

**Town of Haverhill
CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEETING
MINUTES**

Tuesday, February 20, 2024, at 6:00 PM

**J.R. Morrill Building
2nd Floor Conference Room
2975 Dartmouth College Highway
North Haverhill, NH**

Tuesday, February 20, 2024

Conservation Commission members:

Katelyn Currie-Huggard, Chair
Joe Mitchell, Vice Chair
Linda Smith
Marilyn Blaisdell
Carolyn Hofmann, ex officio

The meeting was **CALLED TO ORDER** at 6:08 PM by Chair Currie-Huggard.

Attendance: Katelyn Currie-Huggard, Chair (Here);); Joe Mitchell, Vice Chair (Here); Carolyn Hofmann, Selectboard ex-officio (Here); Marilyn Blaisdell, online (Here); Linda Smith (Absent). A quorum was met.

In-Person Visitors: None.

Online Visitors: None.

AGENDA APPROVAL

Chair Currie-Huggard asked for any additions or deletions to the Agenda.

MOTION #1: Chair Currie-Huggard made the motion to approve the Agenda as amended.

- Chair Currie-Huggard added a discussion of the timber harvest near Marilyn Blaisdell's home and the Armory.

Voice Vote: All in favor, none opposed, none abstained. The Agenda was approved unanimously.

MINUTES FROM A PREVIOUS MEETING:

Chair Currie-Huggard asked for any additions or deletions to the Minutes from **December 19, 2023**. **Note:** There were no Minutes from the **January 16, 2024**, meeting because the meeting was canceled due to bad weather.

MOTION #2: Hofmann made the motion to approve the **December 19, 2023**, meeting minutes as written, seconded by Blaisdell.

Voice Vote: All in favor, none opposed, none abstained. The Minutes were approved unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS:

Armory Timber Harvest Update

Chair Currie-Huggard opened the discussion of a proposed timber harvest near the Armory and asked if there was anything new from the Select Board.

- Blaisdell commented that she believes that the Town will clear cut the trees around the Armory because the Armory will become the new Town Highway Garage, and they need the space.
- Hofmann noted that the Town is keeping the Armory building, but will need to complete asbestos abatement, heating installation, and possibly additions to the Armory building.
- Chair Currie-Huggard commented that white pines as they age become diseased and are dangerous. Chair Currie-Huggard noted that landscaping with successional brush or lawn planning would be options.
- Hofmann noted that the Armory is a good location with gravel pits nearby.

Timber Harvest Near Blaisdell's Home

Chair Currie-Huggard opened the discussion about the trees being cut down near Blaisdell's home.

- Blaisdell stated that her residence is across from the French Pond board launch. Blaisdell commented that landowners are clear cutting trees around a swampy area near her home, which she believes will destroy the habitat. Hofmann noted that many downed trees from the various storms in the fall were being cleared. Blaisdell noted that the timber being cut is far beyond what were downed trees. Vice Chair Mitchell confirmed the location of the timber harvest. Blaisdell commented that she notified the Town Manager.
- Chair Currie-Huggard stated that an intent-to-cut permit is filed and approved if there is a commercial harvest. Hofmann asked if the permit was visible, and Blaisdell replied that she did not see a posted permit. Hofmann agreed to research to see if a permit was approved. Chair Currie-Huggard stated that she will locate pictures from the Sentinel satellite from February 11th. Chair Currie-Huggard stated that using Esri she found the timber harvest weekly timelapse, which would provide the Commission with scope of the harvest. Chair Currie-Huggard also noted that the Town is an abutter with a 5-acre, landlocked parcel adjacent to that lot. Hofmann noted that there were many blowdowns with broken trees and large stumps remaining.
- Blaisdell noted that a bird and wildlife photographer who visits her area has noted that bird pairs are no longer nesting because of loss of habitat.
- Chair Currie-Huggard stated they need to find the intent-to-cut permit and, if there is none, they could notify the NH Department of Environmental Services. Chair Currie-Huggard stated that the Commission could notify the Planning and Select Boards. Chair Currie-Huggard noted that the lot could be under current use.
- Hofmann noted that without an intent-to-cut permit, the Town cannot access the required timber tax from timber harvesting. Hofmann discussed the permitting process.
- Blaisdell asked for the address of the property. Chair Currie-Huggard stated that it is 970 French Pond Rd. Chair Currie-Huggard researched the property card for that address, and

found that that lot of 123 acres is in current use. Chair Currie-Huggard stated that under current use, the Town should have a map of the forest. Vice Chair Mitchell noted that the parcel borders swamp land and is classified differently. Hofmann noted that the house lot is outside of the current use area.

- The Commissioners reviewed the Haverhill tax map, and the timber harvest lots and other lots surrounding French Pond and French Pond Rd.

Connecticut River Hydro Dam Educational Event

Chair Currie-Huggard noted that she is not sure of the dates of the hydro dam event, and she suggested creating an event for the next Conservation Commission meeting, such as inviting Dr. Kate Buckman, the Connecticut River Conservancy's (CRC) new River Steward in NH, (<https://www.ctriver.org/new-hampshire-gets-a-new-steward-for-the-connecticut-river/>) to speak on April 16 or May 21, 2024.

Hofmann noted that after the upcoming election, she will not be a Select Board member because she is not running, and she mentioned that she would like to be on the commission as a member.

Chair Currie-Huggard stated that Dr. Buckman has volunteered to speak on the relicensing of the Connecticut River hydro dams. Chair Currie-Huggard recommended using the Clifford Building Conference Room and advertising on the ListServe, *Bridge Weekly*, and maybe using a brochure template from the CRC. Hofmann researched the Town calendar for the May 21st date, and it seems like that date would be OK. Chair Currie-Huggard recalled the meeting about Old Farms and how over 20 people were in attendance. Vice Chair Mitchell noted that it would be best to market the event broadly to get people to attend.

Mission/Vision Statements and the Natural Resource Inventory

Chair Currie-Huggard suggested the Commissioners rework the Mission and Vision Statements, and she could provide some samples from other towns. Chair Currie-Huggard asked how the Mission Statement is to be implemented, and confirmed that a Mission Statement is about what the Commission hopes to do. Chair Currie-Huggard noted that the regulatory mission of Conservation Commissions is to focus on water quality, wetlands, gravel pits, permitting of structures, and hold or purchase lands. Hofmann asked about the gravel pits and how the regulations are enforced, and Chair Currie-Huggard noted that the Conservation Commission can challenge the gravel pit permitting process via Bylaws and Ordinances.

Chair Currie-Huggard noted that the Mission Statement was included in the 2023 Annual Report, and she stated that it pays homage to the past members.

Chair Currie-Huggard has also researched Natural Resource Inventories (NRI) from other towns. Chair Currie-Huggard stated that she would like to come up with an excellent product over time, if needed.

Chair Currie-Huggard discussed the vacant lands owned by the Town of Haverhill, and what the Conservation Commission could do with it.

Group Donation

Chair Currie-Huggard stated that the Commission was offered a donation by Arianna Chojnowski; however, she does not know how to proceed with acceptance of the money. Chair Currie-Huggard stated that she would like to have a procedure for accepting donations, and Vice Chair Mitchell noted that an account for donations would be needed.

Chair Currie-Huggard noted that the Commission will have \$500 in an operation's account for 2024. Hofmann suggested using money for trail maintenance, especially on Chippewa Trail on Black Mt., which has many trees down. Vice Chair Mitchell noted that Black Mountain is a State Park, and the tree cleanup would be the responsibility of the state.

Vice Chair Mitchell noted that the Fun Run through Kinder Forest could bring some money in if the Commissioners provide trail cleanup.

OLD BUSINESS

Page Scholarship Fund

Hofmann followed up with the Scholarship Fund and noted that in Mrs. Page's obituary last year, it stated that funds go to the Page Scholarship Fund. Hofmann was wondering who that was and where the money went. Chair Currie-Huggard noted that having money go into that fund would benefit many applicants.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Chair Currie-Huggard asked for final comments from the members.

- Chair Currie-Huggard stated that she is using the UNH repository for archiving Conservation Commission materials.

NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, March 19, 2024, at 6:00 PM

ADJOURN

MOTION #2: Chair Currie-Huggard made a motion and Hofmann seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:01 PM.

Voice Vote: All in favor, none opposed, none abstained. The motion was approved unanimously.

Transcribed by Joanna Bligh.

