

CONSERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES

April 5, 2023

APPROVED: May 3, 2023

AGENDA: Election of Officers
ROGER LAROCHELLE – Funding Sources for Conservation Land Protection Projects

ATTENDING: Carroll Brown (Chair), Richard Batchelder (Vice Chair), Bill Haskell (Alternate) and Chip Carleton (Alternate)

ABSENT: Elizabeth Miller, Richard Metcalf, and Janet Cote

OTHER: Christina Goodwin (Town Administrator), Joanne Bailey (Land Use Manager), Donna Sullivan (Land Use Administrative Assistant) Roger Larochelle, Executive Director, Squam Lake Conservation Society and Shaun Lagueux

Chair Brown called meeting to order at 6:08 pm with a quorum present in-person with alternates participating. A roll call was taken.

NEW BUSINESS:

ROGER LAROCHELLE – Funding Sources for Conservation Land Protection Projects

Mr. Brown introduced Mr. Larochelle. Mr. Larochelle stated that he served as Executive Director of Squam Lakes Conservation Society, was a member of the Newfound Lake Land Protection Conservation Partnership, and a resident of Hebron. He was here at the invitation of Mr. Batchelder to talk and brainstorm with the Commission. He has been involved with conservation for more than 20 years as Director of the Squam Lakes Conservation Society. He stated they work with partners in both the private and public sector. He commented that the Squam Lake watershed land is 30% protected and all with private landowners. He stated they worked to protect the Squam Lake and Watershed while maintaining the character of the area.

Mr. Batchelder commented that the Commission was looking to understand what funding sources might be available to municipalities for land purchase for conservation purposes.

Mr. Larochelle asked if the Bristol Conservation Commission had a Conservation Fund and if it was funded by Current Use Change Tax. Ms. Goodwin replied that there was a small fund and at a recent Town Meeting the Town approved use of a small percentage of Change of Use Tax to further fund this account. She stated that to date no funds have come in from this and the Town was currently reviewing its Current Use files for updates.

Mr. Larochelle stated most land preservation projects he has been involved with were funded with private and public partnership. Some campaigns could be achieved with private funding and public funding. He added that some public funding may require matching funds. He shared a list of funding sources with the Commission.

Mr. Brown stated that the Commission has been approached by a private landowner for possible purchase of land for conservation of open fields and that the Town was also interested in protecting its wells.

CONSERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES

April 5, 2023

ROGER LAROCHELLE – Funding Sources for Conservation Land Protection Projects - continued

There was a review of the funding sources Mr. Larochelle has previously worked with. He talked about the protection of the Squam Range with one 5400-acre parcel privately purchased and another 937 acres purchased with the assistance of the Forest Legacy funding and the Squam Lake Conservation Society providing a 25% match. This was a private/public funding partnership. He also spoke of projects with LCHIP and other sources describing the projects, partners and results.

He talked about two funds currently funneled through the Newfound Lake Region Association (NLRA). One was the Gemmill Fund which provides resources for land conservation for the preliminary baseline documentation and transactional costs. The Forever Newfound Fund was set up by Martha Trombley which also was set up to assist landowners and others with transactional costs for land preservation.

He also talked about involving partnership interest resources. He talked about land trusts, conservation easements and stewardship management of these with partners. He stated that it is important to get people together and hold neighborhood meetings, discuss conservation interests and land protection visions. He suggested that small group gatherings in people's homes talking about what they enjoy most, and their vision are a good way to spark interest and participation. These may provide volunteers, private funding opportunities, and partnerships.

He shared the Conserving Your Land booklet that can be downloaded from The NH Land Trust Coalition. He stated Whitney Woods, which is featured on the cover is one of their projects funded with LCHIP funds.

He went on to say, he would be glad to assist the Commission as a resource for their land protection goals. He asked if there were any particular properties the Commission was pursuing. Mr. Brown answered that the land by the Town Well had an important aquifer to protect and that there was a small field off Hall Road that came up in discussion with the landowner. Mr. Lagueux mentioned the rail trail project and other conservation protection areas that he saw as areas to be protected. Mr. Larochelle stated that the Newfound Watershed is an area that is changing rapidly, and he saw it as a prime area to protect.

SHAUN LAGUEUX – Use of the Breck-Plankey Spring property for Conservation Information Center

Mr. Lagueux stated that he recently walked the property at the Spring and felt it was such a high-profile piece of property that could be a great information center and maybe picnic area with high traffic by Spring patrons. He stated there was enough property there that could support a kiosk to educate the public about the Spring and other protected areas and potential projects. He also suggested that the Dam property south along the Newfound River and Bike Path might also be a great place to add picnic areas etc. There was discussion of the breached dam project and what might be done to open the view of the river again. Mr. Brown asked that this be placed on the agenda for the next meeting.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS – postponed to next month's meeting

CONSERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES

April 5, 2023

OLD BUSINESS:

BRIAN & KAREN GALLAGHER – PEMIGEWASSET SHORES ROAD - #222-030

A recently received NHDES Wetland Dredge and Fill permit application for culvert and walkway installation for the Gallagher property at Pemigewasset Shores Road was reviewed. The Commission saw no issues with this.

Mr. Brown commented that for future cases the staff will give a summary of the project and status overview of applications and information in the same way they do with other Land Use Boards to help fully inform the Commission and alleviate any confusion regarding town applications, permit process and information.

MINUTES: March minutes still being reviewed by Land Use and not yet available as DRAFT

COMMISSION MEMBER ITEMS:

Mr. Batchelder shared information from the New Hampshire Association of Conservation Commissions (NHACC) workshop series and stated he found the information very valuable. He commented that the workshop recordings and materials are available online at NHACC. The office will send the links to the videos to members.

Mr. Brown stated he would like to schedule continuation of walking Conservation properties at the next meeting.

COMMUNICATIONS: None

LAND USE STAFF COMMENTS & UPDATES: None

NEXT MEETING: May 3, 2023, at 6 pm

ADJOURNMENT:

With no other business, Mr. Batchelder moved to adjourn. Mr. Brown seconded. The motion carried 4-0-0. The meeting adjourned at 7:06 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Janet Cote
Land Use Associate