

DRAFT
Subject to Review, Correction and Approval

Minutes of the Conservation Commission Meeting 9/14/2016

Members present: Brett St. Clair, Stan Sowle, Ron Jarvis, George Holt, Drew Groves, Matt Lavey, Margaret Watkins

Minutes – Drew offered, George seconded motion to accept the minutes of the July meeting.

On behalf of the Commission Brett recognized Mel Gendron's resignation and expressed thanks for his years of service and well wishes for his new venture.

NH DHHS Biomonitoring Program

Amanda Cosser, Biomonitoring Program Manager, and Melissa Levesque, Biomonitoring Program Specialist, both in the Division of Public Health, NH Dept of Health and Human Services, discussed a study designed to get information on human exposure to arsenic and uranium as transferred via wells (500 people) and public drinking water sources (50 people). Participants will be randomly selected from Hillsborough, Strafford, and Rockingham counties and the Merrimack towns of Dunbarton, Bow, and Epsom. The 5-year study, funded by the Centers for Disease Control, involves tap water and urine analyses and recognizes that arsenic may come from a variety of sources other than tap water, including fish and rice. Results will be compared with national data and will help guide the state's risk reduction efforts.

Public Hearing on Scenic Road Cutting by Eversource

Brett St. Clair opening the hearing at 8 PM, as advertised. Approximately 13 residents attended, along with an Asplundh representative and Eversource arborist. Brett clarified that Dunbarton has 7 Town-designated Scenic Roads. State law gives scenic roads a limited level of protection and in Dunbarton's case, oversight by the Conservation Commission relative to stone walls and tree cutting within the right-of-way.

Brian Salas, Regional Arborist for Eversource Energy, has identified 1 dead ash at 55 Guinea Road as the only tree likely to be cut down by the Asplundh Tree Expert Co. hired by Eversource to do the work. Before any work is performed, Eversource notifies all affected landowners. Landowners requesting special treatment must so notify Eversource within a specified time. If concerns are expressed, those landowners will be contacted directly. The cutting is done on a 4-year cycle to keep the power lines open. Eversource tries to treat scenic roads differently.

Rick Antonia stated he had not been notified. Brian will follow up.

Addison Chase asked whether only 1 tree was to be cut. Brian clarified that all trees will be trimmed.

Rick Antonia stated there were 12 dead trees that have not been taken down by his house. Brian: If trees are not near wires, Eversource is not responsible. The road agent may want to take them

down, in which case the Conservation Commission would need to hold a public hearing. A landowner may remove them without a hearing.

Maureen McCanty stated she had not received any notice of tree trimming. Brian suggested two possibilities – if the property is in a trust, notice goes to the trust agent. Also, notice only goes to the landowner on the same side of the road as the power lines.

Fred Mullen asked about situations where rights-of-way are state owned. Brian: Eversource deals with the landowner unless there is an issue.

Brian stated there have been very few complaints since institution of the notification by mail system.

Ed Wagner has a 1,000' drive. Brian: Eversource will work the entire length of the drive. They typically flat cut the brush and 15' above the power line unless the limb is >5" diameter. Service lines to homes get a very light cut. If a landowner wants an aggressive cut, Asplundh will be aggressive. For questions, call Keith Duncan, 603-933-2992.

Mark Antonia received no notice.

Ron Jarvis asked about Pierce Lake power line maintenance in Hillsborough. Brian: That situation is different, as the utility owns the right-of-way so can do what it feels it needs to do.

Brian noted that 90% of power outages results from trees or limbs falling on them.

Fred Mullen said he gets called about downed trees. What's the difference whether town or Eversource clears the debris? Brian: The intent is reliable power for the town.

Addison Chase asked if Brian inspects roads after the trimming has been completed. Brian: If there are problems, yes, Eversource will seek restoration.

Lee Martel requested that the large pines by his house not be taken down unless Asplundh is willing to remove them.

Mark Antonia asked about removal. Brett clarified that this hearing is the formal authorization for taking down trees in the right of way. Brian: Asplundh generally doesn't want to cut trees > 6"-8" in diameter and typically doesn't remove them from the property.

Ed Wagner – asked if he'd be notified when Asplundh is coming. Brian: No. Call Keith for sense of timing.

Sharon LeBreque thanked Eversource. She's had fewer power outages since they were last here.

Brett suggested if people are concerned, they use the card Eversource sent to request a pre consult. If they have questions, call Keith.

Dan Sklut mentioned that Jeff Crosby and Keith have talked about trees on town property.

Motion: Brett moved and Drew seconded that the Conservation Commission allow Eversource to do maintenance trimming on scenic roads in Dunbarton in consultation with interested landowners and including the removal of 1 ash tree at 55 Guinea Road. The motion passed unanimously.

The hearing was closed at 8:50 PM.

Dennis Card subsequently discussed an issue on Tenney Hill Road relative to widening that occurs each time the road is graded and consequent damage to tree roots. The Commission agreed to take this issue up with Jeff Crosby. Asked about the Commission's position on scenic roads, Brett stated that we see them as helping to maintain the town's rural character, particularly with respect to trees and stone walls. However, the Commission has no authority over what private landowners do. Mark Antonia is concerned about road widening on Rangeway Road at the hill. Commission agreed to talk with Jeff about this, too. Dennis Card thanked CC members.

Overlook Estates The deed to deed land to town is still under revision. Key CC points for deed: Property should be managed by the Conservation Commission as part of the Bela Brook Conservation Area (as recommended by Selectmen) and allow low impact nonmotorized recreation use, forest management, and recreational trails.

Cater stable expansion Owners of land on Montalona Road that abuts the KP Conservation Area south of Kimball Pond Road have filed a site plan review to expand their operation. George sees no red flags. He will report back at next meeting.

Taylor (Schumacher) easement – Property was acquired by the Botnicks. Brett sent a copy of the conservation easement to the building inspector.

Stone Farm Conservation Project – Title work has been completed – all is good. Committee is within \$5,000 of the fundraising goal. Brett asked if the fundraising fell short whether the Conservation Commission would be willing to make up the shortfall. All agreed. This action would require a public hearing with two days notice.

Snowmobile trail at Kimball Pond – Bow Pioneers have not responded to our proposed route for a trail going up the north end of the pond. Thanks expressed to Drew for all his work on this.

Kimball Pond sign was stolen. Police have no information as to what happened.

KTFCA (Kuncanowet) cleanup – Ten people showed up to work from 9-2 on trail maintenance.

Mountain lion sighting – Stan reported mtn. lion sighting at the foot of Mills Hill.

The meeting was adjourned around 9:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Margaret Watkins