

# Brentwood Conservation Commission

Meeting Minutes - May 8, 2024

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*Members Present:* Chair Becky Dunham, Vice Chair Bob Stephens, Lise McNaughton, Andy Laroche, Brian Silva, BOS representative Paul Kleinman

*Alternates:* Acting Secretary Michelle Siudut, Patrick Marcoux, Rob Wofchuck, Doug Cowie

*Guests:* Deb Briscoe, Letty Bedard, Doug Finan, Bruce Stevens, Heather Dudley-Tatman, Emma Laham

Dunham called the meeting to order at 6:32 pm. Motion by Dunham to appoint Siudut as a voting member, seconded by Laroche; passed unanimously.

Pickpocket Dam Update. Dunham introduced Eric Turer at the beginning of our meeting due to another obligation he has at 7:00. Turer spoke about the status of the Pickpocket Dam removal. The Exeter BOS/engineer submitted the grant, with little public input. Concerned citizens groups have been attending Exeter BOS meetings to question the progress of the application. Submitted public comments are now available on the Exeter River Advisory section of the Exeter Town website. Comments questioning fish migration issue were not addressed. Request has been made to Exeter BOS to reconsider dam removal decision; grant application citing fish migration is erroneous and per grant requirements needs reconsideration. The Grant requires public process and communication; which has not happened. The Exeter River Advisory Committee will meet at 3pm tomorrow at Exeter Town Office. Recording will be on their YouTube channel. Wofchuck asked if Turer is representing ESRLAC; Turer said no, he is here as a resident to update the Commission. Stephens asked if Turer's property will be affected by dam removal; Turer believes the water level at his property would be affected. It is estimated that the current 90 acres of wetland will be reduced to about 20+ acres if the dam is removed. The "danger" of the dam failing is unlikely; if we had a 1000yr flood only 1 house would be affected.

Bruce Stevens commented he has been attending meetings regarding this issue since 2016. Fish were not part of the conversation then, it was a dam safety issue. Bruce rhetorically asked if Brentwood would be willing to assist financially to help Exeter maintain/fix the dam; a move he himself would not support.

At the request of ConCom, a letter was sent in March to Exeter Town Manager by Karen Clement requesting Brentwood representatives - Select Board, Town Administrator and Conservation be involved in all current and future discussions regardless of whether the application was approved or denied. Dean replied suggesting a meeting with Select Board and Town Administrator. Dunham will follow-up on any developments from this meeting.

**1. Minutes Review.** Motion by Siudut, seconded by Silva to approve minutes from April 10, 2024 meeting as amended, approved 6-0-1. VOTE REVISED later in the meeting, to 3-0-1.

**2. Bills & Reimbursements.** Roadside Cleanup expenses for coffee and donuts \$121.78. Motion by Laroche, seconded by McNaughton for Dunham to be reimbursed; approved unanimously.

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### 3. Correspondence & Notices.

Lambert: Proposal for project on Rt 125 still on hold.

MTI/PolyExe (Tax Map 205.006 001): Dunham reported contact in April from Todd Valentine of MTI regarding a pre-application meeting with Glenn Greenwood about a 15,000 Sq ft addition to the facility on Pine Rd. Following this call, Dunham, Greenwood, Valentine, and 2 reps of engineering firm participated in a Microsoft teams video call to review application process. Issues mentioned by Greenwood and Dunham were wetlands, stormwater runoff and border with Fish & Game property. Discussion of a joint Planning Board and ConCom site walk. There are tentative plans for MTI to present to Planning Board at their June 6 meeting, or a subsequent meeting. Presentation to ConCom will be scheduled.

R.E. Prescott: Dunham contacted Brendan Quigley of Gove Engineering to discuss the DES March 21 letter noting a need for Conservation's input on the project. Dunham noted the May 20 deadline and that Prescott has not appeared before ConCom. Conservation is interested in this plan and Dunham asked for a presentation by Gove, and offered May 8. Quigley said he disputes the DES interpretation of the prime wetlands and is requesting a DES review; barring that, he will ask for an extension of the May 20 deadline. Either way, he will schedule a presentation to ConCom. If the reading stands, some changes will need to be made to the plan, and it "would be unproductive to meet with Conservation until those changes are made." Following the conversation with Quigley, Dunham spoke with Kristin DuClos at DES who signed the March 21 letter, noting Quigley's questioning the DES wetlands reading and request for an extension on the May 20 deadline. Dunham stated Conservation's interest in a presentation from Gove on the project. Duclos described the steps that would occur. Dunham thanked Duclos for the information.

Dunham noted that the Prescott plan shows an easement that is on both sides of the Brentwood/Epping border and that Quigley told her it was held by RCCD and is an old easement, probably something to do with the Dragway. It is not on our easement list. Lise McNaughton has contacted RCCD for more information.

### 4. Old Business.

a. Perambulations. Bob Stephens said he will set up the Exeter walk this week.

b. Conservation Commission Manual. Siudut said Lipinski has not set a meeting for the subcommittee. Wofchuck submitted some changes directly to Lipinski.

c. Forest Management Capital Reserve. Trustees of the Trust Fund will meet with BOS on May 21 to follow up on Three Bearing's questions as to whether this fund should continue to exist. Dunham noted she found a reference to the fund in a report which said this fund was approved to "pay for 3 loggings between 2006 and 2040"; she thinks only 1 logging has occurred. She will inform Julie Avant, chair of Trustees of the Trust Funds.

d. Property Reviews. No update from Spead, Swasey.

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e. Roadside Cleanup. Laroche reported that there was a good turnout of residents for the event, and the coffee and donuts were appreciated; lots of good conversation on a wide range of topics; attendees questioned the clearing on both the north (new road) and south (pavillion area) sides of the property; Dunham said she asked the BOS last night to provide information on what is happening with the clearing by the pavillion. Letty shared that the clearing is for the feasibility study; suggested looking at the town website under Projects Tab. The following week Andy Gray, Rec Director, spoke with Dunham and suggested coordinating the clean-up effort next year, earlier, to include field cleanup. Dunham noted Conservation would follow-up.

f. Trails Committee regarding Stevens property: Deb Briscoe said previous plans were to have paths mown through the Stevens fields which are off old Haigh Road, north of Split Rock. Briscoe suggests paths be mowed monthly to maintain height below 8" to allow for low growth for herbivores and allow for fire protection. Briscoe has a volunteer offering to do monthly mowings from May-Sept for the cost of fuel. Briscoe also noted the posts holding up the gate (which has been set aside) need replacing so the gate can be reinstalled and prevent vehicles from entering the field. She also suggested relocating the gate and setting aside a portion of the field along Haigh Road for parking.

Briscoe did not ask the volunteer about mowing the entire field; Marcoux suggested mowing both fields to keep scrub brush down; at a minimum the edges. Rob Wofchuck suggested mowing alternate sides each year; Lise McNaughton concurred; suggestion of October mowing time. Dunham will contact the volunteer to see if he would mow the full field. Wofchuck asked about Trails Com/Rec pay for mowing; vs ConCom paying for mowing. Dunham will follow-up.

Dunham said we still need to follow-up on the fence removal issue and the edges of the field cleared. Wofchuck suggested NH Fish & Game as well as USDA (this may be for private property) grants for some of the field maintenance; suggested recruiting UNH students for clearing.

g. July speaker presentation. Wofchuck is working on scheduling someone to present on stormwater issues at the July meeting.

h. Dunham noted Greenwood presentation on May 2 was very informative. Tonight's packet contains the printed presentation of Greenwood's presentation; video is also available.

i. Pickpocket Dam update (moved to beginning of meeting).

j. ConCom Open Space Committee. Establishment of this committee was approved at the April meeting. Motion by Siudut, seconded by Silva to appoint Dunham, McNaughton and Wofchuck, Robin Wrighton (marketing, familiarity with properties, easement experience) and Jeff Dvorak (professional environmental services) to this Committee; approved 7-0; VOTE REVISED later in the meeting to 4-0. Dunham notified the Select Board about the creation of the Open Space

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Sub-Committee on May 7; it was noted additional members may be added as needed and as the work evolves over time; Kleinman suggested we advertise for openings for this committee.

### 5. New Business.

a. New easement inquires. None

b. Reappointment of members and alternates. Dunham reviewed the current list of members and alternates and their eligibility and interest for reappointment to 3-year terms (copy in packet). She noted terms expiration dates are not consistent; they need to be reviewed. At its meeting May 7, BOS Chair Jones, outlined a revised process being established for all appointments and re-appointments to committees and commissions. It will take some time to work out all details- it has not been set in stone yet. Jones described that a joint meeting would be scheduled between the Select Board and Committee members to review and discuss applicants for re-appointment and appointments. Committees would not vote prior to this meeting or present recommendations. Decisions would be made by the Select Board at the joint meeting between the Board and committees.

There was discussion that persons with “expired terms” should not have valid voting rights. Dunham noted the expiration dates are inconsistent. With this in mind, votes taken this evening were revised to include only members/alternates in good standing. Dunham will confer with the Town Administrator to review and discuss next steps.

c. NH GRANIT database project. UNH GRANIT is a database of all public and conservation easement properties in the state. Peter Steckler with Northeast Conservation Services (and a Brentwood resident) has been hired to work with communities on updating the records for each town. The project is voluntary on the part of each town and Steckler is available to train volunteers. An excel chart of Brentwood’s current data in the system and a map, are included in the packet. McNaughton, Marcoux and Siudut volunteered, with caveat that the work not begin until fall. Dunham will inform Steckler.

A handout on NHACC lunch & learn workshops and field training opportunities was presented.

Bond approval: Dunham reported that the bond application was submitted prior to the April 26 deadline. Brentwood Treasurer Tammy Gallant reported that the bond counsel said everything looked good.

At the request of the Library Trustees, Dunham extended an invitation to all to attend the dedication of the Library Amphitheatre in memory of Linda Johnston on June 15, 2-5 pm. A copy of the invitation can be found on the Library website and on FACEBOOK.

Dunham distributed a copy of the Conflict of interest policy that is being considered. No further information at this time.

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### **Other Business.**

Siudut reviewed the pasture walk at the Batchelders (owners of former Schmalzer properties) which was attended by representatives of NH Graziers, the Society for the Protection of NH Forests, and the Rockingham Conservation District. She noted there are other organizations we may wish to look into, when considering future conservation easements.

Marcoux reviewed legislative update: \$1M approved toward trail repairs; house amended some LCHIP details for conservation easements; Senate approved carbon credit study; Wetland downed trees to clear up wetland. The Farm bill is currently up for reapproval (every 5 yrs); both house & senate ag committees have released plans.

Motion to adjourn 8:33 pm; passed unanimously.

Next meeting: June 12 at 6:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Michelle Siudut  
Secretary pro tem