



CONSERVATION COMMISSION TOWN OF BELMONT, NH

Wednesday, May 4, 2022

Belmont Mill Tioga Conference Room and Remotely by Zoom
Belmont, New Hampshire

Present: Members Denise Naiva, Ed Stephenson, Jane Jordan; Alternate Members Pauline Tessier, Susan Irving and Georgina Lambert.
Absent: Chairman Scott Rolfe; Vice Chair Terry Threlfall, Jr.; Members Keith Bennett, Ruth Mooney, Ex-Officio; Student Members Ella Irving and Christopher Paré;
Staff: Sarah Whearty, Karen Santoro, and Colleen Akerman.
Zoom: Sarah Whearty.

It was the consensus of the Commission that D. Naiva step in as acting Chairman to preside over the meeting.

D. Naiva opened the meeting at 6:00 pm and welcomed those in attendance. She said any party experiencing difficulty in accessing the meeting at any point should call 603-267-8300 x101, and the meeting will be recessed until access can be restored for all parties.

Alternate Members Pauline Tessier, Susan Irving and Georgina Lambert were appointed as voting members.

Commission Membership:

S. Rolfe Resignation:

S. Rolfe emailed Staff and Commission members his resignation letter. D. Naiva explained that S. Rolfe served 17 years on the Commission, and served multiple terms as Chairman and Vice Chairman. She said S. Rolfe has generously offered to remain a resource for the Commission with regards to forestry, trees and wildlife.

D. Naiva asked Alternate Member P. Tessier if she would be interested in moving up to a permanent position and filling the remainder of S. Rolfe's term (2023). P. Tessier said yes. She will complete the member interest form and submit it for approval by the Selectmen.

The Commission discussed advertising for a new alternate member using the Town website, the Land Use hallway monitor at Town Hall and the monthly Town newsletter.

Speaker – Forest Stewardship Plan for Tioga Conservation Area:

D. Naiva introduced Ms. Donna Hepp who presented information about a grant obtained for a stewardship plan for the Tioga Conservation Area.

Ms. Hepp explained that the Belknap County Conservation District (BCCD) applied for, and was awarded, a wildlife grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation for almost \$160,000. That grant included a Forest Stewardship Plan for the Tioga Conservation Area.

Ms. Hepp indicated that they reached out to a forester, Mr. Ron Klemarczyk, looking for an estimate for the stewardship plan. She said Rick Ball, former Land Use Technician, gathered all of the information and maps that Mr. Klemarczyk needed. Mr. Klemarczyk estimated a cost of \$4,400 to \$4,600, not to exceed \$4,600 for the stewardship plan.

Ms. Hepp described that the grant included forest stewardship plans in Alton, Belmont and Gilmanton. Plans are underway to have a public field day/workshop so that people can talk to the forester and people on the Conservation Commission. They have someone from the UNH Cooperative Extension, a wildlife biologist, the county forester and a New Hampshire Fish & Game wildlife person also available for workshops. They are helping the Town but also making help more accessible for residents to see the benefits of planning. Ms. Hepp suggested sitting in on a Conservation meeting and discussing goals for the Tioga. The forester will develop the plan based on the Commission's goals and objectives, such as protecting water and focusing on wildlife habitat. She said Mr. Klemarczyk has time to work on the plan this year but his schedule is booking up quickly. Ms. Hepp would like to lock in some dates to propose to Mr. Klemarczyk.

D. Naiva asked if the Commission would need to visit the physical site. Ms. Hepp answered that prior to getting started on the plan, Mr. Klemarczyk should get on a Commission meeting agenda to get more information about the Commission's goals and objectives. She said that one reason for getting the plan done this year is that there is also funding to implement a project, which could happen next year. Ms. Hepp recommended that a large infestation of 20-25 acres of glossy buckthorn be considered for treatment, and the BCCD would look for matching funds to help with the project. She anticipates that Mr. Klemarczyk and Mr. John Martin would use a "brontosaurus" brush mower to remove the glossy buckthorn and use a treatment to knock it back. D. Naiva mentioned that use of herbicides will require permits. Ms. Hepp responded the project would be for next year.

J. Jordan acknowledged that she is new to the Commission and wondered if the Commission already has a goal for the Tioga area. D. Naiva explained that there is a loosely defined forestry management plan, specific to the easement with Five Rivers Conservation. The goal is to leave the area natural and protect the waterfront by the Tioga watershed and the Winnepesaukee River. There are lots of wildlife sightings, hunting and fishing there.

D. Naiva asked if improved parking could be included in the plan. Ms. Hepp answered that something such as clearing trees for the parking area could be part of the plan. They are going to try to get matching funds for the glossy buckthorn treatment and some other things.

D. Naiva wanted to confirm the treatment would be next year. Ms. Hepp said yes. The cost looks to be about \$26,000, and probably higher as costs increase. Ms. Hepp suggested the timing for the workshop to be late summer or in the fall. She can check with Mr. Klemarczyk on his schedule and try to get him on the agenda for the June Commission meeting. D. Naiva mentioned there is typically no July meeting and in August many people are on vacation. The June meeting is currently scheduled for June 1st at 6 pm. During the meeting, the Conservation Commission voted to move the June meeting to June 8th at 6 pm.

K. Santoro informed the Commission that the stewardship plan on file with the Town is dated for 2018. She can email it to all of the members and to Ms. Hepp for review. Ms. Hepp will forward it to Mr. Klemarczyk.

Ms. Hepp remarked that a grant was used to revise forest management and stream restoration practices at Gunstock.

Ms. Hepp reminded the Commission that the BCCD celebrated 75 years last year with most of their funding and projects from grants and donations. They are always looking for associate members, and they are currently looking for a farmer. S. Irving remarked that she knows someone who may be interested.

Ms. Hepp shared that this year they will be doing a stream restoration in Meredith. They move around the community with different projects. In Sanbornton they worked on Black Brook and there are plans to work on Chapman Brook. They are focusing on that and the matching grants. This grant from the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation is a three-year grant. She said they also do gleaning and have a gleaning coordinator for the county. Misfit produce is gathered for food pantries. The coordinator works with farmers who may have an excess of fruits or vegetables. They focus on natural resources and helping with food insecurity. They expect to have a full-time volunteer coordinator soon. The coordinator is not just for the BCCD, but for any conservation organization looking for volunteers.

Ms. Hepp concluded her presentation by promoting the BCCD newsletter, and mentioning that the BCCD has worked to help farmers with shared equipment such as a no-till seed drill. H&T Farm in Belmont is storing the equipment.

Elections:

MOTION: P. Tessier moved to elect D. Naiva as Chairman of the Conservation Commission.

The motion was seconded by J. Jordan and carried. (5-0-1) D. Naiva abstained.

MOTION: J. Jordan moved to elect E. Stephenson as Vice Chair of the Conservation Commission.

The motion was seconded by D. Naiva and carried. (5-0-1) E. Stephenson abstained.

Board's Action – Minutes 04/06/2022:

MOTION: On a motion by J. Jordan, seconded by E. Stephenson, it was voted unanimously to approve the minutes of April 6, 2022. (6-0)

NH Department of Environmental Services Applications:

1. **Scott Naismith – 50 Nancy Drive – Map/Lot 107-074-000-000:** Shoreland Permit on hold to demo existing 800sf home, rebuild 1600sf two-level home with no footprint change. 11' x 21' permeable patio already installed. After the fact required full shoreland permit.
2. **Mark Evans – 421 Jamestown Road – Map/Lot 118-009-000-000:** Shoreland PBN accepted to impact 30sf of protected shoreland to replace a set of stairs.

1. Current Planning Board 04/25/2022 & ARC:

a. Planning Board:

- i. **Matthew & Heather Gault – 682 Laconia Road – Map/Lot 230-043-000-000:** The Planning

Board approved a Site Plan for Contractor's Yards, storage of equipment trailers, aluminum frames and pressure treated lumber.

- ii. **Route 106 Realty Trust – Laconia Road & 28 Corriveau Way – Map/Lot 217-114-000-000:** The Planning Board tabled a Site Plan request for a Contractor's Yard, commercial building (motor vehicle & trailer service, professional offices, light manufacturing, retail stores and a service business), and a Conditional Use Permit for a subordinate dwelling unit to May 23, 2022.
 - iii. **Gilmanton Sand & Gravel – 28 Stone Road – Map/Lot 245-001-000-000:** The Planning Board approved an application for Earth Excavation for a new quarry.
 - iv. **Grenier Family Revocable Trust – Depot Street – Map/Lot 235-032-000-000:** The Planning Board approved a Site Plan for a commercial building for auto and trailer sales and repair.
 - v. **Mammoth Acquisition Company LLC – 77 Daniel Webster Highway – Map/Lot 201-029-001-000:** The Planning Board tabled a Compliance Hearing regarding the poor slope conditions due to no ownership representation at the meeting. All stake holders have been notified, including the original applicants and owners, current property owners, prior engineer, construction company, and current business owner. The Town is monitoring the situation.
- b. **No April ARC meeting.**

2. Current Zoning Board 04/27/2022:

- a. **TAP Public House – 930 Laconia Road – Map/Lot 122-057-000-000:** The Board granted a one-year extension of the approvals for a Variance and Special Exception for a deck.
- b. **Donald Quinn for Winnisquam Beach Association – 11 Dove Terrace – Map/Lot 117-015-000-054:** The Board granted two Variances to add a manufactured unit and a concrete slab.
- c. **Route 106 Realty Trust – 54 Peggy Drive – Map/Lot 210-017-000-000:** The Board granted a Variance to allow billboards with off-site advertising. This was necessary for the existing billboards to remain, due to the previous approval for residential use of the lot.
- d. **Route 106 Realty Trust – Laconia Road – Map/Lot 210-017-000-000:** The Board granted a Special Exception for a Contractor's Yard in the Commercial Zone.
- e. **Route 106 Realty Trust – 28 Corriveau Way & Laconia Road – Map/Lot 217-114-000-000:** The Board granted a Special Exception for a Contractor's Yard in the Commercial Zone.

Projects:

1. Andrew Sanborn Farm – Trail Mowing Update:

K. Santoro reached out to local mowing companies to find out about equipment capabilities and rates. She met one person at the site and they walked the trails. Mowing was recommended and a chainsaw is needed to move some trees off the trail. K. Santoro is waiting to hear back from a couple of people with estimates on the number of hours and rates. A 40HP tractor with brush hog was estimated at about \$70 per hour and there was another estimate with higher rates. There are a couple of miles of trails. If there are more trees down, it could take a while to clear. The company who works on the WOW Trail was recommended. The trail is wet in some of the lower portions so it is recommended to wait until later in the summer to let it dry out and some things to grow up.

There was discussion about how the mowing will be paid for, how contractors are made aware of the projects and bidding, and possibly capping the total amount to be spent. K. Santoro explained she has reached out to some local companies and taken recommendations from others. The project is small and should not need to be put out to bid. D. Naiva stated that K. Bennett still mows the field but not the trails.

D. Naiva reported that there is no longer any debris by the gate, as was reported at the last meeting. K. Santoro responded that DPW cleaned up the mess the same day she reported it.

2. Currier-Sanborn/Tioga Marsh:

Annual Monitoring:

K. Santoro said that the annual monitoring needs to be done. Rick Ball had previously gone out and checked the trails at the Tioga Marsh. J. Jordan said she accompanied Rick Ball. D. Naiva said Five Rivers Conservation Trust also checks on the property.

Signs:

P. Tessier asked about “No Parking” signs around the lake entrance area. There is a “No Motorized Vehicles” sign and a “No Dumping” sign. There are people parking there with cars and trailers that block the area. The Commission discussed the location of signage in the area.

3. Winnisquam Watershed Network (WWN):

E. Stephenson reported they are working on finalizing plans for the Lake Host Program at the Laconia boat ramp on Water Street starting Memorial Day weekend. They have two teachers lined up for 40 hours per week at \$15-\$16 per hour. WWN is also working on a draft of their watershed management plan which they hope to have available at the annual meeting in July. There will be a Zoom meeting about it in August.

J. Jordan asked what the requirements are to be a Lake Host. E. Stephenson explained people take a class from NH Lakes online and then they are paired up with someone with experience. J. Jordan may have some people interested in volunteering.

E. Stephenson also mentioned that they will be coordinating for VLAP (Volunteer Lake Assessment Program) testing at the end of May and hope to get some in for June, July, August and the beginning of September. He detailed the types of tests performed on Lake Winnisquam and the locations of the tests, including tributaries. He said they recently found out that UNH and NHDES have both been doing similar tests on Winnisquam for over 20 years and did not know.

S. Irving asked if there are tests completed at the Belmont beach. E. Stephenson said WWN is not involved in that.

E. Stephenson noted that there are plans for milfoil harvesting this summer.

4. Silver Lake Association:

P. Tessier shared that they are getting ready for their annual meeting, and they have been working on trying to get a study done for a potential dam. There is guaranteed money from the County for the study and they are trying to get a very preliminary study done to see if it is feasible before spending \$530,000 on the detailed study. If it is not feasible, the County should not use the resources.

P. Tessier asked the Commission about contacting the Tilton and Northfield Conservation Commissions about putting up some signs about invasive species around the lake.

D. Naiva asked about milfoil plans for the summer. P. Tessier responded that they received a grant for some harvesting days but they must pay 50% of the cost. They will likely not start mapping until June because the milfoil grows when the water is warmer. They anticipate starting to harvest in July this year

rather than later in the fall.

5. DOT Mitigation Grant:

D. Naiva asked how the grant works. Does the Commission have to make an application, and how will funds be awarded? S. Whearty explained that there is no “automatic pot of money”. The State is looking for a priority list of mitigation areas and if they are doing other work in the area, they could address some of the priority items on the Town’s list. There are other bonuses to having a priority list for Town projects because if there are overlaps between a DPW project and Conservation interests, ARM funds could be available for planning, construction, or property acquisition. This can be helpful if the Town wants to acquire some land because of high wetlands value, because it is in a wellhead protection area or valuable headwaters are present. If there is a project nearby the Commission could “piggyback” off of other Town projects and apply for grant funding to protect resources. D. Naiva clarified that there is no fixed amount of funding, just the need for a priority list. K. Santoro verified that is correct.

Complaints/Violations/Concerns/General Info:

Herbicide Use Notification (NHEC):

K. Santoro stated New Hampshire Electric Co-op sent notices out to all local towns that they will be applying herbicide along the ROWs. There was also a notice in the newspaper. There are only two lines in Belmont that they are looking to treat at the end of Main Street and on Shaker Road. D. Naiva asked why they are using herbicide instead of goats. K. Santoro explained it does not say why they are not using goats, but the herbicide will be selectively applied and they needed a special permit from the State.

NH Lakes Free Webinars:

K. Santoro provided a web link on the electronic agenda to free webinars from NH Lakes. There are two more coming up regarding the “LakeSmart” program and an NHDES toxicologist who will discuss PFAS contamination. P. Tessier asked if the webinars can be viewed after the event takes place. E. Stephenson said yes, they have a library of previous presentations.

Land Use Application Review on behalf of Conservation Commission:

Former Chairman S. Rolfe has recently been reviewing Land Use applications on behalf of the Conservation Commission. D. Naiva said that she used to review them when she was Vice Chair. The applications are reviewed and there is a place to sign off and make comments. J. Jordan asked more about the process and any deadlines associated with applications. D. Naiva answered that applications are sent by email and there is a deadline to review prior to the Zoning or Planning Board meeting. Anyone on the Commission can volunteer to do this. She said that she used to contact former Land Use Technician, Rick Ball, with any questions she had but now K. Santoro would be the resource for those questions. If there is something the reviewer doesn’t understand, she would be able to clarify it. The Town wants the Commission to be on top of projects and respond to applications. If there are no concerns a quick email reply that there are no comments is sent. J. Jordan volunteered to review the applications and D. Naiva will help mentor her for the process.

Student Member Update:

D. Naiva reported that our current Student Members Ella Irving and Christopher Paré are graduating this year. She decided to reach out to sophomores and juniors who could give two years of experience to the Commission. D. Naiva said a sophomore, Emilie DeFrancesco, submitted an application and she sounds delightful. She is Class Secretary and works on the Student Council, and the BRASS organization (Belmont Representatives Advocating for Student Success). She is a runner, a member of

the Outdoor Environmental Club and Treasurer of the National Chemical Society. Ms. DeFrancesco said in her application that she will be an active member of the Commission and take what she learns back to the student body.

K. Santoro also noted that the Membership Interest Form was updated for student use. They can mark that they are applying to be a Student Member, their current grade level and proposed term. It does not require them to sign that they are 18 years old.

Old Home Day – 08/13/2022:

D. Naiva told the Commission that she spoke with Mr. Lou Barinelli from NHDES about offering water test kits and he was very helpful. He can get the tubes that will be needed for the water samples. She reminded the Commission that in 2017 NHDES did a presentation and offered well water testing to the public and handed out kits. People who were interested showed up and got their kits and instructions. They received a \$50 voucher towards the \$85 cost. Thirty-one people took advantage of this and the cost to the Commission was \$1,500. The water collections have to be turned in to Concord within 24 hours. Samples were delivered to Town Hall on a Sunday and were driven to Concord Monday morning. D. Naiva offered to do that for these tests but someone would need to open Town Hall to make it available for dropping off the tests. There was discussion about having a cut-off for the number of participants, putting a cap on the cost, and the dollar amount of the vouchers. S. Irving asked what is tested in this area. D. Naiva read a few of the items from the flyer: coliform bacteria, E. coli, nitrates, chloride, fluoride, iron, and copper.

The Commission agreed that Old Home Day was not appropriate to provide the test kits because of the detailed instructions necessary for obtaining the samples. However, it would be a great location to have flyers about the testing available and offer the water testing presentation in September. Other suggestions were to include the information in the Town newsletter, The Laconia Daily Sun, The Winnisquam Echo, and the Belmont Community FaceBook page.

Upcoming Meetings:

It was the consensus of the Commission to make the following adjustments to the upcoming meeting schedule:

June Meeting – June 8th

July Meeting – cancelled

August Meeting – August 3rd (no change)

September Meeting – September 14th

Budget/Expenditures:

LCHIP Incentive Payment \$250:

K. Santoro informed the Commission that this NH Incentive payment was received in acknowledgement of the Currier-Sanborn monitoring report.

Jeff Marden Scholarship Fund:

The Commission received a thank you letter from the Lakes Region Scholarship Foundation for the \$250 amount credited to the Jeff Marden Scholarship Fund. D. Naiva shared that the funds generally originate from the Sargent Fund, which provides funds for different organizations in Town. Every year the Conservation Commission submits an application for funding. We requested \$1,000 and received \$250. Generally the Commission awards \$500 each year. Scholarship applications will be coming in shortly. There is \$924 in the fund right now.

Adjournment:

MOTION: On a motion by J. Jordan, seconded by E. Stephenson, it was voted unanimously to adjourn at 7:35 pm. (7-0)

Respectfully submitted:

Colleen Akerman
Building and Land Use Clerk