floater mussels to protect them. A kiosk to post information with a roof over it is planned for the rail trail and the parking lots at

Saunders Pasture and Betsy Dodge. Gerry suggested laser letters into a material at the kiosks. It was also suggested the kiosks at Route 136 toward Francestown, Pulpit Rock and Goffstown Rail Trail be used for ideas for the New Boston kiosks. Gerry and Bill Morrissey are planning information stops along the New Boston rail trail including smartphone use where information about the trail can be viewed on smartphones. Bob Todd had some information on Great Meadows and Burr will ask him if he has similar information on other areas as well.

**Appointments:** Ed Gilligan was a full member of the Commission and now has to resign. Rick is an alternate and may be interested in being a full member. Barbara will continue as an alternate. Tom, Burr, Amy, Laura, Gerry and Rebecca are full members. Appointment applications will be submitted to the Selectmen for approval.

**SNHPC Open House (Watershed Culvert Assessment):** SNHPC asked the Conservation Commission to work with them to sponsor an open house for all Conservation Commissions in the Piscataquog Watershed Association. Laura is working on this and the library seems like the perfect place to hold it. Presentations of the culvert assessment and watershed conservation program will be discussed at the open house. The date will be discussed at the April 5 meeting. April 11 or 12 seem possible. The Commission will secure the location. SNHPC will send all invites. SNHPC is meeting with the Planning Board to discuss the master plan at the next Planning Board meeting.

**New Boston's 250<sup>th</sup> Celebration:** The Conservation Commission wants to do something for the celebration. Laura said the Committee is in the early planning stages and is discussing fundraising. The Commission suggested possible events including railtrail day, highlight a specific property, hike and picnic, winter party at Betsy Dodge pond, stargazing at Saunders Pasture or a tour with a historic theme including the dam on Betsy Dodge, old mill locations or First Settlement. The Commission will think about this more and consider combining resources with the Recreation Department or Forestry Committee to sponsor an event.

Barbara moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:43 PM. Laura seconded the motion. All approved.

Respectfully submitted, Maralyn Segien