



TOWN OF HUDSON

Conservation Commission



Ken Dickinson, Chairman

Nancy Brucker, Selectmen Liaison

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DATE: 9 February 2015

MEETING MINUTES Below is a listing of minutes for the Hudson Conservation Commission. Minutes are not a verbatim record of each meeting, but rather represent a summary of the discussion and actions taken at the meeting. All Conservation Commission meetings are televised live and repeated during the following week on HCTV, cable television channel 22. Official copies of the minutes are available to read and copy at the Town Engineer's Office during regular business hours (Monday through Friday, 8:00 A.M. to 4:30 P.M.).

Should you have any questions concerning these minutes or wish to see the original recording, please contact the Town Engineer's Office at 603-886-6008.

A regular meeting of the Hudson Conservation Commission (HCC) was held in the Community Development Conference Room of Town Hall.

Members of the Commission present: J. Battis, W. Collins, K. Dickinson

Members of the Commission excused: P. Dubay, R. Brownrigg, M. Tranfaglia

Members of the Commission absent: R. Jurewicz

Member of Town Staff present: Excused

Board of Selectman Representative: Absent

Seating of

Alternates: None

Called to Order at
7:09 pm

AS A QUORUM WAS NOT PRESENT THE MEETING WAS OPENED ONLY TO LISTEN TO A PRESENTATION WITH NO OFFICIAL BUSINESS BEING CONDUCTED.

As no members of the public were in attendance and no public input was presented.

I. OLD BUSINESS

None

II. NEW BUSINESS

A. Musquash Pond “Weed Watcher” Survey

John Scroggins, New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services
Volunteer “Weed Watcher”

Mr. Scroggins presented a talk on the preliminary results of his field evaluation of the invasive weed situation at Musquash Pond and his commentary on the possible educational and recreational enhancements for the pond area. Mr. Scroggins applied the ratings and evaluation from “Methods for the Comparative Evaluation of Non-tidal Wetlands in New Hampshire”, March 1991. NHDES, Audubon Society of NH, and USDA and “Method for Inventorying and Evaluating Freshwater Wetlands in New Hampshire, 2011 (Updated 2013)” UNH Cooperative Extension to conduct his survey.

The area of study was confined to the Musquash Pond Swamp wetlands, the first wetland area off the Musquash Road entrance. Mr. Scroggins noted an abundance of good plant life in the emergent zone including Arrowhead, Jewelweed and Swamp Loosestrife. He noted an area of Cattails that could become overcrowded in the future. The occurrence of the invasive Purple Loosestrife was also noted. In floating leaf zone, the dominant plant is White Water Lilies with Duckweed, Watershield and Yellow Water Lilies interspersed. Mr. Scroggins did not find any milfoil or other exotics. He did note an overgrowth of Bladderwort and Coontail that could accelerate oxygen depletion in the pond. This suggests too high a level of nutrients in the water. During his field work he also noted a great variety of insects, birds and aquatic animals. In particular he noted the importance of beavers to the maintenance of the habitat in the pond. It was his view that there is a very good level of biodiversity in the plants and would provide a good educational setting.

Mr. Scroggins noted that the Purple Loosestrife is thinly scattered in the area. Due to the shallow depth of the pond, the pond produces more fish than would be expected for its size. This is because of the Swamp Loosestrife shades the shallow areas of the pond and keeping the waters cool. The invasive Purple Loosestrife will ultimately crowd out the native Swamp Loosestrife allowing the water to warm and reducing fish populations. The best control is biological control using the *Galleruca pusillus* Beetle and Mr. Scroggins did note the presence of the beetle at Musquash. He also topped the seed heads of as many Purple Loosestrife plants as he could to attempt to reduce the spread of the invasive plant at Musquash.

The speaker was very enthusiastic about the recreational and educational potential of the Musquash Pond area. His main concerns are that the central pond and

stream channel are eutrophic with probable high levels of phosphorous and nitrogen. In addition, the White Water Lily density is making access difficult.

Mr. Scroggins pointed out that a unique feature of Musquash Pond is the floating island that moves over time which can be seen in time sequenced aerial photographs.

Mr. Scroggins also noted the educational value of the Musquash Conservation Land but noted several items he felt needed attention including poison ivy control near the Musquash Road parking area and long term efforts to control the Purple Loosestrife and maintain biodiversity.

Mr. Dickinson noted that there was a beetle release for Purple Loosestrife control at Benson Park within the last ten years.

Mr. Battis thanked Mr. Scroggins for his efforts and suggested that the Commission add Mr. Scroggins' report to the Conservation Commission website.

B. Naming of trails in the Town Forest/Timber Inventory

Due to a lack of a quorum, the Chairmen deferred this discussion to a future meeting.

C. NH DES Exotic Species Grant

Due to a lack of a quorum, the Chairmen deferred this discussion to a future meeting but requested a brief update from Mr. Battis. Mr. Battis noted that the value of the NH DES grant appears to be substantially below what had been assumed in the budget process. He did note, however, that there were several potential sources of revenue, such as the Pond Reclamation Capital Reserve Fund and various Conservation Donation Funds which have not previously been tapped and might mitigate the decreased state funding. This will be discussed in more detail at the next meeting. Mr. Dickinson noted that the Town Engineer stated that the Town would try to cover the shortfall and, under our proposed budget, we are attempting to put money aside for the future to maintain the previous year's successes and perhaps reduce or eliminate the cost of future chemical treatments.

III. Other Business

A. Stewardship of Conserved Lands

No discussion was conducted on this item.

B. Mills Property Assessment

Mr. Collins suggested that a site walk be scheduled for the new members and Mr. Battis responded that Mr. Mills had offered to allow members to visit the site as needed. Mr. Dickinson stated that a site walk should be feasible.

IV. Financial Status

Mr. Dickinson noted that the balance of the Conservation Fund, on 1 January, was \$881,264.98. Mr. Battis noted that in January, he thought that the Conservation Fund should be credited for 50% of the Land Use Change Tax. Mr. Collins asked if any of the Land Use Change Tax funds could be used for any of the programs currently in process such as the invasive species control. Mr. Dickinson noted that the primary use of the fund should be purchase of open space. Hudson is deficient in protected land compared to many towns in the state with only 5% to 10% of the Town protected. Mr. Battis concurred with Mr. Dickinson's comments although he noted that several people have commented that the wording of the original warrant article should not be considered restrictive on the intended use of the funds.

V. Correspondence

Mr. Dickinson noted that he had received emails from the New Hampshire Association of Conservation Commissions, NHACC, will be holding a regional meeting which will discuss the proposed Kinder Morgan Pipeline through Hudson. He noted that Hudson was one of the least impacted towns in the region in terms of linear miles of pipeline but that there were several wetland crossings along the proposed route. He also noted there would be an Open House on 19 February hosted by Kinder Morgan to discuss the pipeline. Mr. Dickinson requested that Mr. Battis briefly comment on the pipeline process. Mr. Battis noted that he was also a Hudson representative to the Nashua Regional Planning Commission and that they are involved in the pipeline process representing the region. He showed a slide of the currently proposed Northeast Energy Direct (NED) pipeline route through Hudson paralleling the existing northwest-southeast power transmission line between the Londonderry and Windham lines. Most of the impacted lands from this route are privately held however, one parcel, the Ingersoll Property owned by the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests, is under a conservation easement held by the Town of Hudson.

For resources for people interested in looking into this issue, Mr. Battis provided the NRPC "Hot Projects" website:

<http://www.nashuarpc.org/hot-projects/project-pipeline/>

and for Kinder Morgan:

http://www.kindermorgan.com/business/gas_pipelines/east/neenergydirect

He also noted that the NRPC site has numerous useful links including the Federal and State site evaluation process.

Mr. Battis noted that formally there is no application before the State at this time and the Federal process is in the pre-application process where Kinder Morgan has notified the FERC that they will be submitting an application but have not yet actually filed the application.

Mr. Battis attended an NRPC sponsored presentation about the State site evaluation process. At this time, as far as the State is concerned, no applications or pre-application notifications have been submitted.

Under both the Federal and State processes, the Hudson Conservation Commission has no formal role. All the wetlands permitting required under the State process is reserved to the NH DES. In the State process, the Town can intervene in the proceedings as the Town of Hudson but only through the Board of Selectmen. However, there are numerous points during the application processes that individuals can provide input to the Federal and State process.

Finally, he noted that the NRPC has created a fact-finding subcommittee to examine the impacts of the proposed pipeline and that the NRPC does have a formal role in the State evaluation process representing the region as a whole.

Mr. Collins asked if the Planning and Zoning Boards would have any input. Mr. Battis stated that, as he understood the process, the entire permitting process is reserved to the state and all Town input must be through the Board of Selectmen. Needless to say, the Board of /selectmen could choose to seek input from their various boards and commissions to prepare the Town submission.

Mr. Dickinson stated he would seek more information from the NHACC for the next meeting regarding the types of responses they are looking for.

Mr. Dickinson noted that he had received an email from the Town Engineer regarding buffer issues at the Sparkling River housing development off Route 3A. The Town Engineer will schedule a wetland scientist hired to oversee the restoration to make a presentation at the next meeting.

Mr. Dickinson also mentioned the DES wetland application approval for the Vigeant property off Route 3A at the Town Boarder with Litchfield and a letter from a Forester soliciting forestry management work for the Town owned properties.

VI. Approval of Minutes

Due to a lack of a quorum, the Chairmen deferred this discussion to a future meeting.

VII. Commissioner's Comments

Mr. Battis noted that Mr. Scroggins' talk mentioned the need for volunteer organization at Musquash Conservation Lands. He noted that Mr. Dickinson

would be happy to receive the contact information for anyone who would be interested in assisting in trail maintenance or improvement.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:51 pm.

Ken Dickinson, Chairman