

# Canterbury Conservation Commission

## Canterbury, NH

**Thursday May 12, 2022, 7 pm**

### **Attendance:**

In person: Ken Stern, Kelly Short, Audra Klumb,

Remotely by Zoom: Steve Seron, Teresa Wyman, Sara Riordan

Guest: Sarah Thorne, 5 Rivers Conservation Trust Board Member, via Zoom

### 1. Approve April Minutes

Teresa moved to accept the minutes of the April 14, 2022 meeting. Audra seconded; There being no discussion, members voted and the motion carried.

### 2. Conservation project discussion. Meadowsend Timberlands, Asby Road

Ken recused himself from the discussion. Sarah Thorne, Board Member of 5 Rivers Conservation Trust (5RCT) presented a potential new project, first thanking Canterbury for making the conservation of the Glines Farm a success.

Meadowsend is a family owned for-profit business that produces timber according to sustainable forestry practices. Part of their business model is to permanently conserve forest lands. Meadowsend approached 5RCT with the goal of recouping a portion of the purchase price for 520 acres they recently purchased. The property has frontage on Asby Rd., is located to the east of the Meeh Family easements, to the west of the Shaker State Forest and the Prescott easement. In all, this property abuts 1965 acres of conserved land. There is a large string of wetlands along Gues Meadow Brook. The landowner currently allows public use.

Meadowsend has conducted a harvest over the last year and left about 40% of the timber volume as seed trees. This land has many positive conservation values including forestry, wildlife habitat, outdoor recreation and wetlands conservation. These values are enhanced due to proximity to other conserved property. It has potential for development with proximity to route 106 and related to the racetrack. It includes "Runaway Pond," which is one of the headwaters of the Shaker pond system. The wildlife habitat at the northern end of the property ranks among the highest priority habitat of the region in the NH Wildlife Action Plan.

To complete this project, 5RCT would seek funding to ensure permanent conservation and public access from several public sources including LCHIP, the Moose Plate Program, Merrimack Conservation Partnership, and local private fundraising. The appraised value of the conservation easement as of Monday was \$390,000. 5RCT would need significant financial participation by the town – estimated between \$180,000 and \$200,000 -- to provide matching funds to LCHIP and other funding. Sarah requested that the Commission let 5RCT know our level of

interest and amount of funding that would be available from the town at our June meeting with the acknowledgement that this is not a lot of lead time.

Kelly expressed concern about having two Canterbury projects compete for LCHIP funding in a single year. The CCC has already committed to supporting a project that Ken and Ilene Stern are pursuing with the Forest Society that will be applying for funding from LCHIP and some other sources that the Meadowsend project would also apply to. Sarah said that the landowner is not looking to sell the land at this time so we may not need to pursue it this year.

After Sarah Thorne left the meeting the Commission members discussed the project. The group consensus was that we do not want to risk getting inadequate funding for either project by having them compete for funding from the same sources in the same year. The Commission would also like to have more time to consider the finances of this project and consider it for next year. Kelly will convey this to Sarah.

3. Property management projects update – RSFCA, Riverland.

Ken updated the group on the RSFCA rock removal. John Carr is not interested in moving the big rocks. He suggested Tom Fifield who is not especially interested but may take a look later this year. Ken suggested having the stonemason remove whatever he can and we will deal with the rest after he does his work. Audra visited the site and noted that the area just off the entrance to the property does not meet wetland criteria. She feels it is ok to add some gravel there to improve out access.

Ken visited Riverland Conservation Area, which is still closed for the season, and found that it looks like it is in good shape. There is a small amount of litter and one dead tree that fell across the drive. Ken will ask Ken Folsom to have the highway crew to take care of the tree. Ken Stern said the boardwalk is in bad shape and will need to be addressed later this year. He asked if we have anything in our management fund that could pay for remove it if we cannot get the prisoner group to remove it.

4. McAllister Class VI road waiver request, Ayers Road

The letter approved at the last CCC meeting was sent to the Select Board. According to the minutes, the Select Board denied the waiver request.

The Planning Board is getting back to the Master Plan process and would like any members of the CCC to join them on May 24 to participate in a meeting to bring the perspective of the various boards in town. This meeting will be in preparation for the public session on June 18. There will also be discussion about impervious surface regulations. Kelly, Teresa, Ken and Audra will attend.

Members suggested other possible conservation projects in town to consider in the future.

5. Permits

There is a forestry project that has been approved; we were notified of the permit by DES.

6. Conservation property priority process discussion and CNHRPC resources map review

A second set of maps was produced by the CNHRPC based on feedback provided by Kelly and Ken. Kelly will share a link that the RPC has created that will contain all the maps/documents they have prepared for Canterbury. They have created a 4-tier map and a gradient map which has more nuance. One version is in black and white.

Kelly shared the draft co-occurrence map based on the CCC's weighted ranking of ecological assets. The current draft shows highest ranking areas in red. The map will evolve if the weighted rankings change when the CCC seeks input from others in town.

Ken noted that in addition to wetlands being ranked high, agricultural lands are ranked high on co-occurrence map. Ken noted that in addition to the Schoodac area, the valley between Shaker Road and Baptist Hill is high ranking with many wetlands. He noted that the map does not emphasize wildlife corridors, notably Burnham Brook. Also Horseshoe Pond does not 'light up'. Ken notes that we might need to look at our scoring further. Kelly stated that we scored large forest blocks high. Kelly also emphasized that all of Canterbury is important as we have a large amount of tier 1 and tier 2 land shown in the Merrimack Conservation Partnership priority map. She notes that we need to be careful not to ignore properties that aren't extremely high. This is just one set of input on decisions.

Kelly shared other map versions, including one that shows current conserved lands. This shows areas that are rated high and includes conserved areas including the area around Shaker Village, Spender Meadow and Schoodac Conservation Area. Kelly also showed the color gradient version of the map.

CNHRPC suggests that we choose whether we want a 4 tier map or a gradient map to share publically to avoid confusion between the 2 maps. Ken noted that the maps tell different stories so we need to think about what will be most helpful to portray. Ken prefers the gradient map because it is more detailed. Kelly noted that if we are evaluating conservation opportunities, we can also use other maps such as the Merrimack Conservation Partnership Map created by natural resource professionals. We may choose to use several maps to help us with project evaluation.

Kelly will send links to the conservation partnership map and the new maps. We should think about what the maps tell us and what maps would be used for different purposes to tell different stories. Members should examine the maps and note any preferences, questions, and comments for our next discussion.

It would be good to have our feedback on these maps soon in case they can be used for the public meeting with the planning board. Kelly noted that we need to be good ambassadors for this info so people don't misunderstand the maps.

Ken is wondering about the fact that we did not include being adjacent to conserved land to the ranking criteria. Kelly said that we could get this input and create a map with this ranking added and see what kind of difference it makes in the maps.

Members are to contact Kelly by May 27<sup>th</sup> with any questions, feedback about the maps. Ken and Kelly will take this input to make changes before the June 9 meeting.

Next meeting June 9<sup>th</sup> at 7pm