

**Conservation Commission Meeting
Public Minutes
December 11, 2024**

Members Present: Becky Dunham (Chair), Bob Stephens (Vice Chair), Michelle Siudut, Matt Lipinski (Secretary), Paul Kleinman (Selectboard Rep), Andy Laroche (Alternate), Patrick Marcoux (Alternate), Heather Dudley-Tatman (Alternate), Emma Laham (Alternate), Doug Cowie (Alternate).

Chairman Dunham called the meeting to order at 6:31pm.

Motion by Lipinski to appoint Marcoux and Dudley-Tatman as voting members for tonight's meeting. Siudut seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

Agenda Items (Item numbers correspond to the sequence shown on posted agenda)

1. **Minutes Review:** The minutes of the Commission's October 9, 2024 meeting were reviewed. Dunham noted they were tabled at the November meeting because there was uncertainty about some content. Dunham stated she verified with Lipinski that the content in question was correct as written in the draft minutes. Siudut stated she watched the video of the meeting and confirmed the draft minutes were correct. Motion by Marcoux to approve the draft minutes as written. Siudut seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

The minutes of the November 13, 2024 meeting were reviewed. Dunham suggested making four changes. Motion by Marcoux to approve the draft minutes as amended. Siudut seconded and the motion was approved 5-0 with Stephens and Lipinski abstaining.

- 1.a. **Secretary Transition:** Dunham advised that Lipinski, who has served as the Commission's Secretary for almost two years, wished to step out of that role as of year-end. Lipinski confirmed and advised that he had spoken to Siudut about succeeding him in the role. She was amenable to doing so and Lipinski asked if anyone else might be interested as well. No additional interest was expressed so Lipinski moved to elect Siudut as Conservation Commission Secretary, effective January 1, 2025. Marcoux seconded and the motion was approved 6-0 with Siudut abstaining. Dunham expressed her thanks to Lipinski for his past service as Commission Secretary.

2. **Bills & Reimbursements:** None.

3. **Presentation by Andy Gray, Brentwood Recreation Director:** Andy presented a plan for remediating the diminished condition of the softball fields behind the Rec Center. He noted that the lower fields in particular have deteriorated over the years due to an area of poor drainage and lack of irrigation, resulting in conditions that are dangerous to players. He proposed a plan to add drainage to the area between the upper and lower fields, and irrigation to the playing fields. He presented a map showing the proposed location of the drainage and

irrigation systems. Discussion ensued regarding runoff into a wetlands area to the north, which may include Prime wetlands and mapped vernal pools, and the existing archery course and wetlands to the south. Marcoux asked whether fertilizer is used on the fields. Andy confirmed it was, which raised an environmental concern about potential fertilizer migration into the wetlands areas with runoff. Stephens suggested an engineering design be obtained by the Rec Department regarding its plan, which could identify and address these and other concerns. Andy concluded his presentation and thanked the Commission for its input.

4. **Old Business**

- a. **Martin subdivision, South Road:** Dunham advised that the subdivision permit has been signed and the permitting work is completed.
- b. **Fuller easement update:** Kleinman advised that the deed/conservation easement is scheduled to be signed at the next Selectboard meeting. The Town's share of the purchase price came in at approximately \$241,000.
- c. **Breen work/Stevens field:** Dunham reported that Kevin Breen has completed the contracted cleanup work on the Stevens field and his invoice has been paid as agreed.
- d. **Easement monitoring:** Lise will provide an update at the January meeting.
- e. **Conservation stewardship fund:** Dunham reported that Wofchuck is checking with other towns via the NHACC list serve regarding what they've done with such funds. The topic is tabled until the January meeting.
 - e.1. **Open Space Subcommittee:** Dunham reported that the Open Space subcommittee met November 20. Consultant Anna Boudreau attended and the group discussed ideas or further outreach to landowners about conservation options.
- f. **January speaker:** The speaker at our January meeting will be Andrew Fiske of American Rivers. Dunham suggested consultant, Anna Boudreau, as a speaker in February to educate Commissioners on easement structure, process, timing, and landowner interaction. Dudley-Tatman asked what other topics might be of interest. Dunham will follow up with Boudreau.
- g. **Pickpocket Dam:** Eric Turer provided a summary of the December 10, 2024 public meeting in Exeter, which he attended. There was not much new information disseminated at the meeting. The Town of Exeter reported that it was unsuccessful in obtaining the NOAA grant it sought to fund dam removal and it is now in fundraising mode. If sufficient funding is secured, they intend to move forward with dam removal. An impact assessment has been completed at the 100-year flood level, but not the 1,000-year level. Input on that assessment and on the dam removal plan will be obtained from immediate abutters. Everyone else will just receive notice. They intend to propose a

Warrant Article in March, even though actual funding sufficiency remains unknown. Removal would happen sometime in 2027.

- h. **Town forest – Capital Reserve Fund:** The Selectboard has decided to retain this Fund. Updated forest management reports will be forthcoming.

5. **New Business**

- a. **Conservation Fund expenditure request:** A property has come to the attention of the Open Space subcommittee which meets our conservation criteria. Funding to obtain an appraisal is requested. Details are confidential at the direction of the property owner and the matter is tabled for discussion in nonpublic session.
- b. **Miscellaneous Announcements:**
 - i. Dunham reported that various trees are being cut on Prescott Road in order to allow for utility pole installation.
 - ii. Tractor Supply on Hwy 125 has applied for a variance in order to erect a second sign advertising its garden center. Stephens inquired whether they already have a garden center or whether they intend to add one.
 - iii. Marcoux attended the latest meeting of the Energy & Efficiency Advisory Committee (E&EAC). He reported they are gathering information about a heat capturing project in Exeter. Dunham congratulated Marcoux on his participation in a United Nations Conference in the Galapagos islands in November.
 - iv. A question arose whether the Webb property on Pine Road, once under consideration for conservation, may have diminished in value after the recent fire on that land. A short discussion ensued.

Nonpublic session: Motion by Lipinski to go into non-public session under RSA Section 91-A:3, II(d) to discuss the property referenced in agenda item 5.a, above. Dudley-Tatman seconded and the motion was unanimously approved by roll call vote:

Dunham – Aye
Stephens – Aye
Siudut – Aye
Lipinski – Aye
Kleinman – Aye
Marcoux – Aye
Dudley-Tatman – Aye

The public was excused from the room, video and voice recording of the meeting was turned off, doors were closed, and the Commission went into non-public session at approximately 8:00pm.

At approximately 8:20pm, Stephens moved to return to public session and seal the nonpublic session minutes. Marcoux seconded and the motion was unanimously approved by roll call vote:

Dunham – Aye
Stephens – Aye
Siudut – Aye
Lipinski – Aye
Kleinman – Aye
Marcoux – Aye
Dudley-Tatman – Aye

The Commission resumed public session, turned the video and voice recording equipment back on, and reopened the meeting room doors to allow public access.

Dunham asked Lipinski to advance the motion prepared in nonpublic session.

Lipinski moved that the Commission expend up to \$5,000 from the Conservation Fund for purposes of obtaining an appraisal of the property under consideration for conservation which was discussed in nonpublic session. Marcoux seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

6. Other Business:

- a. **Next Meeting:** Dunham advised that the next Commission meeting will be on January 8, 2025.

Upon motion by Stephens, second by Kleinman, and unanimously approved, the meeting was adjourned by Dunham at approximately 8:29pm.