

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

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

**Monday, July 18, 2022**

**4:30 PM**

**Room 22,  
Recreation Center**

**Members Present:**

Councilor Andrew Madison, Vice Chair  
Eloise Clark  
Councilor Robert Williams  
Art Walker  
Ken Bergman  
Thomas Haynes, Alternate  
John Therriault, Alternate (via Zoom)

**Staff Present:**

Mari Brunner, Senior Planner

**Members Not Present:**

Alexander Von Plinsky, IV, Chair  
Brian Reilly, Alternate  
Steven Bill, Alternate

**1) Call to Order**

Vice Chair Madison called the meeting to order at 4:33 PM. The Vice Chair recognized Mr. Therriault participating remotely and there were no objections. Mr. Therriault was alone at his location.

**2) Approval of Meeting Minutes - June 20, 2022**

Revisions: line 186, change “Cadadie” to “Casadei.”

A motion by Mr. Walker to adopt the June 20, 2022 minutes as amended was duly seconded by Ms. Clark. The motion passed on a unanimous roll call vote.

**3) Report-Outs**

**A) Greater Goose Pond Forest Stewardship Committee**

Mr. Haynes said the group had not met this month. He reported that Saturday July 9 was the second trails maintenance workshop addressing water issues; there were a few participants. The group installed three water bar-type apparatuses at the access trail coming from the north trailhead. He thinks it would be good to have an active list of people interested in this type of work; Commissioners should forward suggestions to Mr. Haynes. Lew Shelley, who led the workshop, suggested addressing two areas that

stay wet and muddy by dropping and peeling a nearby hemlock tree to create a walkway. Mr. Bohannon agreed, and they might do that work on July 23. They also discussed a fall workshop on bridges. They walked the lower Drummer Hill Road trail and identified some spots Mr. Shelley thinks could be improved. They will work with the New England Mountain Bike Association's large pool of volunteers.

Mr. Haynes was contacted by Chris Casadei, requesting to meet with the Subcommittee and walk the Goose Pond lands together, to perhaps combine some of his logging with what is in the Stewardship Plan. Mr. Haynes replied that the Commission is not able to do any logging at this point so walking the land together was moot.

Mr. Haynes moved to pay Lew Shelley of Snowhawk, LLC., in Walpole, NH, \$300 for the Commission's half of the July 9 trails workshop. Mr. Walker seconded the motion.

Mr. Haynes continued that this was to contribute as much as the Commission did for the June workshop and partner with Parks & Recreation again. He thought this was planned in advance but recognized that it might not have been communicated well. Mr. Bergman recalled that the Commission's budget was increased to \$2,000. Vice Chair Madison asked how long ago the July workshop was planned; Mr. Haynes replied in the spring/March and the initial plan was for the Commission to pay half.

The motion carried on a unanimous roll call vote.

Mr. Bergman clarified that the purpose of felling the hemlock was not because it is in the way, but because it could provide materials for subsequent trail improvements. Mr. Haynes agreed. This is the easiest and most cost-effective way. Mr. Bergman wondered where the logging recommended in the Greater Goose Pond Forest Stewardship Plan stood at this point. Mr. Haynes replied that the Stewardship Plan outlines a prescribed logging operation with a consulting logger, but the Subcommittee had not spoken of being ready to do any forest management. Mr. Bergman asked, if logging occurred, would the recommended schedule be compressed, or the years pushed back. Mr. Haynes said it was unknown and the Subcommittee is getting oriented with this recreation piece. If there were logging, Councilor Williams reminded that there would need to be a public process with a request for proposals to avoid the appearance of directing to one logging company. The Vice Chair shared concern about walking the forest with one specific company. Mr. Haynes said the Subcommittee was aware, especially after how aggressive Mr. Casadei was in wanting to work with them; they saw the need to cool that down.

**B) Outreach**

Nothing new to report.

**C) ARM Fund**

Nothing new to report.

#### **D) Invasive Species**

Councilor Williams reported that there had been two events since the last meeting, which was the same day as a Japanese knotweed pull. He said there is still a lot remaining in the area, but it is growing back weaker with this treatment. Eventually, the goal is to plant native species there. He thinks it is a good start. On July 16, there was an event at the Airport, with fewer people than planned. The group found the watercress in good condition after last year's work, so they will plan to go back in a future year. Thus, they addressed some other patches in the area—some purple loosestrife and white sweet clover, the latter of which some people consider a native species while it is invasive elsewhere in the nation. The Councilor felt good removing it from this showcase wetland. Mr. Therriault replied that clover is not listed as invasive in NH and that it does provide nitrogen to the soil and he thought it should be left in place. Vice Chair Madison asked how vast the infestation was and Councilor Williams compared it to the size of the meeting table, and he could tell the natives were trying to fight against it in the disturbed area it had claimed. Ms. Clark confirmed that it was the tall white clover and Councilor Williams agreed. Mr. Bergman asked where the loosestrife was, and Councilor Williams said approximately 30' down across the road from the stream crossing at an old logging area. Mr. Bergman added that there is some further in the marsh that is difficult to access. Ms. Clark added that one invasive threatening wetlands is phragmites and she suggested that a crew go after it. Councilor Williams had seen it treated with fire, which is past this Commission's abilities. Everyone was appreciative of Councilor Williams' efforts.

Vice Chair Madison asked if they were documenting the removal activities. Councilor Williams has tried but it has been difficult in some instances. The Vice Chair said it would be nice to document the effect of this mechanical removal on these species where in many instances, chemicals are considered to be the only remedy; it could be a good case study to influence other communities. Councilor Williams said it would vary species-to-species; for example, the garlic mustard had been very successful but other species less so. Councilor Williams added that the new Senate bill would make resources available for municipalities to address some of these invasives and the better the City's history is documented, the more likely success obtaining those grants.

Mr. Bergman recalled that the new solar establishment at the Airport is highly disturbed land that would be a prime invasives site if pollinator friendly cover is not introduced to the soil. Vice Chair Madison would pass that information to the Public Works Director. Ms. Brunner said the array is owned by Revision Energy on City Land, and Revision agrees to sell the energy to the City. The array land is not leased from Swanzey. She was unsure who maintains the ground under the array. Mr. Bergman confirmed that most of the energy will be used at the Wastewater Treatment Plant. Mr. Therriault said he was assured that the ground would be reseeded with a pollinator blend and the Vice Chair would follow-up with the Public Works Director to confirm. Once seeded, Councilor Williams said the Commission should be keeping an eye on it. Vice Chair Madison said it might be struggling with the drought conditions.

#### **4) Discussion Items**

##### **A) Conservation Commission Speaking Events**

Nothing new to report.

**B) Airport Proposed Wildlife Control Fence**

Vice Chair Madison said the Airport Director, David Hickling, discussed this at the previous week's Finance, Organization, and Personnel (FOP) Committee meeting. As a part of this project, the Airport Director has two meetings scheduled with the Commission, but he was unsure when. Mr. Bergman was curious about the pace of the plan development and funding. Vice Chair Madison said the Director was at the FOP meeting seeking this funding for the fence planning phase, which would go to Council on July 21. Ms. Brunner received an email from Mr. Bergman that she forwarded to the Airport Director, who told her that the fence would be running along the runway, not through the wetland, but that installation would have some wetlands impacts; if in the fall/winter the Vice Chair said those impacts should be minimized. The FOP authorized the City Manager to accept a grant for this, but the Airport Director did not think it would be awarded until November. The design grant is for \$181,900; it would be much more expensive for the actual installation Mr. Bergman found this interesting as the Federal Aviation Administration was not favorable to this design initially. Mr. Bergman gets the sense that the Airport Director is committed to the wetland.

**C) Budget Update**

This year, the Commission has \$2,000 in its budget, \$300 of which was spent already. Unfortunately, the donation made to the Ashuelot River Local Advisory Committee (ARLAC) at the last meeting for \$95.95 was unable to be processed as it was too late for the carryover request this year. Thus, that donation was returned to the General Fund. She said that the Chairman thought it good to still meet that obligation from this year's budget. The Commission agreed to wait to make such a donation until later in the year as ARLAC was unaware of the donation. The Commission agreed to review this year's budget at the next meeting.

**D) Update: 0 Washington St. Ext. Property (TMP# 229-006-000)**

Ms. Brunner and the Chairman were unsure whether to put this on the agenda, but they wanted to notify the Commission of the NH Department of Transportation (DOT) permit and the access created, visible in a photo. They placed the access where they said they would, and logging was underway. Mr. Haynes said that now we will see if they cut where they said they would. He recalled that Mr. Casadei's company was not interested in keeping the parcel after logging and he wondered if the Commission should follow-up with him to see if that is still the case. Vice Chair Madison did not see the harm in that and hoped to hear from the City Manager on the issue before the next meeting. Mr. Bergman noted that the aerial photo's legend was illegible. Vice Chair Madison said that was created by the foresters and not the City for a NH DOT issued permit. This was informational.

**5) New or Other Business**

**A) Planning Board referral – Earth Excavation Permit Application – 0 Rt 9 (TMP# 215-007-000-000-000) – Delayed by applicant request to August 15, 2022  
Conservation Commission meeting**

The site visit was delayed until next month. The property owner is Cooper Gordon of G2 Holdings, LLC., which hired the TF Moran engineering firm to work on the State and local permits. This was the owner's first time doing anything like this and they were unaware they needed permission to excavate for personal use, which they have been doing since late spring 2021 and the engineering firm just became aware of. The Community Development Department and the Assessor's Office reviewed the site and found that the applicants had encroached into the 75' surface water buffer and Staff were working with the owners on remediation that will need to occur. There are also jurisdictional wetlands on the site and logging by a previous owner. The owners had to contact the NH Department of Environmental Services for a retroactive permit. They are currently going through the Planning Board process. There is a delay because they plan to fix what they have done and revise their plan. Ms. Brunner continued on the Commission's role in this excavation project. She would send them the exact regulations, but said the City of Keene has regulations in Article 24 of the Land Development Code. At the State level, there is RSA 155-E. The overall project is to create a gravel pit for commercial sales. Mr. Bergman recalled that the applicants are altering terrain and asked whether they are obligated to restore vegetation. Vice Chair Madison said it depends on the permit restrictions but speculated that some site restoration and remediation would be required. Ms. Brunner said the Alteration of Terrain permit is focused on whether the applicant is stabilizing the site. The City has its own standards for reclamation that are more stringent than the State's. The City has asked for a short-term remediation plan for what they impacted already and a long-term plan for post-excavation. Ms. Clark asked if they would be crushing stone and Ms. Brunner said they would crush boulders but not blast any ledge; they could apply for the latter in a future phase.

Ms. Clark asked for an update about the garden by the cemetery. Mr. Therriault would check and bring pictures to the next meeting. Ms. Clark asked who is weeding it and Mr. Therriault said that ideally, being wildflowers, no one should need to, but he could ask Mr. Bohannon.

**6) Adjournment**

There being no further business, Vice Chair Madison adjourned the meeting at 5:20 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Katryna Kibler, Minute Taker  
July 25, 2022

Reviewed and edited by,  
Mari Brunner, Senior Planner