



CONSERVATION COMMISSION TOWN OF BELMONT, NH

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

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

The chairman called the meeting to order at 6 p.m. and welcomed those in attendance.

Speaker – Working with Streams and Aquatic Habitat:

Donna Hepp, Chairman of the Belknap County Conservation District (BCCD) Supervisors, presented a stream workshop on flood resiliency and aquatic habitat. Ms. Hepp works with communities and landowners on conservation efforts with the BCCD and also works on the Belmont Facilities Strategy Committee. She has previously worked with the US Forest Service in New Hampshire, and has also worked in Vermont, Colorado, Florida, Oregon and Washington, DC. Ms. Hepp has worked as a conservation planner and with landscape architecture.

Ms. Hepp thanked the Commission for letting her give this presentation. The BCCD has five board members who try to connect with local Conservation Commissions at least once a year to share information. The BCCD helps landowners and towns with conservation and natural resources. It is their mission to share information and demonstrate projects. BCCD has received some great grants to do demonstration projects at Gunstock such as repairing a wetlands walk and forest plan revisions. An upcoming project will involve habitat work adjacent to wetlands for the American woodcock.

BCCD provides workshops for practitioners and funds for private landowners to work on streams. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has funds for larger land owners with 10+ acres to do conservation practices. BCCD demonstration projects and community workshops show what can be done to help improve streams.

This presentation from Trout Unlimited includes some basics and streams 101 as well as information on culvert issues. There are some funds available from NHDOT for completing culvert assessments and inventories, which have not yet been completed in the Belmont area.

There are infrastructure vulnerabilities such as culverts, bridges and roads that affect our streams. The goal of this presentation is to share information on streams and their functions and how they relate to infrastructure. Trout Unlimited has a culvert project in New England to help communities complete assessments to address and prioritize work to repair streams.

There are online tools from the State on how to assess stream crossing inventories. What is good for roads is good for fish. Assessments have only been completed on 65% of NH's road-stream crossings. Some work has been done in the Lakes Region but it is not complete.

Many roads and culverts were designed in the 1970s and they were not designed for 100-year storm events. With climate change, more intense storm events are predicted and our infrastructure is not designed to address this. Well designed crossings are like an arch and have a natural bottom for fish and other wildlife. Fish are unable to pass through some perched culverts. There will be less economic impact with proper sized culverts that also allow better passage of aquatic organisms.

Stream water should be slowed down by allowing infiltration whenever possible. Streams carry water to lakes and it is natural for them to carry water, ice and sediment, but due to logging at the turn of the century, there is not as much natural wood in streams as there would have been. There is not enough large wood in streams to help slow down the velocity of water during storm events.

Natural barriers help catch leaf litter and organic matter that create food for macroinvertebrates. Stream channels have deepened and they are unable to use the natural floodplains. During storms, streams should operate through the floodplain. Floodplains help store water during high flow and catch sediment. Rivers need room to migrate, filter naturally and recharge aquifers. If streams are not operating properly, it robs aquifers. Once the water table cools, it helps to mitigate increases in water temperatures.

NRCS and other organizations have funds available for landowners to help heal streams.

Communities are struggling with undersized culverts. They need help with road reconstructions in river corridors to address impacts on streams. Fifty-three percent of stream crossings can't handle flood events. It is important to assess culverts and stream habitats to know where trouble spots are and prioritize the most damaging spots for infrastructure damage and barriers for passage of fish.

Ms. Hepp presented a second PowerPoint presentation on restoring instream habitats using large wood.

A demonstration on large wood additions was done at Gunstock. Over 3 miles of Poor Farm Brook from Gunstock to Ellacoya were restored with large wood additions. The goals for this type of work are to improve fish populations, influence spawning potential, improve tributaries to large systems for thermal refugia, re-engage the flood plain and retain fine sediment.

Large wood is hand placed with simple equipment into the stream corridor to create a mini log jam. Wood is anchored against a boulder or tree to help keep it anchored in place during a storm event. It looks raw but eventually it creates riffles, falls and pools for trout. Deeper water means cooler temperatures. Careful placement of the wood is necessary because many trees at the edge of the banks are holding the banks in place, so other trees are used to create the large wood additions. The canopy and the integrity of the banks need to be maintained. A length of tree is dragged into place and natural barriers are used to hold it and then it settles itself. Smaller wood and branches are woven in. The additions catch leaf litter and organic material which helps with macroinvertebrates that fish feed on. Fish can get through the sides of the additions or over the tops during high flows.

There are grants to pay for a stream assessment of streams flowing into Lake Winnisquam and for Black Brook in Sanbornton and upper Meredith. There has been lots of development and a new culvert which

create lots of sediment. If assessments are completed, the State or private entities can fund restoration work.

BCCD is working with four landowners to restore 2.5 miles in upper Gunstock Brook. With partnerships, it is possible to work with groups of landowners instead of one landowner at a time.

If any Commission members are interested in learning more, BCCD will be holding a state-wide annual meeting. This year there will be a one-day conference on October 17th at Gunstock on stream restoration with people to show examples of dam removals, watershed scale projects and large wood additions to help get away from the old techniques of riprap along streams. On October 18th, the meeting will continue at the Margate with more of the agricultural side of things to help provide food networks throughout the state such as farm to table networks between schools and farmers, restaurants and stores.

The chairman thanked Ms. Hepp for her presentation. Ms. Hepp will provide additional resources to R. Ball through email with links about how to do stream inventories and grants that are available. BCCD would like to know what they can do to better help the Commission. BCCD helps with everything from working with farmers to get excess food to food pantries, to gravel roads and grazing plans. What does the Commission need?

T. Threlfall, Jr. was appointed as a voting member.

Board's Action – Minutes 02/06/2019:

MOTION: On a motion by P. Schmidt, seconded by S. Rolfe, it was voted unanimously to approve the minutes of February 6, 2019. (5-0)

NH Department of Environmental Services Applications:

1. Robert Irwin of 98 Fox Hill Road – Tax Map 111-057-000-000: Shoreland application needs more information to impact 7,910sf to remove an existing garage and construct a new garage and gravel access.
2. Belmont DG LLC of Gilmanton Road (Route 140) – Tax Map 122-056-001-000: Expedited application under technical review to impact 2,043sf of wetlands for the purpose of access to the uplands on the rear of the flag-shaped lot.
3. Theresa A. Lamore Trust of 67 Tucker Shore Road – Tax Map 107-004-000-000: Standard Dredge and Fill Application under technical review to replace an existing 118ft long granite retaining wall that has failed and dislodged from the land. Applicant seeks to replace it with an 118ft stone strong wall, and to construct a perched beach. Total project impact 861sf, with 1,555sf of temporary impact.
4. Jason Seaburg of 16 Lakeside Drive – Tax Map 112-006-000-000: Shoreland PBN to impact 256sf of protected shoreland in order to construct an addition onto the primary structure with a porch.

Land Use Boards/Committees Applications:

1. **Planning Board** – 02/25/2019
 - a. **Jason Drouin Custom Homes LLC:** Continuation of 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 in the "R" Zone. Mr. Drouin's application has been tabled three times. He may be unable to meet the March 4th deadline and would need to re-apply to the Planning Board when he is ready.

- b. **Mammoth Acquisition Company LLC for Northland Group LLC:** The Board approved a subdivision plan to subdivide one lot into two. Property is located at 73 Daniel Webster Highway, Tax Lot 201-029-000-000 in the “C” Zone. This is part of the Wilcom lot that will be used to put in a ConvenientMD.
 - c. **Mammoth Acquisition Company LLC for Northland Group LLC:** The Board approved a site plan for a 5,300sf commercial medical office building (urgent care clinic). Property is located at 73 Daniel Webster Highway, Tax Lot 201-029-000-000 in the “C” Zone.
 - d. **Foley Oil Company Inc.:** The Board approved a site plan to add Propane Gas bulk storage (three 30,0000 gallon tanks) to an existing bulk storage facility. Property is located at 39 Old State Road, Tax Lot 201-002-000-000 in the “C” Zone.
 - e. **Laconia-Best Warehousing & Distribution Group (LBWD/Rateliner):** The Board determined that a site plan is required to change from one permitted zoning use to a different permitted zoning use.
2. **Zoning Board of Adjustment** – 02/27/2019
 - a. **Grosser Family Revoc Trust:** The Board approved a special exception of Article 5 Table 1 of the Zoning Ordinance to allow a dog grooming salon in the “R” zone, regulated under the Veterinary Clinic/Boarding Kennel use. Property is located at 194 Hurricane Road, Tax Lot 231-014-002-000.
 - b. **Foley Oil Company Inc.:** The Board approved a special exception of Article 5 Table 1 of the Zoning Ordinance to allow Propane Gas bulk storage (three 30,0000 gallon tanks). Property is located at 39 Old State Road in the “C” Zone, Tax Lot 201-002-000-000.
 3. **Application Review Committee** – 02/21/2019
 - a. **Matthew T. Gault:** No one was present for review of a site plan proposal to convert residential 6-bay garage into 3-bay welding shop (Light Manufacturing), 1-bay landscaping company (Contractor’s Yard), and 2-bay commercial construction materials storage (Warehousing/self-storage-Interior). Property located at 682 Laconia Road, Commercial Zone, Tax Lot 230-043-000-000.
 - b. **LBWD/Rateliner:** Review of site plan proposal to convert existing Light Manufacturing with Accessory Storage use to satellite truck terminal (Truck Terminal) and warehouse fulfillment/storage (Warehousing/Self-Storage-Interior) uses. Property located at 48 Dearborn Street, Industrial Zone, Tax Lot 123-028-000-000.
 - c. **C&R Realty Trust & IDH Realty:** Review of site plan proposal to establish Contractor’s Yard (Tax Lot 210-005-000-000) and Satellite Sales Lot (205-001-000-000). Properties located at and adjacent to 140 Laconia Road, Commercial Zone. Construction sales in front of lot with contractor’s yard in back of building. Lot with satellite sales further towards Laconia.

Projects:

1. **Daniel Ladd Farm:**
 - a. Boundary at Ladd Hill Road and Union Road: No additional work has been completed on this project.
2. **Jeff Marden Town Forest:**
 - a. Red Pine Harvest: S. Rolfe reported that the cutting has been done for about two weeks and logs are slowly being trucked off. Quite a few trucks were promised this week. R. Ball stated that the road ban is being posted this Friday. R. Ball explained that he was able to watch part of the process and a feller buncher was being used to harvest three trees at one time. S. Rolfe has reopened the trails, but the Commission will need to go through them once the snow is gone to be sure that they are passable. He emphasized that especially since putting in

accessible trails, it is important to monitor trails frequently to be sure that they remain accessible. The Commission still needs to follow up on blazing trails and putting up markers. D. Naiva asked if there were any problems with the harvest. S. Rolfe answered no. Ms. Hepp asked if there are any red pine scale outbreaks in other parts of Town. S. Rolfe responded that he found the first outbreak in the state at Bear Brook. They were hoping it was contained but it wasn't. It has moved up Route 106. The scale is well established. It is best to capture the value of the timber before the trees are standing dead and causing hazards. Scattered trees do better. S. Rolfe reported that he flagged a bunch of dead ash at the harvest location that were also removed. D. Naiva thanked S. Rolfe for his work on this project.

3. **Stewardship Plans:**

- a. **Draft:** R. Ball remarked that L. Lowd has emailed him with a spreadsheet of suggestions for chapters that didn't have the same sequence, formatting and content areas. D. Naiva reported that page 67 needs information about the bittersweet invasive. Also, the Andrew Sanborn inventory should include the pond in the first section about notable features. Yearly inspections should not be limited to a specific month. How is the Winnisquam Lake Conservation Area bounded by Cotton Hill Road? R. Ball explained that the area includes the watershed that goes into Durkee Brook near the old fish hatchery on Route 107. The bounded areas include the highest points and roads near the highest points were picked. D. Naiva thanked R. Ball for all of his work on the stewardship plans. L. Day stated that she had also emailed with some recommended changes but there is lots to take in with this document. R. Ball noted that there are additional items to be added to the Town Forest section including the accessible trail, the bridge, the Eagle Scout projects and the girls' senior project. D. Naiva asked that the pictures from the Red Pine Harvest be documented as well. R. Ball mentioned that they were limited on the drone flight for those pictures because it was so cold out.

Land Protection Projects:

Significant Wetlands Map: R. Ball emailed this document to Commission members. There was no discussion.

Complaints/Violations/Concerns/General Info:

1. **Saving Special Places Conference:** The conference will be held April 6, 2019 at Prospect Mountain High School. D. Naiva reminded the Commission that she will be unable to attend this year. Are there any members who can accompany two Belmont High School students? S. Rolfe stated that he will be there doing a presentation and can be there early to meet the students. Ms. Hepp also offered to assist in any way she can as she will also be attending.
2. **Community Outreach Presentation:** D. Naiva has been working to schedule a vernal pool presentation on April 3rd. The whole meeting will be dedicated to the presentation, which will be given by Audra Klumb, a wetlands scientist out of Webster. D. Naiva asked if the Commission can offer a stipend or reimburse for travel. R. Ball answered yes. There was some discussion on the description of a vernal pool.
3. **Invasive Species Presentation:** D. Naiva will be contacting Doug Cygan about coming to do a presentation at the May meeting.

Budget/Expenditures:

R. Ball reported that the balance of the Conservation Fund is \$133,402.20. None of the 2019 budget has been spent. After Town Meeting R. Ball will go to Keene to have signs made for a number of Town conservation properties for \$150-\$200 per sign.

Other:

D. Naiva will be reaching out to M. Youtsey-Dunn about her Commission membership.

D. Hepp asked R. Ball if he was aware of a meeting on April 9th with 5 agencies offering state conservation grants. R. Ball said he was not. D. Hepp will email the information so that a reservation can be made.

D. Hepp also reported that BCCD is working to plan an all-county Conservation Commission meeting with all towns in the summer or fall.

Adjournment:

MOTION: On a motion by S. Rolfe, seconded by L. Day, it was voted unanimously to adjourn at 7:11pm. (5-0)

Respectfully submitted:

Colleen Akerman
Building and Land Use Clerk