

**ADOPTED**

**City of Keene**  
**New Hampshire**

**CONSERVATION COMMISSION**  
**MEETING MINUTES**

**Monday, September 18, 2017**

**4:30 PM**

**2nd Floor Conference Room,  
City Hall**

**Members Present:**

Thomas Haynes, Chair  
Councilor Jan Manwaring  
Councilor George Hansel  
Brian Reilly  
Denise Burchsted  
Alexander Von Plinsky IV, Alternate

**Staff Present:**

**Members Not Present:**

Sadie Butler, Vice Chair  
Andrew Madison  
Eloise Clark, Alternate

**1) Call to Order**

Chair Haynes called the meeting to order at 4:33 PM.

**2) Approval of Minutes – August 21, 2017**

Dr. Burchsted made a motion to approve the minutes of August 21, 2017, which was seconded by Dr. Reilly.

Dr. Burchsted noted on page 2/7, “detention basin” should be corrected to “tension basin.” Dr. Reilly noted on page 2/7, “mild steel bolts” should be corrected to “meld steel bolts.”

The motion to approve the minutes of August 21, 2017 as amended carried unanimously.

**3) Communication and Notifications**

No communications or notifications.

**4) Greater Goose Pond Forest Stewardship Plan RFO Updates**

Chair Haynes said right now Moosewood Ecological is working on a scope of work and budget to be approved through the City. He is unsure what the delay is; Councilor Hansel said it may be waiting to go through a Committee cycle for approval and if going before the Finance Committee that will likely occur next week. Chair Haynes said this has to occur before they can sign the contract and hopefully it will happen sooner than later so they have the entire fall season to collect data.

Dr. Reilly recalled the Committee was supposed to receive the first 12 pages of the RFQ that Moosewood Ecological submitted. Chair Haynes will ask Ms. Kessler to send it. Councilor Manwaring inquired about Ms. Kessler’s absence, noting there is a shortage of staff for Committee’s but statutorily, this Committee is required to have staff representation; if she will

not be as present, the Commission needs to know how to step up and fill the gaps they can. Chair Haynes noted she has had conflicts for the past few meetings and as far as he knows she is still with the Commission. Dr. Burchsted noted it is really the Planning Department in general that is shorthanded right now; Councilor Hansel noted they are not short-staffed but have many big projects going on, like the Land Use Code Update. Chair Haynes said he thinks all staff would like Committee's to do as much as they can to help and Ms. Kessler will let the Commission know how they can help; the dialogue is open and will continue.

**5) Aquatic Resource Mitigation Subcommittee Update**

Dr. Burchsted reported that she, Chair Haynes, and Mr. Von Plinsky had met in the last month and discussed compiling the information she shared with the Commission. She said the idea of the schematic presented was to have a visual of all the possible projects discussed so far and how they have been arranged into the identified target areas (Ashuelot River north of West Street, Beaver Brook, Hurricane/Grimes Brook, and other identified projects). She wanted to check-in with the Commission for any feedback and will email Ms. Clark to review it with her as well. She has a follow-up call into Lori Sommer at NH DES to make sure this list is on the right track. Dr. Burchsted has the impression that synergistic target area projects would be more favorable to DES but wants to make sure.

Dr. Reilly asked if a project hits several different ARM fund categories if it would be higher priority. Dr. Burchsted cautioned use of the word priority, but they may be more likely to fund such projects; they also favor multiple-component projects. Councilor Hansel, Councilor Manwaring, and Dr. Reilly thanked the subcommittee for their work. Dr. Burchsted asked for comments on strategy, details, and who else should be asked to review.

Councilor Hansel said it looks good but wonders what the Commission will do when it is complete. Dr. Burchsted replied that is one of her questions for Ms. Sommer – how to move forward. She will try to speak with Ms. Sommer before the subcommittee meets again next week. She assumes this is too much to submit to DES and it will need to be further streamlined. Councilor Hansel suggested when this strategy document is complete it can be passed up through City Council with a presentation to keep it on the radar. While staff will ultimately submit this, it is the Commission's job to present it to Council so that staff knows what to work with. Councilor Manwaring agreed the Commission is setting the stage for how money will be spent so Council can be reassured it is being spent well.

Councilor Manwaring suggested that the Ashuelot River north of West Street is good but should include Goose Pond and the Farrar property. She also thinks a greenspace on the Kingsbury property should be included with Beaver Brook. Dr. Burchsted agreed she intends to add restoring the channelized section of Beaver Brook at Kingsbury as well as the Brownfield information. Councilor Manwaring said it is her opinion that ultimately the City will take that land because it is a Brownfield site.

Dr. Burchsted noted she included some locations/projects highlighted in grey that seem unlikely but can act as placeholders. Councilor Hansel said he does not think some of them are that unlikely. He also suggested Carpenter Field, though he knows it has been tried before, it has never been shut down. Dr. Burchsted noted the Planning Director was very clear that is not going anywhere. Councilor Manwaring agreed it is unlikely; she asked if the habitat in the swamp at Woodlawn Cemetery is not finished. Dr. Burchsted replied no, but it has a good start.

Dr. Reilly asked if there are only four categories from DES. Dr. Burchsted replied the four categories displayed were the ones the subcommittee decided on and can be modified. She noted the ARM fund Sample Priority List:

- Land protection priorities can include acquisitions such as: Parcels adjacent to existing conservation lands; Town forests or parcels acquired not currently protected (consider habitat value for restoration); Land in vicinity to drinking water supplies; Floodplains and riparian areas, vernal pool habitat; Farmlands with focus for enhancing wetland and stream buffers.
- Habitat restoration priorities includes projects such as: Wetland restoration—remove fill, restore hydrology, remove ditching; Restoration of streams where they have been culverted, buried, channels straightened; Enhancement of buffers where they may be lacking; Water quality improvements—look at impaired waters for best locations for improvements.
- Infrastructure modification priorities include projects such as: Culvert replacements and dam removals; Connecting sections of streams to improve passage for aquatic organisms, fish passage; Stream bank restoration / vegetated enhancement.
- Native species restoration priorities include projects such as: Eradication of invasive species—with long-term monitoring program established.

Compiling a list of projects for Keene will allow immediate applications to the ARM fund when projects are shovel-ready. Dr. Burchsted noted she is also investigating sources of funding that may be available to supplement the ARM fund. Some projects are ready to go, like the culvert replacements; they are just waiting on funds. Councilor Hansel said while there may be four projects shovel-ready, for example, the Commission should be working to get the other shovel ready in the meantime with the Land Use Tax Fund. Dr. Burchsted agreed having as many projects as possible shovel-ready allows the Commission to take advantage of any situation that arises to keep moving them all along.

Mr. Von Plinsky asked if there was anything to add from a structural standpoint on potential target area layout. Dr. Reilly suggested adding the Beech Hill Conservation Easement under the miscellaneous list, although it is not aquatic. Dr. Burchsted and Chair Haynes agreed it could be considered aquatic because there are vernal pools and upland habitat. Councilor Hansel said this is a great example of what the Commission should be doing and is an opportunity to show the Council how active the group is.

#### **6) Conservation Master Plan Retreat Discussion**

Chair Haynes reported that he has been emailing with Barbara Richter, who is interested in helping. Her dilemma is timing as she is currently planning the NH Conservation Commissions annual meeting in November. He will continue following-up with her; finding a facilitator is still ongoing. Dr. Burchsted noted David Montgomery, who is a National Academy of Science member, will be speaking at the meeting and at KSC. The Commission agreed the annual meetings are a great opportunity with workshops on diverse topics. Chair Haynes will make sure everyone gets the flyer about it.

#### **7) Public Education and Outreach**

Chair Haynes noted little progress since the last meeting but asked to brainstorm City parcels to promote as opportunities when approaching people to facilitate. He listed Goose Pond and Drummer Hill as possibilities all year. Dr. Reilly suggested Beech Hill. Councilor Manwaring suggested getting permission to walk to Woodward Pond, where visitors are not typically welcomed at the Dam; she is unsure where the reservoir plan stands, but it could be an

educational opportunity. She also suggested the Roaring Brook watershed. Chair Haynes agreed that could combine with a walk through historic Roxbury. Dr. Burchsted suggested Stearns Hill. Dr. Burchsted also suggested floating up and down the Ashuelot River (from Court Street to the dam) with an expert. She said the floodplain wetlands are fantastic and the float would be best in spring so there is enough water. Chair Haynes asked for additional ideas to be sent to him or Ms. Kessler.

**8) New or Other Business**

Councilor Manwaring noted she did not work on a criteria list and will for next month.

Councilor Hansel suggested putting a financial update on the agenda for next month; it is good timing to start looking at it.

Chair Haynes recalled that Councilor Manwaring's term expires at the end of the year and he will find out if any others expire as well. Dr. Burchsted suggested Ken Bergman as a possible new member. She will invite him to an upcoming meeting to see if he is interested. The term limit is three years, you can serve a maximum of two terms, and there must be at least one Councilor on the Commission; these are statutory guidelines.

**9) Adjournment – Next meeting date Monday October 16, 2017**

Hearing no further business, Chair Haynes adjourned the meeting at 5:19 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Katie Kibler, Minute Taker

Reviewed and edited by,  
Tara Kessler, Planner