



CONSERVATION COMMISSION

TOWN OF BELMONT, NH

Wednesday, February 6, 2019
Belmont Corner Meeting House
Belmont, New Hampshire

Present: Chairman Denise Naiva; Vice Chair Paul Schmidt; Members Scott Rolfe and Keith Bennett; Alternate Members Terry Threlfall, Jr. and Bobbie Jean Bennett.
Absent: Members Laurel Day, Lynne Lowd and Claude Patten, Ex-Officio; Alternate Member Michelle Youtsey-Dunn.
Staff: Rick Ball and Candace Daigle.

The chairman called the meeting to order at 6 p.m., appointed T. Threlfall, Jr. and B. Bennett as voting members and welcomed those in attendance.

Board's Action - Minutes 12/05/2018

MOTION: On a motion by K. Bennett, seconded by P. Schmidt, it was voted unanimously to approve the minutes of December 5, 2018, as written. (6-0)

NH Department of Environmental Services Applications:

- 1. Eversource Energy - 01/07/2019:** Eversource ROW NH DES Wetlands Utility Maintenance Notification is complete for vegetative maintenance in the ROW.
- 2. Mallards Landing Association at Lot 305 First Street - 01/24/2019:** NH DES Shoreland Permit by Notification is accepted to impact 206sf of protected shoreland to excavate a driveway and remove a stump.
- 3. Tioga View Estates Condo Association Inc. at River Street - 01/29/2019:** NH DES Dredge and Fill application is under technical review to impact 311sf along 70 linear feet of stream bed and 160sf of stream banking, to replace a deteriorated 48" CMP with a 48" HDE pipe and improve head wall and end wall. The slope of the pipe will be reduced from 2.4% to 1% and rounded river stone will be placed to provide stream continuity. This project probably was not held to the new stream crossing rules as it is a replacement and due to the minimal sized pipe. However, a full NH DES permit was required because it is a perennial stream. They however are laying stone to make it more wildlife friendly.
- 4. Brian Carmona of 92 Sunset Drive – 02/01/2019:** NH DES Shoreland application is under technical review to demolish and reconstruct an existing non-conforming single-family cottage. Proposed cottage will be moved back from the lake 6 feet. Permeable pavers, rain gardens and grass pavers will be implemented for storm water management.

Land Use Boards/Committees Applications

- 1. Planning Board:** 12/17/2018 and 01/28/2019
 - a. Debra Magee:** The Board approved a subdivision application to subdivide one approximately

4-acre lot into two lots (Minor Subdivision). Property located in the “RS” Zone, 434 Jamestown Road, Tax Lot 118-014-000-000.

- b. **Mark A. Mooney Rev. Trust for Christopher A. Mooney:** The Board approved a request to amend a subdivision approval requiring underground utilities. Property is located in the “R” Zone, 350 South Road, Tax Lot 244-026-002-000. The Board relieved them of the requirement to go fully underground with utilities from the road in.
 - c. **Jason Drouin Custom Homes LLC:** The Board tabled a request for Site Plan approval to construct a second story on part of existing structure (40’ x 80’) permitted as Contractor’s Yard (building contractor with cabinet shop). Property is located at 15 Durrell Mountain Road, Tax Lot 212-008-000-000 in the “R” Zone. This was because the applicant has not been able to get a surveyor on site for the required plan. Clearing that was done was outside of the existing approved envelope so a new plan is required.
 - d. **603 Storage:** The Board approved a request for Site Plan and Conditional Use Permit approvals to construct 15,350sf of self-storage (4 buildings) w/paved ways and underground stormwater control. Property located in the “C” Zone, Gilmanton Road, Tax Lot 122-056-001-000.
2. **Zoning Board of Adjustment:** 12/19/2018
- a. **Mammoth Acquisition Co., LLC:** The Board approved a request for a Variance of Article 5 Table 2 of the Zoning Ordinance, to construct a 5,000+sf commercial medical clinic building on a to-be-subdivided lot, closer (15’) to the front property line than allowed (50’). Property is located in the “C” Zone, 73 Daniel Webster Highway, Tax Lot 201-029-000-000. The application will be in front of the Planning Board this month.
 - b. **No meeting** – 01/23/2018
3. **Application Review Committee:** 12/20/2019 and 01/24/2019 – No meetings

Projects:

1. **Daniel Ladd Farm:**
Boundary at Ladd Hill Road and Union Road: Surveyor is still struggling with health issues which has slowed down this project. The project is not time sensitive and spring will also be a better time to do the work.
2. **Jeff Marden Town Forest:**
Red Pine Harvest: Logging equipment was moved in today. The access road is shaded and still solid and hopefully additional warm weather will not impact the project. Cutting should be done in 3-4 days and trucking in 2-3 weeks. Logs will be transported to mills in Canada for dimensional lumber and timbers. Notices to abutters were sent last year and again this year. S. Rolfe will put signs up to temporarily close down the trails during the project. R. Ball will also post on website.
3. **Village Spur Trail:**
Names for Second Bridge: The first bridge was named Slippery Rock Bridge for a large piece of slippery ledge historically noted by locals. R. Ball will talk to Town Administrator Beaudin about the naming process for the second bridge. Members noted the erectors should have a hand in the naming. It might also tie into the community’s 150th celebration.
4. **Actions for Wildlife in a Changing Climate:** The Chairman shared notes provided by L. Lowd prepared from her attendance at a UNH Cooperative Extension/NH Fish and Game workshop as well as from websites (notes attached). Members discussed the Five Ways Communities Can Protect Wildlife in a Changing Climate and the Top Five Actions That Can be Implemented. The listed items can be helpful in setting up goals for the upcoming year.

The members also listed many previous actions of the Commission that support the ideals

presented;

- a. Jeff Marden's successful effort to have the Ordinance speak to the importance of Wildlife Habitat and Habitat Links and Buffers;
- b. Natural Resource Inventory;
- c. Goals and past actions to preserve the Tioga riverfront areas;
- d. Invasive species education and control;
- e. Educational Workshops;
- f. Open space management plans.

5. **Trail Development Criteria:** S. Rolfe noted that in working recently with the City of Concord, he found they have an evaluation checklist when considering new trails. The State also gets proposals for new trails on public lands of different types. They go through a process to approve that trail with the requesting entity. He suggested that the Commission also adopt the use of this tool because it should be a thoughtful evaluation before such a decision is made. Lands are not preserved as open space just to facilitate trails and all lands are not appropriate for trails. Lands often preserve other qualities and, in some instances, trails would reduce the quality of those other features. A trail checklist would allow the Commission be fair and consistent and make decisions with all the relevant criteria addressed. It would be an important component to managing lands. Trails are a wonderful amenity, but not in otherwise sensitive areas, and they are a management burden. They have to be maintained, monitored and enforced. Illegal spurs are created on a regular basis and must be curtailed. No matter the signage, people will take their off-leash dogs, which can raise havoc with wildlife, neighbors and other trail users. All of these matters come to the Commission. The Chairman noted it would also dovetail into the acquisition process when properties are under consideration. Currently the only permitted snowmobile use on Commission managed properties is on part of the Village Trail. The snowmobile club may request to use an additional section of the Village Trail in upcoming years, but will need to protect the planking in the second bridge to do so. The members agreed this comprehensive checklist is a great addition to the tools currently being used and that it would be maintained as a separate process so that it can easily be used both inside and outside of an acquisition process. It is not necessary to apply the evaluation on all existing managed properties at this time, but it will be used on an as-needed basis.
6. **Property Stewardship Checklist:** The Chairman asked if all members had a chance to review the monitoring report form which is currently used during the annual evaluation of properties managed by the Commission. She suggested that use of the form be expanded to all observations made by members. For instance, the Bennetts could complete a form when they're evaluating downed trees, storm damage or other relevant facet of the Sanborn Farm site. One should be completed for the timbering of the Town Forest. Making these out whenever something of consequence is noted on one of the properties will create a more robust record of the sites, the problems, the activity and help set goals. S. Rolfe noted he will complete one for his view of the Bean Dam. Forms can be obtained from, and completed forms returned to R. Ball.
7. **Community Outreach 2019:** The members discussed continuing their efforts of community outreach. Although some of the programs have had a scant audience, others, like the Well Water program had a much larger audience. Some of the ideas for future programs included:
- a. Wildlife in the Community;
 - b. NH Stonewall mapping project;
 - c. Engaging Your Community Around Climate and Wildlife;
 - d. Vernal Pools-April would be a great month for something like that;
 - e. Invasive Species, perhaps focusing on upland species and their continued use for landscaping-
- R. Ball noted that Doug Cygan, who is the State's leading invasive species control coordinator,

is a resident in Belmont and has worked closely with Public Works on some of the Town's control practices;

- f. Stream Crossings/Connectivity - R. Ball noted that the Commission should consider attempting some action at the Fellows dam site to allow for fish to move upstream; perhaps some ponds with rising elevations or removing some additional part of the structure. S. Rolfe noted that native brook trout still do survive in the Tioga.

There are also programs with active audience participation where people are asked to circle areas they believe are unique and worthy of preserving. The Chairman also suggested inviting Donna Hepp, Chairman of the Belknap County Conservation District Board of Supervisors, for a summary of their recent Community Stream Workshop. S. Rolfe pointed out that there may be an opportunity for some stream work in the Town Forest.

8. **Commission Goals 2019:** Outreach programs discussed above. In addition, continue to check annually on managed properties and stay on top of existing issues seem to be reasonable goals considering the limited number of Commission Members. The Chairman noted that Amy Burke is getting two students for the Saving Special Places program. She noted that no funding for the Jeff Marden Scholarship was provided from Sargent Fund this year. The Fund representatives noted there were many great applicants, but limited funds. The Commission will reevaluate their application for the upcoming year. Members note that Commission funds may not be used to fund the scholarship. In the past they've also tried outside fund-raising for the scholarship. R. Ball will check on the current balance.
9. **Winnisquam Watershed Network:** L. Lowd had previously emailed information. WWN has been in contact with James Gallagher, Chief Engineer at NH DES in regards to the high water levels. Mr. Gallagher said the reason that Winnepesaukee, Winnisquam, and Silver Lake water levels have been so high is that the owners of hydropower dams and other interests downstream had to perform their annual maintenance. The normal two-week shutdown had been extended to three weeks with a low stream flow. The Lakes Region received 8 extra inches of rain in November plus several inches of rain in December. Mr. Gallagher also said they will continue the high water release from the dam that will not cause significant flooding at Silver Lake until both Lake Winnepesaukee and Lake Winnisquam are back to normal levels. L. Lowd also submitted a detailed report about the workshop to D. Naiva and R. Ball which they will share with the members after the meeting.

Budget/Expenditures: Dues have been paid to Belknap Range Conservation Coalition. R. Ball will be reaching out to the sign-maker in Keene to discuss some needed signs. Evidently, they have a process whereby their signs should last for decades instead of years. We do have some remaining blanks.

Adjournment:

MOTION: On a motion by K. Bennett, seconded by S. Rolfe, it was voted unanimously to adjourn at 6:50 pm. (6-0)

Respectfully submitted:

Candace Daigle
Town Planner

Actions for Wildlife in a Changing Climate Workshop
On December 7, 2018 by Lynne Lowd

The scientists have determined that the weather pattern is changing because of climate warming. We are getting more severe patterns such as a few years ago we had a extremely dry pattern for a longer time that caused drought like conditions. The drought conditions can affect drinking water, wetlands and surface waters, the fish and wildlife that depend on them, agriculture and forestry, and water based recreation. This year we had a wetter pattern that has caused lakes and streams to rise, causing flooding and erosion, potentially causing damage to habitats and ecologically significant areas, increased runoffs into water bodies, which can carry excess nutrients, sediment, and pollutants. This extreme weather pattern is causing the wildlife to move more north. The wildlife needs a safe environment to move about safely.

We also need to reduce our carbon footprint. There are hydropower plants that do not pollute water or air but do affect land use, homes, and natural habitats in the dam area. The wind turbines provide environmental benefits including the ability to generate electricity without carbon emissions, water use, and emissions of water and air pollutants. The wind turbines kill birds and bats and effect the direct and indirect habitat loss from the construction and operation of wind energy facilities. Solar power creates no emission that are harmful to human health and the environment but solar farms pose a real environmental challenge including habitat degradation and harm to wildlife but it also has a high initial cost, its weather dependent, solar storage is expensive, uses a lot of space, and is associated with greenhouse pollution from manufacturing of solarvoltaics but solar energy has far less pollution than other energy sources. If you are interested in using solar it is recommended to use the solar panels that mount to your roof and not on the ground. The roof mounted panels will not interfere with any habitat moving on the ground.

There are 5 ways Communities can Protect Wildlife in a Changing Climate.

Actions for Wildlife in a Changing Climate Workshop
On December 7, 2018 by Lynne Lowd

1. Make connections by protecting areas for habitat expansion and connect habitats via travel corridors, such as streams, that will allow wildlife to migrate. You do not need to buy all the land in order to make a wildlife corridor. This statement was repeated several times. First look at your aerial view of the town map and surrounding communities to determine a connection. Talk with landowners and other communities to see if they want to get involved with a this plan. Connect private landowners and towns with County Foresters and Wildlife specialists to discuss recommendations for improving and creating wildlife habitat.

2. Include climate adaption in town documents by incorporate climate change factors into town documents, such as natural resources inventories, conservation plans, master plan chapters, hazard mitigation plans, etc. The Conservation Commission along with other town officials should work with the Town Planners to make a plan that will help with the expansion of industries, housing developments, and natural passageway for the wildlife as a long term plan.

3. Reconnect the watershed by remove barriers to flow like dams and undersized culverts to restore aquatic connectivity (also reduce flood damage). You can do this by making bigger and better culverts. The older culverts are round and can cause problems at the beginning of the culvert that sits on the upper stream; rocks and trees or branches can block the culvert which would effect the control of the water flow and block the wildlife to pass through. The problems of the round culvert at the downstream can makes a deep basin and difficult for wildlife to safely pass through the culvert. This style of culvert is not flexible with fast rising water. A purpose of the culvert is not only for fish and small animals to pass through safely but the ease of water flow. The new concept is to use a U-shape culvert with a natural bottom with build up rock sides and large enough for a person to walk through. This U-shape design will allow the wildlife to pass through without traveling on the roads and is more flexible with rising water.

Actions for Wildlife in a Changing Climate Workshop
On December 7, 2018 by Lynne Lowd

4. Restore & manage habitat with climate in mind by developing and implementing restoration and management plans that support wildlife resilience (it will be good for people too!). Find out which wildlife is using your land, work with a professional forester, and wildlife biologists. Keep a journal of management actions and wildlife observation. Learn about conservation easement options. Consult professions about financial assistance. To maintain the property you can periodic timber harvest and plant wildflowers.

5. Keep an eye out for invasives in your community. These species are expected to increase with climate change, and monitoring and managing them will become even more important. This includes invasives species, pests, and diseases.

The Conservation Commission can get involved by these top five actions they can implement.

1. Encouraging landowners to preserve the natural features such as wetlands, riparian buffers (vegetation areas along the water edges) and upland areas providing flood storage.

2. Control invasive species on town-owned properties and encourage landowners to do the same.

3. Communicate and build public awareness about climate change via activities such as local workshops and other events, climate-focused signage, demonstration projects, or high-water mark projects.

4. Incorporate climate change into municipal documents. E.g. Natural Resource Inventory, land conservation/open space plans; forest and farmland management plans; Master Plan; Hazard Mitigation and Capital Improvement Plans.

Actions for Wildlife in a Changing Climate Workshop
On December 7, 2018 by Lynne Lowd

5. Develop and add climate vulnerability and adaptation benefits to the criteria used for prioritizing land conservation projects and conservation easements.

What else can Conservation Commissions do?

Land Conservation: Assess current and potential future conservation lands for climate resilience and for their ability to protect water resources and store flood waters. Pursue funding for conservation and stewardship work, especially in high-risk area.

Management and Restoration: Conduct restoration projects to improve habit and ecosystem health. Monitor municipal properties to identify problems (e.g. erosion and invasive species). Implement best practices for land management. Identify opportunities to modify culverts and remove barriers to stream flow.

Communication and Educating: Host educational workshops and stewardship work sessions in your community. Engage student and community groups in monitoring and restoration projects. Encourage property owners and businesses to incorporate the best available climate science and vulnerability assessments into decision-making. Provide water use restrictions during drought. Consider implementing a high-water mark project to raise awareness about flooding.

Land Use Planning and Regulation: Promote municipal regulations that reduce vulnerability and protect ecosystems (e.g. wetland/riparian buffers, elevation of new structures in the floodplain, etc.). Encourage your municipality to consider implementing transfer of development rights and other incentives to acquire or conserve property in high-risk or repetitive loss areas. Develop water-efficient landscaping regulations that restrict water uses during droughts.

Actions for Wildlife in a Changing Climate Workshop
On December 7, 2018 by Lynne Lowd

I would like to add that this information was taken from the many handouts and internet websites given at this workshop. Many of the presenters asked us to refer to these handouts. I will be handing these handouts along with my report to Denise Naiva. I am unable to read this report at our next meeting because I will be out of town. I am proud to know that the Belmont Conservation Commission has been involved in many of these practices already.