

Deering Conservation Commission
762 Deering Center Road
Deering, NH 03244

Minutes for 08 March 2021 Meeting

Attendance:

Commission members: Stacie Hernandez, Gary Samuels, Mike Thomas, Rebecca Mitchell, Jackie Sawyer, Dennis Sawyer, Kay Hartnett

Also present: Glenn Clark, Lucas Turcotte, Russel McAlister

Call to order: The meeting was called to order at 6:30 by Gary Samuels.

Minutes: The minutes of the meeting on February 8, 2021 were approved.

Correspondence: Public notice of the Franconia planning board to review the final application for subdivision located at 1318 Old County Rd, to be held at 6pm on March 16th.

Old Business: N/A

New Business:

Proposed Watershed Ordinance

The changes to Deering's Watershed Ordinance, proposed by Planning Board, are on the town ballot on 9 March.

The main thrust of the proposed revision of the Watershed Ordinance was to require builders to obtain a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) from Planning Board before undertaking any new construction within the watershed. Conservation Commission considers this an important and useful requirement.

However, among many changes, the requirements for maintenance of septic systems and for allowing no more than 10% of a homeowner's land to be converted to lawn were removed from the Watershed Ordinance to Site Regulations as part of the CUP application. This has two effects. First, the CUP refers to new construction. Owners of existing homes within the watershed are now regulated by a Watershed Ordinance that says nothing about existing homes. Second, the revised Watershed Ordinance allows for granting of waivers from regulations. Changes to the CUP may be made without consulting town residents via a vote.

At the BOS meeting of 4 March Planning Board member Sharon Simpson made the point that Planning Board is not an enforcement agent. It was suggested that septic regulations be referred to BOS for development of a by-law that can be enforced.

Town Administrator Russ McAlister noted that violations of ordinances can be appealed by homeowners, thereby slowing the process while allowing continuation of the offensive activity. The planning board can already change their site plan regulations. This is an argument for controlling septic issues as a by-law under the BOS.

Stacie voiced concerns over the monitoring of non-point source pollution, such as the livestock runoff. Non-point source pollution is difficult to pin-point on a certain property. The conservation commission participates in the DES Volunteer Lake water quality testing program (VLAP). Water samples are taken at several defined stream entries into the lake. DES tests these samples for water quality and reports annually to the town on water quality at each of the several tested sites. From these reports it is not possible to determine exact sources of pollution (e.g farm or home site), only sampled regions of the lake. Stacie noted the need for more precision in locating sources of pollution. She suggested that livestock owners in the watershed be urged to prevent runoff and manage nutrient discharge into the by working cooperatively with NRCS or the conservation district for farm planning services. This should be incorporated into a revised watershed ordinance.

Motion that the Conservation Commission fully supports the planning boards effort to clearly define the building process in the watershed and new language which better protects the watershed, however, due to the removal of the sewer and lawn regulations, the Conservation Commission does not support the proposed watershed ordinance as written. Voted unanimously in approval of the motion.

Membership

Gary Bono passed away in mid-February. Gary was deeply involved in all activities of the Conservation Commission during the first decades of the 2000's. Chairman Samueols briefly recounted Mr Bono's many and diverse activities as a Conservation Commission member, and has sent the Conservation Commission's condolences to Mr Bono's family.

Lucas Turcotte expressed interest in joining the conservation commission. Commission members recommended that Lucas' nomination be forwarded to BOS for them to appoint him as a member of Conservation Commission.

Wood Duck Box Final Report for 2020-2021

60% use rate for boxes this year. A couple boxes had to be moved to open water and were installed with a metal pipe.

Pollinator Garden Update

Mike sent along the proposed budget and the expenditures. It will be \$348 for first round of materials. Funding for the pollinator garden will come from the town conservation fund. A motion to approve the expenditure was approved unanimously.

Lake Host Program Update

All in favor for motion to approve the Lake Host Program's salary increase to \$13-15/hr to remain competitive with other lake programs.

NRRA Compost Bins

Kay is on the board for the Hillsborough Transfer Station and recommends that the Transfer Station pursue this NRRA initiative.

Summer Camp Update

Waiting for invoices. All six applicants were approved for the camps that they wanted.

Saving Special Places

Virtual this year.

Conservation Easement Donation Update

PLC trustees approved acceptance of the donation of a single conservation easement covering four town-owned parcels (Tax map 219, lot 2; Tax Map 222, lot 6, Tax Map 223, Lots 8, 9). Of these, only Lot 219, 2 (approx. 65 ac) requires a survey. Two bids for survey were received by PLC, the lowest (\$10,000) was accepted. This amount is the amount initially estimated for the survey. The survey will take place this spring.

Election of Officers

Motion that Gary Samuels continue as the chairman. **All approved.**

Motion that Mike Thomas start in the role as vice chair. **All approved.**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 by Chairman Samuels.

The next meeting will be held on April 12th in Town Hall or virtually.

Respectfully submitted,

Stacie Hernandez

Deering Conservation Commission