



TOWN OF HUDSON

Conservation Commission



Timothy Quinn, Chairman Ted Luszey, Selectmen Liaison

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WORKSHOP

DATE: September 24, 2012

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, T Boland, K Dickinson and P Dubay

Members of the Commission absent: S Rumbaugh (excused), N Lamoureux (excused), T Quinn

Member of Town Staff absent: Excused

Board of Selectman Representative absent: N Brucker (excused)

Seating of Alternates: None

Meeting was called to order at 7:20 PM

Pubic Input related to Non – Agenda Items: None

I DASH Operation and Budget Plans

Presentation by: Jim Kegley
5 Griffin Road

Mr. Kegley presented an update on the DASH (Diver Assisted Suction Harvester) operations for milfoil and fanwort invasive species control at Robinson and Ottarnic Ponds. At this point, about 90% of the work for this season has been completed and 100% should be completed by the end of the season. The DASH operations are estimated to cost about \$12,000 this year as this effort has been supported by a 50% matching grant from the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services. Approaching the end of the season, we are not at the point in weed control that had

been desired. The goal is to minimize the level of investigation around the full parameter of the pond.

The less than desirable status results from several variables. Two of these variables are the control of competing species and an unusually mild winter of 2011-2012. The process of weed management using DASH is still in a learning process. There are only about 7 ponds throughout the state with this dual plant dynamic.

Mr. Kegley stated that the invasive species problem has existed at these ponds since the 1990's. The DASH method to manage the weeds has existed for only about two years state-wide.

Mr. Kegley noted that a public information meeting will be held on 6 October at 9 AM in the Police Station Community Room. Amy Smagula, Limnologist from NH Department of Environmental Services and the DASH operator, Bob Patterson, will attend the meeting. This will be an open forum to discuss the present status and how to go forward.

Mr. Kegley stated that he sees the most reasonable path forward to continue at a constant funding level. State funding support for the operation will be sought but is always an open question.

Mr. Kegley could only speculate on recommendations the DES will make.

Alternative plans might include starting harvesting earlier into the season.

Mr. Battis asked if water temperatures might limit the earlier harvesting.

Mr. Kegley suggested that this was really an issue of scheduling by AB Aquatics and must be planned ahead.

Mr. Kegley suggested two options are under consideration for FY2014 DASH operations. One is to maintain the present 39 days of operation (30 days at Robinson Pond and 9 days at Ottarnic Pond). Alternatively, due to the enhanced growth during the 2012 growing season, an increase to 50 days might be recommended. The status of DES funding is unknown at this point.

Mr. Dickinson asked for confirmation that about \$26,000 was expended last year and that the best case scenario would increase labor by about 20%, an additional 10 days of operation.

Mr. Battis asked if the increased labor would be in FY 2014 or 2015.

Mr. Kegley stated that Mr. Dickinson was correct and that it could be in FY 2014. With the 40 days of operation for his season we have not achieved the sparse distribution of plants around the pond. If we need to go to 50 days of operation on a

regular basis, we may be approaching the cost of an annual herbicide treatment. If we maintain the 40 days of operation, we might have to settle for something less than sparse plant density. At this point, without more information, the 40 day operation schedule might be the most reasonable.

Mr. Dickinson noted that this past winter was an exceptional winter. He suggested that we continue for the next year or two at the present level of harvesting. It might be better to make certain there are no long lapses in harvesting rather than adding days.

Mr. Kegley concurred that the Conservation Commission proceed assuming a 40 day level of operations and consider moving it up in the season. This is a shared decision between the people of the town, the CC, the BoS, and the state. The state has a stake and a voice provided by the matching grant. Purely, speculating, Mr. Kegley noted that they may feel there are more cost effective means including herbicides.

Mr. Dickinson stated that he felt that we are sticking with the DASH and alternative paths might be better tried in other communities before we adopt them. From our presentation last year to the BoS we would need significant supporting data to take a new path.

Mrs. Dubay stated there we need to determine the budget today and not after the 6th. Whatever the state might push us to do will need to wait until the next fiscal year.

Mr. Battis stated that because of the dates for budget submission and the public meeting and past presentations to the BoS, we need to stay the course. There are two possibilities, the state could either reduce or eliminate funding. He did note, however, we then have the option to carry on by either supporting operations out of the Conservation Fund or by reducing the number of days of operation. Until the state indicates their position, we need to proceed as originally planned.

Mr. Dickinson asked if that meant go with a 40 day schedule.

Mr. Battis stated yes although it is up to the commission which schedule to budget. It is possible to use other sources of funds including the donation accounts and Conservation Fund.

Mr. Boland suggested that we could increase the budget to add the days and, if those funds were not used in 2014, they would be available in out years through the Conservation Fund.

Mr. Battis suggested this would work for one budget cycle.

Mr. Dickinson suggested that perhaps the additional cost of the 50 day schedule needs to be considered as a necessity. He asked if any other projects were planned and inquired about the Musquash Trail grant application.

Mr. Battis replied that he had not heard anything on the status of that grant. Mr. Dickinson suggested that if more extensive work is required, additional funding might be obtained by conducting a timber cut in the Town Forest. He noted that the Conservation Funds are, in his mind, reserved for purchase of conservation land.

Mr. Battis summarized the discussion, in terms of the budget, as being a decision between the 40 or 50 day DASH operations. In addition it was noted that the Lake Host program is budgeted at \$4,500 and Volunteer Lake Assessment Program (VLAP) testing at about \$1600/year. The 50 day plan would require an additional \$7,000 per year request.

Mr. Kegley stated that the long term goal is to cut back the total operations but to stay with the 40 days of operations and delay the anticipated harvesting cut back.

Mr. Dickinson noted that if we have other tasks, such as a new kiosk at Musquash Pond, we must include those in our budget. He asked Mr. Kegley what he thought the state might provide for funding.

Mr. Kegley responded that he did assume they would provide some funding as they have a stake in the process, but he could not estimate the amount.

II FY 2014 Budget Plans

Mr. Battis relayed to the Commission instructions from the Board of Selectmen for developing the budget for FY 2014. The BoS requested that an attempt be made to maintain a constant budget between FY 2013 and FY 2014 subject to known changes such as increased utility costs. He suggested several changes in the distribution of funds among line items to more closely align with prior year expenditures.

Mr. Dickinson questioned the role of the DES matching grant in the budget.

Mr. Battis explained that the budget represents our expenditures and we do not consider the grant. The grant reduces the amount of funds required to be raised by the town to satisfy the budget.

Mr. Dickinson noted that over 90% of our budget is associated with the lakes.

Mrs. Dubay noted that our role has changed from prior years by the addition of new responsibilities. We should have more funds to perform these new roles.

Mr. Dickinson restated his concern that 90% of our budget goes to the lakes.

Mr. Battis replied that, except for Musquash Trail Work, we have not identified any additional tasks.

Mr. Dickinson suggested that an additional \$1,500 could be assigned to support trail work at Musquash for tools or other supplies. He suggested this could also increase the small equipment maintenance line.

Mr. Battis stated that although the BoS requested a flat budget, we have been asked to enhance our support for town lands and we could justify these increases.

A discussion ensued about work requirements at Musquash Conservation Lands.

Mr. Dickinson suggested we add a line item for \$1500 for Musquash trail work.

Mr. Boland concurred.

Mrs. Dubay agreed that additional line items should be added for the Town Forest Forestry Plan and other items.

Mr. Dickinson suggested that a timber cut could fund the Forestry Plan update.

Mr. Dubay asked if the forestry plan update would have any upfront costs?

Mr. Dickinson responded that there should be no upfront cost.

Mr. Dickinson recommended the new line item be entitled "Town Land Stewardship".

Motion to Approve the Budget Request (as attached):

Motion by: K Dickinson

Second by T Boland

Vote: 4 – 0 in Favor

Comments by the Commissioners:

Mr. Dickinson stated that he would investigate the situation with the Forestry Plan for the Town Forest and evaluate the need for an update to the plan. He also noted that at Musquash a trail that has been overgrown, due to puddling on the trail, which could be cleared and would improve access to the homestead foundation and add a new loop trail.

Motion to Adjourn :

Motion by: T Boland

Second by P Dubay

Vote: 4 – 0 in Favor

Meeting adjourned at 9:23

J Battis, Chairman

Conservation Commission Proposed Budget Request FY 2014

Account Number	Description	FY13 Budget	FY14 Request	Explanation
06-4619-5586-202-000	Small Equipment Maintenance	\$300	\$500	DASH Unit Maintenance
06-4619-5586-214-000	Notices, News, Ads	\$100	\$100	
06-4619-5586-215-000	Publications	\$100	\$100	Land Use Regulations Books
06-4619-5586-217-000	Assoc. Dues/Fees	\$600	\$800.00	NH Assoc. of ConComs, NH Assoc. of Wetland Scientists, SPNF, NH Lakes Assoc.
06-4619-5586-235-000	Registration Fees	\$150	\$150	Conference Registration
06-4619-5586-238-000	Postage	\$200	\$175	
06-4619-5586-241-000	Printing, Stationary	\$300	\$150	
06-4619-5586-252-000	Professional Services	\$33,788	\$33,400	Mostly support for VLAP, Lake Host and DASH Operations. We see some small increase in water testing fees.
06-4619-5586-303-000	Office Supplies	\$100	\$50	
06-4619-5586-450-000	Capital Reserve Fund (Pond Reclamation)	\$1	\$1	
06-4619-5586-xxx-000	Town Land Stewardship	Not Applicable	\$1500	New Line Item to support Trail Maintenance, etc. in Conservation Lands. Previously buried in Professional Services
TOTALS:		\$35,639.00	\$36,926.00	