

**CONSERVATION COMMISSION**  
**December 13, 2016**  
**Draft Minutes**

**CALL TO ORDER:**

The session was called to order by Chair Carlos Guindon at 7:01 pm.

1. Members present were Todd Piskovitz; Anne Surman, Selectmen's Representative; William Campbell, Vice Chair; Carlos Guindon, Chair, Virginia Raub, Clerk; Andrew Koff, Treasurer; and David O'Hearn, Alternate.

Staff present were Kristen Murphy, Natural Resources Planner and David Pancoast, Recording Secretary.

The Chair announced that he won't be present for any meetings in January.

2. Public Comment:

A local Boy Scout who didn't give his name, was there with his father, pursuing his merit badge for attendance at government meetings.

**ACTION ITEMS:**

- 1. Forest management plan development opportunity for Elliott Conservation Parcel**

Ms. Murphy got an email from Brooke Smart of NRCS with which they have a Conservation Agreement on the Elliott Property that NRCS funded to help protect. She discussed a Forest Management Plan proposal which came to her from NRCS. The Commission has to get a forester for Phase I and NRCS will contract with that person and pay for doing it. She wanted to find out if the Commission was interested in pursuing development of a Forest Management Plan ("MP") there. The property is about 33-34 acres. Mr. Campbell asked if a forester would be able to tell if logging is viable. Ms. Murphy said there is no requirement to log the property, they just need to consider a plan for it. Mr. Guindon said an MP would be good even if it's too small to log it. Invasive species are present and perhaps they could get some information on them and on management of those. Ms. Murphy said probably the Commission should be receptive to logging if they are going to enter the process at all. If not, then perhaps it's best to let some other entity benefit from the NRCS funding that might result.

There was discussion on past logging at the property. Mr. O'Hearn gave some background on it and suggested an MP would be a good thing to have there. Ms. Raub said the timeline is important on this, need to act since the program runs out in July. Ms. Murphy agreed they need to give NRCS time to act on it before that program runs out.

Mr. Campbell said he agreed with Mr. O'Hearn that it would be great to have an MP on this. The access is an issue there. No big logging road/landing is possible there. Mr. O'Hearn said that winter operations would likely be viable on this parcel if any could be done. Mr. Campbell said that they should try to get a forester to do an MP. Mr. Guindon agreed but thought that they should not mislead anyone on logging it, should voice their reservations on that. Mr. O'Hearn said maybe a forester would recommend cutting it not for profit but for wildlife habitat. It was last logged in about 1985/86. Ms. Murphy discussed access, which is difficult on this one. Might be able to access it through the Oakland property. Even if not logged, a brontosaurus machine might do some good. Ms. Murphy explained that Phase II (action) would be paid by the Commission, not NRCS. Mr. Campbell moved that the Commission enter into an agreement with NRCS to do a forest management plan for Phase I for the Elliott Property and have Ms. Murphy engage a forester to pursue that. Mr. O'Hearn seconded and it passed unanimously. The Chairs agreed that Mr. O'Hearn was authorized to vote since Ms. Eberhardt was not present tonight.

## **2. 2017 Annual Priority Setting**

The Chair opened the discussion on this topic and asked for Commissioner input.

### **February Events:**

There was discussion on the February events and snow and clearing for parking at events. It may be worthwhile to set an upper limit for attendance at events if parking can't be accommodated.

Ms. Raub said she will handle the Raynes Barn event again. There was discussion on getting the information display boards out to the Barn in advance for that event. Ben Anderson (who lives across the street) has a snowmobile and he might use it to pack down the loop for the trail. There was discussion on packing down the loop trail.

### **Raynes State Register Listing:**

Ms. Raub reported that Don Briseldon, Ms. Murphy and she had met a few weeks ago and divided the work and it's in progress. There was discussion on when the submission is due.

### **Raynes CIP in 2017 for Fall 2018:**

Ms. Murphy said that there should be more advance planning for any CIP items, someone presents the matter to the Planning Board at the appropriate time.

### **Blandings (turtles)/Vernal Pool Education Event-Forest Ridge Homeowners Association (HOA)-Spring.**

The HOA person at Forest Ridge reached out to NH Fish and Game for assistance and they are interested. Forest Ridge is off Upton Road north of the powerlines. A huge portion of the Conservation Land there is the powerline corridor, which is a large breeding area for Blandings Turtles.

**Trail Passports:**

Ms. Murphy explained that that some assistance in setting this up would be necessary. There were four areas to be considered. Mr. Campbell said he would help.

**McDonnell Scout Project:**

Ms. Raub met with some Boy Scouts and their fathers and they are going to pursue a kiosk project, with a design and presentation to go to the Scouting Board and then to the Commission. It will large enough to prevent disturbance/moving/theft. Area neighbors are aware of it.

**Interns for Property Inspections-Summer:**

Chair Guindon said that the program might include marking trails. Ms. Murphy said the trails in the cut area need a lot of attention and marking. Boundary marking would also be a big benefit to the Commission. Ms. Murphy said trail maintenance was done last time.

**New Little River Trail:**

The Chair said trail completion is necessary. Mr. Koff said progress is coming along. There was discussion on the locale and the trails. The Chair explained that most work has been done, very little heavy work needs to be done at this point. Would be nice to have marking flags. Mr. Campbell said the developer was discussing changing the right of way to accommodate better access. Mr. Guindon said 4-5 folks could do it in a day. There was discussion on this.

Ms. Raub asked about tackling invasive species in Henderson Swasey forest area, that they should do it in May before they get too active. Mr. Guindon said they need the resources to do it. Ms. Murphy said that it could be an Earth Day Event (April 22). Mr. Guindon said it needs to be hands-on and pulling them is a learning experience. There is an extensive area of invasives there that needs attention. Charlie Marino might be worth contacting. Ms. Raub said she knows a licensed backpack sprayer for that.

Trail marking at Henderson is necessary. Only thing marked is main routes, some approved routes not marked and some unapproved routes exist as well. Trails Committee meeting should be held on this.

**National Trails Day Event-June 4, 2017:**

This is an annual event for the Commission and will keep it. Mr. Guindon said there is no point person on the Commission right now for trails and someone is needed to fulfill that role. Mr. Koff agreed to be the point person for the Commission on trails and especially to work with the Trails Committee. Mr. Campbell said that a Trails Committee meeting should be scheduled for March or April and folks need to be able to get out on to trails after that meeting so it's fresh. Mr. Guindon said more focus on maintenance needs to be done now. Ms. Murphy said marking approved trails is important and should be done soon, so that unapproved trails aren't continuing to be used. Blazes on trees have been a source of complaints-they aren't obvious.

Ms. Murphy suggested that Jingle Bells Rock be painted and located on a property and hints are given every day to help folks find it. Could use it to get folks out to trails/properties. Need list of things to scavenge and forms and teams, etc. for Scavenger Hunt. Need proofs via cell phone pix. Need a good prize to offer. Ms. Raub will think about it.

**Earth Day Event (4/22):**

The intent is to have some folks to do trail work and maintenance.

**Woodcock Walk at Raynes or Morrissette-late March or early April:**

Discussion was held on this and being sure birds are present before the walk is conducted. There was discussion on the spectacle and how exciting it is to see.

**Great Pumpkin Toss:**

This was added as an annual event It will be held on the first Saturday in November (after Halloween).

**3. Committee Reports:**

**a. Property Management**

Ms. Murphy reported that property inspections have been held. One on Oakland is scheduled for tomorrow. There is another on Thursday in same area. 80 Epping Road involved the Conservation Deed section on moving into a new building prior to issuance of Certificate of Occupancy for the building. Baseline documents are okay. She found nearly all the markers but not all. Discussion on Baseline Reports was held. The \$1000 fee was discussed.

There was discussion on the monitoring. Ms. Murphy said new property owner is amenable to all this. No landscaping has been done. There was discussion on trash in easement area.

**b. Trails**

Mr. O’Hearn presented copies to the Commission of his findings on use of bikes on trails. Rogue trails should be roped off/blocked and then rogue trail folks would get the idea. Trails need to be well-marked and authorized or not authorized. There is a Town Ordinance allowing bikes on marked trails. How to approach it will be key, per Chair. Ms. Raub said there is a trail on the website marked unauthorized and there was discussion on that. The point was raised that over fifty homes are proposed to go in on Epping Road. Mr. Koff said a Trails Committee meeting in Feb or March would be important to advance resolution of this problem. Discussion was held on balance between bikes and wildlife values on properties.

**c. Outreach**

Ms. Murphy was approached by Channel 22 on doing a film for recreational opportunities to get the word out. Bob Glowacky of the Activities Club, is interested to do a show on Channel 98 on Exeter Outdoor Activities. Snowshoeing event will be filmed with a host and have opportunities for the Commission to get the word out to folks. It will involve all social media such as You-Tube. He is getting things going on that concept.

**4. Approval of Minutes: November 15, 2016**

There was discussion by members on corrections,. After discussion of clarifications, corrections, additions and deletions to these minutes , Mr. Campbell moved that subject to that discussion, these minutes should be approved as corrected. Ms. Raub seconded and it passed unanimously.

**5. Other Business:**

Ms. Murphy said she's been contacted about the Commission membership listing on website with a full vacancy shown. Legal counsel said the Board of Selectmen ("BOS") can designate a representative to report back to BOS on activities is one option but they can't vote on any public hearings. Or the BOS can appoint a voting member to the Commission which would NOT be just a BOS representative. There is an alternate and a vacancy on full membership. She to know what the Commission wants to do. It will come up at the next BOS meeting. Should the Commission facilitate process that Mr. O'Hearn be made a full voting member and Ms. Surman be a BOS Rep but not a voting member? There was discussion on this process and situation. The BOS Rep to the Planning Board is differewnt and is by statute and that Rep is a voting member of that Board. Ms. Surman said she wouldn't be disappointed if she couldn't vote, she'd rather have the full member position filled by Mr. O'Hearn. Discussion followed that no capacity exists for a BOS Rep on ConCom to be an ex officio voting member, by law. There was discussion on one year BOS appointments to ConCom.

The Chair said he would like a BOS Rep on the Commission even if they're a non-voting member. Mr. Campbell asked if the Commission should make a recommendation to the BOS. Ms. Surman said it would be great to have a recommendation. Discussion was that BOS Rep is important, even if can't vote. Discussion lead to the notion of having the BOS Rep serve as an Alternate Member so they can be pulled into voting if a quorum is needed. Consensus was that the Alternate idea is a good one. Mr. Piskovitz then moved that the Commission recommend to the BOS that it appoint Dave O'Hearn as full member aof the Commission and the BOS Rep as an Alternate Member. That was seconded by Mr. Campbell and approval was voted unanimously.

Mr. Campbell raised the Pete Richardson memorial, talked to Jay Perkinson to put a brass plaque at Founder's Park with an appropriate sentiment that captures Pete's spirit, essentially stating that "He left the world better than he found it," to replace one of the plaques that are

there. It can be done for \$25 or so. If ConCom wants to do it, he will pursue it. Need to know how to pay for it and he suggested a ceremony in Spring 2017 commemorating it with the public and the Richardson Family. Mr. Perkinson said he'd put it in his budget. Ms. Eberhardt had said she'd participate and Mr. Campbell said he would as well. Mr. Guindon liked the quoted language. It will be funded privately at about \$5 per person. Everyone should email Mr. Campbell if they want to contribute and he'll find out the actual price. He hopes it will go on one of the three benches that are overlooking the river. No votes were necessary.

Mr. Raub said the holiday show across the street is being held and that proceeds are going to the Raynes Farm property. It is held this coming Saturday and Sunday, 12 noon to 4 pm, ends this weekend.

Mr. O'Hearn said that he is an advocate for young forest for diverse habitat. 231 acres of prime oak tree land exists in Town, but intense development has reduced openings and increased fragmentation. Songbird populations have decreased. He proposed that a program to patch-cut poplar and aspen be undertaken to reroot areas without seeding and the resulting growth is good browse for deer and other species. There was discussion on aspects of this concern.

**6. Next Meeting: Date Scheduled (1/10/17), Submission Deadline (12/30/16)**

**7. Adjournment:**

There being no other business before the Commission, Mr. Campbell moved to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Raub and the vote was unanimously approved. Chair Guindon adjourned the session at 9:23 pm.

[A Work Session ensued, held off the public record]

Respectfully submitted by David Pancoast, Recording Secretary.