



CONSERVATION COMMISSION TOWN OF BELMONT, NH

Wednesday, March 3, 2021
Remotely by Zoom
Belmont, New Hampshire

Zoom: Chairman Denise Naiva; Vice Chair Scott Rolfe; Members Terry Threlfall, Jr., Ed Stephenson, Jane Jordan, Keith Bennett, and Ruth Mooney, Alternate Ex-Officio; Student Members Ella Irving and Christopher Paré.
Absent: Member Claude Patten, Ex-Officio.
Staff: Rick Ball and Colleen Akerman.

D. Naiva called the meeting to order at 6:05 pm and welcomed those in attendance. She announced that as Chairman of the Conservation Commission, she finds that due to the state of emergency declared by the governor, this public body is authorized to meet using electronic means. She said that the Commission gave notice to the public of the necessary information for accessing the meeting using Zoom or telephone, and she announced that any party experiencing any difficulty in accessing the meeting at any point, should call 603-267-8300 xt. 125, and the meeting will be recessed until access can be restored for all parties.

The Chairman noted there is a quorum this evening and held a roll call attendance:

Denise Naiva.
Scott Rolfe.
Ed Stephenson.
Terry Threlfall.
Keith Bennett.
Jane Jordan.
Rick Ball, Land Use Technician.
Colleen Akerman, Building & Land Use Clerk.
Ella Irving.
Chris Paré.
Donna Hepp.
Amelia Kaufhold.
Ruth Mooney.

Introductions – Student Members – Ella Irving and Christopher Pare:

The Chairman introduced the Commission's two new student members from Belmont High School. Christopher Paré is a junior who is interested in nature and the environment. He is President of the Belmont High School Outdoors Club, and is working with UNH and Dartmouth to host a climate summit to invigorate environmental conversations. C. Paré enjoys running and hiking in the White Mountains. Ella Irving is also a junior. She wanted to join the Commission to get involved in the

community and the environment. She thinks it may help her with career decisions. She enjoys going to for walks and surfing.

All members and attendees introduced themselves to the new student members.

Belknap County Conservation District – Donna Hepp and Amelia Kaufhold:

Ms. Donna Hepp is on the Board of Supervisors for the Belknap County Conservation District (BCCD). She introduced Ms. Amelia Kaufhold, who is the newly hired Volunteer Coordinator for Environmental Stewardship & Food Assistance at the Belknap County Conservation District. Ms Kaufhold describes herself as “a farmer and an educator”.

Ms. Hepp explained that the BCCD is celebrating their 75th anniversary. They work with environmental stewardship and food assistance programs. A lot of the work they do needs volunteers. They have active volunteers for the upcoming plant sale and ongoing projects to improve wildlife habitat. They see an opportunity to do more with volunteers and partner groups. One of their new ideas is to reach out to other organizations and bodies involved with environmental stewardship, such as town Conservation Commissions.

Ms. Kaufhold is looking to establish a collaborative community-based program to expand volunteer engagement with other local organizations. She has talked with Prescott Farm in Laconia and the State Forest Nursery. They want to help connect volunteers and organizations together and host training sessions so that people can volunteer more easily. The individual organizations would not have to bear the weight of training for volunteers. BCCD is working on building a new website with a good online hub to look for volunteer opportunities such as helping in a kitchen or on the trails. Ms. Kaufold and Ms. Hepp have come to the Commission to see if we have any suggestions for programs, projects or organizations to partner with. They are reaching out to make suggestions and spread the word they are looking for more volunteers. People have been stuck at home and are eager to get out. The State Forest Nursery has a waitlist for plant sale volunteers. Those “overflow” volunteers could be shifted another organization. BCCD is starting a newsletter every other week. They asked that anyone with ideas please email ameliakaufhold@gmail.com or bccdvolunteer@gmail.com D. Naiva asked if BCCD has tapped the high school for volunteers. Ms. Kaufhold said not yet, because it has been too cold and they are still working out the needs of the community. As things start to unfold there will be trail work and spring sales prep. Schools will be able to organize opportunities for groups or individuals. Some businesses offer employees an afternoon of volunteering. She said the new website will have more information and will be easier to interact with. Ms. Hepp said if the Commission has work projects, the BCCD can assist with volunteer outreach.

D. Naiva thanked Ms. Kaufhold and Ms. Hepp.

Forest Management Plan:

Ms. Hepp asked to share some information on funding for forest management on Town land. She said she has been involved in obtaining multiple grants to get environmental and conservation projects done. One of the main grants is through the Nation Fish and Wildlife Foundation. They focus on streams, rivers and forests. Ms. Hepp has used their funding to do stream restoration to improve the eastern brook trout habitat. There is an April 12th deadline for the grant. She asked if the Commission has Town land where they would like to get a forestry plan to improve habitat. She would need information such as the name of the tract, map and acreage and a forester to get an estimate built into the grant cost, and to perhaps implement the project. This same grant was used to do forest management for Gunstock and to create

permanent openings for the American woodcock and interpretative signs and kiosks. It is sometimes difficult to get grants for Town forests. Some funders only fund private lands. This could help fill a gap. D. Naiva mentioned she thought about streams and rivers and the Commission's priority to protect the Tioga River. S. Rolfe said there are a couple of properties that could entertain a natural resource inventory such as the whole Tioga conservation area and a few other Town properties. S. Rolfe asked about the funding levels. Ms. Hepp said the current grant is \$193,000 and grants start at \$50,000. She said if she were to complete the grant she would need assistance from the Commission to pull maps and get data. She will write the grant but will need information. D. Naiva thanked Ms. Hepp.

Board's Action – Minutes 01/27/2021:

MOTION: S. Rolfe moved to approve the minutes of January 27, 2021.

The motion was seconded by J. Jordan and carried on a roll call vote by D. Naiva, S. Rolfe, E. Stephenson, T. Threlfall, K. Bennett, J. Jordan and R. Mooney. (7-0)

Paul Schmidt:

D. Naiva announced that Paul Schmidt passed away on February 23rd. He was a member of the commission for 5 years and served as Vice Chair. She wanted to put it on record that he was a wonderful asset to the Commission. He was a wealth of information and passed away too soon. He had exotic trees and plants in his home. He was a geologist and had lots of specimens. D. Naiva suggested if members wanted to, they should contribute to the Jeff Marden Scholarship Fund in Paul's name.

NH Department of Environmental Services Applications:

1. **Susan and Timothy Schaller – 11 Gilman Shore Road – Map/Lot 111-064-000-000:** Shoreland permit under technical review to add and expand the second floor of the main dwelling.
2. **Route 106 Realty Trust – 40 Old State Road – Map/Lot 201-003-000/000:** Alteration of Terrain application to disturb 382,102sf to develop the site with self-storage units.

Current Planning Board/ZBA Applications:

1. Planning Board 02/22/2021 –

- a. **93 Daniel Webster Highway LLC – 93 Daniel Webster Highway – Map/Lot 201-093-000-000:** The Board approved a request for site plan approval for a gas station, convenience store and food drive thru window/lane. Property is in the "C" Zone. R. Ball shared the plan on his screen and explained that it is a state of the art design. All tanks and lines are double walled to the pumps. The company is based out of Concord.

2. Zoning Board – 01/27/2021 and 02/24/2021:

- a. **Timothy & Susan Schaller - 11 Gilman Shore Road – Map/Lot 111-064-000-000:** Continuation of a request to add new building footprint and add a second floor:
 1. The applicant withdrew their application for a Variance of Article 5 Table 2 of the Zoning Ordinance closer (0.8') to the side property line than allowed (12.5') but not closer than the existing structure.
 2. The Board granted a Special Exception of Article 11.A.3.c of the Zoning Ordinance closer (9.1') to the side property line than allowed (12.5') but not closer than the existing structure.
- b. **Fay Family Trust – 113 Tucker Shore Road – Map/Lot 107-018-000-000:** The Board tabled a request for a variance of Article 5 Table 2 of the Zoning Ordinance to add a second story closer (17.3') to the front property line than allowed (50') so the applicant can do additional research and make changes to the application to better meet the criteria for a variance.
- c. **Phong N. Tran – 88 Ladd Hill Road – Map/Lot 201-068-000-000:** Request to convert existing restaurant space into two additional dwelling units. The Board approved:

1. A Variance of Article 5 Table 1 of the Zoning Ordinance to establish a 4- unit multifamily use in the rural district. ZBA #0221Z.
2. A Variance of Article 5 Table 2 of the Zoning Ordinance to establish a density greater (2 units/acre) than allowed (0.33 unit/acre).
- d. **Steve & Michelle Castle – 13 Gilman Shore Road – Map/Lot 111-065-000-000:** The Board approved two variances of Article 5 Table 2 of the Zoning Ordinance and two variances of Article 4 of the Wetlands Ordinance to construct a dwelling unit and garage:
 1. Closer (40.1’) to the highwater mark than allowed (50’).
 2. Closer (3.5’) to the west side property line than allowed (12.5’).
 3. Closer (6.5’) to the east side property line than allowed (12.5’).
 4. Closer (18.2’) to the front property line than allowed (50’).
- e. **Stacy Clark – 39 Breck Shore Road – Map/Lot 114-019-000-000:** The Board approved a Variance of Article 5 Table 2 of the Zoning Ordinance to construct a garage closer (29.5) to the front setback than allowed (50’).

ARC – 02/18/2021:

- a. **106 Realty Trust – 40 Old State Road – Map/Lot 201-003-000-000:** Request to develop the site with self-storage units.
- b. **Phong N. Tran – 88 Ladd Hill Road – Map/Lot 201-068-000-000:** Request to convert existing restaurant space into two additional dwelling units for a total of four in the building.

Projects:

1. **Currier-Sanborn:** D. Naiva recapped that the issues of the deer stand and dumping were discussed at the last meeting. J. Jordan said she has not seen anything dumped recently, but the seasonal people are not around. She does not know where the deer stand is. R. Ball stated the “No Dumping” signs have not yet been posted due to weather conditions. J. Jordan asked to join R. Ball when he goes out to check on the deer stand.
2. **Village Trail:** D. Naiva reported that she sent Commission members a copy of the letter that went out to the woman with trail concerns. The letter told her to notify police if there is any suspicion of vandalism, and reassured her the decorations would be removed. R. Ball said he received an email from the woman who installed the bench and she was not aware it had been decorated. She said she would get family members to remove them. D. Naiva said she also asked the woman to consider joining the Commission.
3. **Jeff Marden Scholarship:** R. Ball reported the account balance is \$758. D. Naiva said there were no funds received from the Sargent Fund this year, and that is where a considerable amount of the funds come from. The Sargent Fund donated to food banks and many of the regular recipients did not receive funds. She encouraged members to contribute to the Jeff Marden Scholarship Fund. Typically, the Commission awards \$500 but it may not be in that position this year. R. Ball recommended waiting to see what type of applications are received and review it again.
4. **Town Warrant Article #25:**
 - a. **Voting Day – March 9, 2021:** D. Naiva thanked members for their letters to the editor about the warrant article and getting the word out to their friends and neighbors in support of the Conservation Commission.

Complaints/Violations/Concerns/General Info:

Newsletter Articles: D. Naiva thanked R. Ball for the most recent newsletter article in the Town’s monthly emailed newsletter. She asked members with ideas to submit them by email and encouraged the student members to submit an article about any projects. Student members were also encouraged to present any projects or information to the Commission.

Budget/Expenditures:**New Hampshire Association of Conservation Commission Dues:**

MOTION: E. Stephenson moved to withdraw \$350 from the Conservation Fund for the following:

- a. Annual dues to the NH Association of Conservation Commissions.

The motion was seconded by S. Rolfe and carried on a roll call vote by D. Naiva, S. Rolfe, E. Stephenson, T. Threlfall, K. Bennett, J. Jordan and R. Mooney. (7-0)

Funding for Milfoil Remediation: D. Naiva reminded the Commission that there is no longer an operations budget. The only thing the budget supports is Land Use Staff salaries and benefits. Only the Conservation Fund can be used to support projects like milfoil remediation. She said there are no answers needed now, but she encouraged members to think about what we should do about that. Typically the Commission has dedicated \$5,000 for remediation, but do we want to take money out of the Conservation Fund?

E. Stephenson reported that this year there will only be diver work done on Lake Winnisquam so the bill will be less than usual. The current estimate for the entire lake is \$20,000. T. Threlfall reported there is excessive picking that needs to be done on Silver Lake. Their association has already submitted paperwork to the State. He said their association is working on fundraising, but they would still like to request \$2,000. They do understand the position the Town is in right now. S. Rolfe asked E. Stephenson about contributions from other towns for Lake Winnisquam's milfoil remediation. He replied that the Winnisquam Watershed Network (WWN) receives funding from the other four towns around the lake. The WWN does not know what they will receive from towns this year. Many will decide at Town meeting.

Next Meeting: It was the consensus of the Commission to hold the next meeting by Zoom, on April 7, 2021.

Adjournment:

MOTION: S. Rolfe moved to adjourn at 6:53 pm.

The motion was seconded by E. Stephenson and carried on a roll call vote by D. Naiva, S. Rolfe, E. Stephenson, T. Threlfall, K. Bennett, J. Jordan and R. Mooney. (7-0)

Respectfully submitted:

Colleen Akerman
Building and Land Use Clerk