

# Canterbury Conservation Commission

## Canterbury, NH

Thursday April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2022, 7 pm

### Attendance:

In person: Ken Stern, Kelly Short, Bob Steenson, Audra Klumb, Sara Riordan

Remotely by Zoom: Steve Seron, Teresa Wyman, Guest-Leah Hart, SPNHF

#### 1. Conservation project discussion. Deepwood Forest, Bean Hill Road

Presented by Leah Hart, Land Protection Specialist, Society for the Protection of NH Forests (SPNHF), and Ken Stern; Ken is recusing himself from any discussion and voting as he and his wife, Ilene Stern are the landowners.

The Sterns have purchased 400 acres on Bean Hill Road, off Baptist Hill Rd, in Canterbury and Northfield with the intent of conserving it for access for hunting, hiking, cross-country skiing, and wildlife protection. The property is in the Merrimack Conservation Partnership priority focus area. It is mostly forested with red oak and hemlock as predominant species since a previous owner cut pine for a sawmill. The property includes beaver ponds and a black gum swamp; The Sterns have retained an ecologist and forester for wetlands and wildlife inventory and forest inventory and they have approached SPNHF about conserving the property.

Leah Hart emphasized that conserving this property has both a local and regional impact. There are many important habitats in proximity to the property and significant wildlife corridors to be preserved as well as addressing issues of climate change resilience. SPNHF is considering purchasing a conservation easement on the entire property through a “bargain sale”, which would preclude development and protect the natural resources and recreational values of the property. The Sterns want to actively manage the forest for public recreation and wildlife.

The presentation tonight is to make the Conservation Commission aware of the project, which is in the beginning stages. SPNHF will work with LCHIP and the State Aquatic Resources Mitigation Program (ARM) to obtain grants to assist with conserving the property. LCHIP and ARM would hold 3<sup>rd</sup> party rights of enforcement. Ken hopes that the town will contribute \$15,000 toward the easement stewardship fund as this would be a great help and the amount could be matched by the other grantees. Audra asked if we could have a tour of the property and Ken is quite willing to take folks out for a tour..

Kelly commented that this property is in a high value area of the Wildlife Action Plan, that 400 acres is a very big project and that this is a very exciting project for Canterbury. She thanked Ken and Ilene Stern for bringing this project to us. Ken commented that

everyone likes different aspects of a property and the Sterns hope that everyone will find something to enjoy on the property.

Leah Hart noted that the 2 grant applications (LCHIP and ARM) are due early to mid summer and funding decisions will be made mid to late fall. SPNHF will come back with details once grant decisions are made.

Bob asked if there is any step CCC needs to make in support of project. Leah noted that a letter of support would be very helpful for the ARM grant. Leah will send a reminder when a letter is needed. Bob suggested that the Board of Selectman could possibly provide an additional letter of support.

2. Approve prior meeting Minutes

Bob S. moved to accept the minutes of the March 10, 2022 meeting and Steve seconded. There being no discussion members voted and the motion carried.

3. Election of officers

Kelly moved that we consider the following slate of officers:

Ken Stern, Chair

Kelly Short, Vice chair and Treasurer

Sara Riordan, Secretary

Members voted and the officers were approved.

4. McAllister Class VI road waiver request, Ayers Road

Audra and Bob Steenson walked the Class VI section of Ayers Road. Both reported that the road has very steep grades with exposed ledge and concerns about the Hazelton Brook crossing, wetlands as well as water flowing over the road, which would require significant alterations.

Ken read a drafted letter from the CC opposing the waiver based on the identification of the area as one of the largest intact forested areas and as a priority conservation area. Access improvements would significantly impact the area.

Members voted unanimously to approve the letter as written and to submit the letter to the Select Board. Selectman Steenson abstained from vote.

Ken Stern, Chair, will send the letter to the Select Board reflecting our opposition to the waiver, dated today.

5. Permits

Kelly opened discussion about our receipt of notice of 2 permits applications received by the DES Shorelands Bureau

a. Oxbow RD, by MDM Property Management- Application for permit to construct a commercial building with parking area.

b. Sturm Project on Canterbury Shore Drive- Application for installation of septic system and removal of a deck and 2 sets of steps.

Discussion centered on what the role of the CC is regarding permit notices that don't involve wetlands. Kelly will call DES to clarify what our role as CC is regarding Shoreland permits. She will also clarify why MDM applied for a permit since the map on Granit looks like the site is well beyond the setback. If we need to take any actions we will hold a special meeting before the deadline, which is April 20. She will also ask DES what can be done if inappropriate dumping is observed.

6. Property management projects update – RSFCA rock removal.

Ken received a response to the newsletter notice from Joe Wielock. Ken met Joe at the site and he is willing to remove whatever rocks he can remove with his equipment. He will not be able to remove the large boulders.. Ken spoke with John Carr about removing the large rocks. John explained that no one wants to put the big rocks into a truck. He suggested moving the rocks with a large excavator to tuck them at the base of the wall at the east side of the property along Kimball Pond Road. Ken will get a price from John in case we agree with this approach. Ken also suggested putting some gravel in the wet area on the driveway access. Audra will look at the site to make sure there are no hydric soils which would require any work there to have a wetlands permit. Kelly suggests prioritizing removal of all large rocks if we can find someone to do so since they tend to create areas for invasive species to take hold because it's hard to clear growth around the rocks.

7. Impervious surfaces regulations– Aquifer Protection District

Greg Meeh, Chair of the Planning Board, contacted Ken looking for input on regulations re: impervious surfaces in the town's industrial zone and wonders if they should follow the impervious surface allowance under the Shoreland Protection Act. After discussion, we will recommend that if the applicant's impervious surface exceeds 35% that they install sufficient storm water control measures to avoid erosion. Kelly will pass the recommendation on to Greg Meeh.

8. Conservation property priority process discussion and Central NH Regional Planning Commission (CNHRPC) resources map review

There is nothing new to report. Kelly will check with the CNHRPC to follow up on the maps they are preparing for us.

9. Other Business

- a. Meadowsend Forest. This is a potential conservation project that will be presented at the May meeting.
- b. NH Fish and Game Wildlife Corridors Study-  
Ken noted that Fish and Game presented this long-term project identifying wildlife corridors that connect large blocks of prime wildlife habitat at the Saving Special Places Conference. Ken will send a link with information to CC members.

We may consider adding this data to our priority planning. To be discussed next meeting.

- c. Sherwood Forest Homeowners Association met with Bob S. to express interest in protecting an island owned by the town from construction. It was agreed that since the island is about ¼ acres and fully covered by the Shoreland Act, the island is already protected from development. No action required.
- d. Ken has done a thorough study of the maps recently provided by Central NH Regional Planning Commission (CNHRPC). He has concerns about some legibility and clarity issues. Ken noted that maps should tell a story and that some of these maps do not achieve this given the way they are designed. Ken will contact the CNHRPC to clarify our concerns and bring updates to our next meeting.

**Meeting was adjourned at 9:20pm**

**Next Meeting: May 12, 2022**